

# National Graduate Development Programme feedback survey

August 2017



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## Summary

During August 2017, the Local Government Association (LGA) conducted a survey of graduates who had just completed the two year National Graduate Development Programme (ngdp) in order to gauge their views of the programme and the effect that participation has had on them. The results will be used to improve and develop the programme.

## Methodology

An online survey was sent to the 96 graduates who comprised cohort 17 of the ngdp, which finished in the summer of 2017. The survey was sent out in August 2017, shortly after the graduates attended their final 'wrap up' event. A total of 60 replied – a response rate of 63 per cent.

## Results

- **Overall satisfaction with ngdp:** Most respondents (85 per cent) were either very or fairly satisfied with the ngdp.
- **Gaining a management position:** Nearly all (97 per cent) of respondents said that they felt more confident in their ability to gain a management position in local government (to at least a small extent) as a result of participating in the ngdp.
- **Objectives:** Many respondents (83 per cent) said that they were hoping to gain experience and 80 per cent wanted to develop key skills for fast-track management progression, as a result of taking part in the programme. Seventy-seven per cent of respondents said that their objectives had been either fully or largely met.
- **ngdp contract and future plans:** Nearly half of respondents (48 per cent) had no time remaining on their ngdp contract, and a similar proportion had 1-3 months remaining (47 per cent). When asked about their future plans the majority of respondents (67 per cent) said that they had secured a job post ngdp.
- **Employment and the job market:** Of those respondents who said that they had secured a job post ngdp, over half (21 respondents – 53 per cent) were between 19 - 24 months into the programme when they had done so. Of those who had secured a job, nearly two thirds (26 respondents – 65 per cent) were being employed by their host council. Those employed outside local government (nine respondents) were asked their reasons for this. All said that a good opportunity had come up and seven respondents (78 per cent) said that the post offered them the opportunity to learn new skills.

Of the 14 respondents who were searching or planning to search for a job post ngdp, just over half (eight respondents – 57 per cent) felt either fairly or very positive about their chances in the job market.

- **Impact of ngdp:** Many respondents (85 per cent) thought that participating in the ngdp had had a great or moderate positive impact on their ability to further their career. Nearly all respondents (95 per cent) said that they would be fairly or very likely to recommend the programme to others if asked about it.

## Introduction

During August 2017, the Local Government Association (LGA) conducted a survey of graduates who had just completed the two year National Graduate Development Programme (ngdp) in order to gauge their views of the programme and the effect that participation has had on them. The results will be used to improve and develop the programme.

## Methodology

An online survey was sent to the 96 graduates who comprised cohort 17 of the ngdp, which finished in the summer of 2017. The survey was sent out in August 2017, shortly after the graduates attended their final 'wrap up' event. A total of 60 replied – a response rate of 63 per cent.

This is a good response rate for a survey of this kind. Whilst these results should strictly be taken as a snapshot of the views of this particular group of respondents, rather than representative of all ngdp graduates, this level of response means that the results are likely to provide a good indication of the views of cohort 17 graduates 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 numbers are reported alongside the percentage values.

## Feedback on the ngdp

This section provides full results for each survey question.

All respondents were asked how satisfied or dissatisfied they were with ngdp. Most (85 per cent) were either very or fairly satisfied and no-one was very dissatisfied.

	<b>Number</b>	<b>Per cent</b>
<b>Very or fairly satisfied</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>85</b>
Very satisfied	23	38
Fairly satisfied	28	47
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	4	7
Fairly dissatisfied	5	8
Very dissatisfied	0	0
Don't know	0	0

Base: all respondents (60 respondents)

All respondents were asked to what extent, if at all, they felt more confident in their ability to gain a management position in local government as a result of participating in the ngdp. Nearly all (97 per cent) said that this was the case to at least a small extent.

<b>Table 2: To what extent, if at all, do you feel more confident in your ability to gain a management position, having participated in the ngdp?</b>		
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Per cent</b>
<b>To at least a small extent</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>97</b>
To a great extent	32	53
To a moderate extent	19	32
To a small extent	7	12
Not at all	2	3
Don't know	0	0

Base: all respondents (60 respondents)

All respondents were asked to identify their objectives in taking part in the ngdp. Many (83 per cent) said that they were hoping to gain experience and 80 per cent wanted to develop key skills for fast-track management progression.

<b>Table 3: What were your objectives in taking part in the NGDP?</b>		
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Per cent</b>
To gain experience	50	83
To develop key skills for fast-track management progression	48	80
To learn about new subject areas	44	73
To fast-track my career	43	72
To network and learn from other trainees	36	60
Other (please specify)	4	7
Don't know	0	0

Base: all respondents (60 respondents)

Please note that percentages will sum to more than 100 as respondents could select multiple answer options

Four respondents (seven per cent) said they had additional objectives and these are provided below:

- to experience lots of areas and get a holistic view of local government
- completion of the ILM
- to contribute to the public sector
- to learn about how local government worked.

All respondents were asked if their objectives had been achieved. Seventy-seven per cent said that these had fully or largely been met.

**Table 4: Were the objectives that you had for taking part in the NGDP achieved?**

	Number	Per cent
<b>Fully or largely achieved</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>77</b>
Fully achieved (met all goals)	9	15
Largely achieved (met most goals)	37	62
Partially achieved (met some goals)	14	23
Not achieved (met none of the goals)	0	0
Don't know	0	0

Base: all respondents (60 respondents)

All respondents were asked how long they had remaining on their ngdp contract. Nearly half had no time (48 per cent) and a similar proportion had 1-3 months remaining (47 per cent).

**Table 5: How long do you have remaining on your ngdp contract?**

	Number	Per cent
No time	29	48
1-3 months	28	47
4-6 months	2	3
7-9 months	1	2
10-12 months	0	0
Don't know	0	0

Base: all respondents (60 respondents)

Respondents were asked about their current plans for the future. The majority (67 per cent) said that they had secured a job post ngdp.

**Table 6: What are your current plans for the future?**

	Number	Per cent
I have secured a job post NGDP	40	67
I am currently searching for a job post NGDP	12	20
I plan to search for a job in the coming weeks	2	3
I plan to go back/have gone back to studying	3	5
Other	3	5
Don't know	0	0

Base: all respondents (60 respondents)

Those respondents who said that they had secured a job post ngdp were asked how far into the ngdp they were when the job was secured. Over half (21 respondents - 53 per cent) were between 19-24 months into the programme.

**Table 7: How long into the NGDP were you when your new job was secured?**

	Number	Per cent
1-6 months	0	0
7-12 months	2	5
13-15 months	5	13
16-18 months	12	30
19-21 months	16	40
22-24 months	5	13
Don't know	0	0

Base: all respondents who said that they had secured a job post ngdp (40 respondents)

These respondents who had secured a job were asked to select an option from the list in Table 8 that best reflected their new job. Nearly two thirds (26 respondents - 65 per cent) were being employed by their host council from the ngdp programme

	<b>Number</b>	<b>Per cent</b>
My host council(s) from the NGDP	26	65
Other local government	5	13
Other public sector	5	13
Third sector	2	5
Private sector	1	3
Self employed	0	0
Other (please specify)	1	3
Prefer not to say	0	0
Don't know	0	0

Base: all respondents who said that they had secured a job post ngdp (40 respondents)

One respondent selected 'other' and specified that their post was within a housing association.

Those respondents who said that their new job was within either the private sector, other public sector, third sector or that they would be self-employed or other, were asked their reasons for choosing a job outside of local government. Respondents could select more than one answer. All the nine respondents who answered this question said that a good opportunity had come up and seven respondents (78 per cent) said the job gave them an opportunity to build new skills.

	<b>Number</b>	<b>Per cent</b>
A good opportunity came up	9	100
To build new skills	7	78
To gain a greater scope of work	6	67
I couldn't find a permanent role in local government	3	33
Change of geographical location	3	33
Frustration with the structure of local government	3	33
I don't want to work in local government right now	2	22
I was pursuing a management position	1	11
I wanted a higher salary	0	0
I don't want to work in local government again	0	0
Other (please specify)	0	0
Don't know	0	0

Base: all respondents who said that their new job was within either the private sector, other public sector, third sector or that they would be self-employed or other (9 respondents)  
Please note that percentages will sum to more than 100 as respondents could select multiple answer options

The 14 respondents who said that they were searching or planning to search for a job post ngdp were asked how confident they felt about their chances in the job market. Over half (eight respondents - 57 per cent) were either fairly or very positive.

<b>Table 10: How do you feel about your chances in the job market?</b>		
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Per cent</b>
Very positive	1	7
Fairly positive	7	50
Not very positive	4	29
Not at all positive	1	7
Don't know	1	7

Base: all respondents who said they were searching or planning to search for a job post ngdp (14 respondents)

All respondents were asked the extent to which they thought that participating in the ngdp had had a positive impact on their ability to further their career. Eighty five per cent (51 respondents) said that it had to either a great or moderate extent.

<b>Table 11: To what extent, if at all, do you think that participation in the ngdp has had a positive impact on your ability to further your career?</b>		
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Per cent</b>
<b>To a great or moderate extent</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>85</b>
To a great extent	41	68
To a moderate extent	10	17
To a small extent	8	13
Not at all	0	0
Don't know	1	2

Base: all respondents (60 respondents)

All respondents were asked how likely they would be to recommend the ngdp to others if asked about it. Nearly all (57 respondents - 95 per cent) said that they were either fairly or very likely to recommend the programme.

<b>Table 12: Taking everything into consideration, how likely would you be to recommend the ngdp to others if asked about it?</b>		
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Per cent</b>
<b>Very or fairly likely</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>95</b>
Very likely	42	70
Fairly likely	15	25
Not very likely	2	3
Not at all likely	0	0
Don't know	1	2

Base: all respondents (60 respondents)

Respondents were invited to provide any comments that the LGA could use to help promote the ngdp to future participants. A variety of comments were provided, including

- “Participating in the NGDP has given me a great understanding of the skills needed to succeed in local government, and enabled me to shape my career to achieve my ambitions.”
- “The NGDP is a fantastic place to start your career in local government. I have worked [on] interesting projects across services, and built the foundations and skills needed to fast track into a project management job. I would highly recommend.”
- “The NGDP will give you a comprehensive introduction to the world of local government, whilst supporting and challenging you in equal measure to see what you're capable of.”

- “The residentials were a key part of my enjoyment of the programme. They gave the real opportunity to get to know our cohort meaning that I have built relationships that I think I will be able to call on for the rest of my career.”
- “The ngdp has provided me with so many exciting and new opportunities which has allowed me to secure a management position in the council. The support from other trainees has been invaluable!”
- “NGDP is a great foundation to start any career. It offers brilliant development and inspiration and a fantastic safe network to be part of.”

Finally, respondents were asked if they had any other comments about the ngdp. Thirty people responded with a variety of comments and these are themed below:

- **Placements:** Nearly half of all responses to this question mentioned the variety and range of placement experiences amongst ngdp graduates. These differed widely and some form of quality control around implementation was felt to be needed. Some respondents suggested that greater LGA support and guidance to councils might provide a more regulated approach ensuring that graduates on placements would have a more equal level of support, range of experiences and consistent expectations.
- **ILM Qualification:** Several respondents mentioned the ILM qualification. Comments included a need for more guidance and clearer communication around the qualification and a feeling of disappointment with the ILM itself. There was felt to be some difficulty conflating the learning from the ngdp and the qualification, along with a lack of clarity about the requirements and the work required. A need for the work to be better tailored and applied to real life situations, provision of better resources and study time and the need for greater support generally were all mentioned.
- **The scheme and the delivery team:** Over a third of respondents spoke positively about the scheme describing it as excellent and as providing invaluable opportunities. Several specifically praised the delivery team who were supportive and organised.
- **Individual responses** to this question included; the need for greater diversity on the programme, council's should agree to have a retention/progression strategy in place based on standard ngdp guidelines, provide more opportunity for meeting and working with participants of other graduate schemes, for example developing something with civil service fast track graduates to help improve the relationship between central and local government.

## Annex A: Questionnaire

The following questions focus on the ngdp overall, and the totality of all the learning modules you have attended.

1. Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the ngdp?

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

2. To what extent, if at all, do you feel more confident in your ability to gain a management position in local government, having participated in the ngdp?

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

3. What were your objectives in taking part in the ngdp?

*Please tick all that apply*

To learn about new subject areas  
To develop key skills for fast-track management progression  
To gain experience  
To fast-track my career  
To network and learn from other trainees  
Other (please specify)  
Don't know

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

4. Were the objectives that you had for taking part in the ngdp 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

5. How long do you have remaining on your ngdp contract?

No time

1 – 3 months

4 – 6 months

7 – 9 months

10 – 12 months

Don't know

6. What are your current plans for the future?

I have secured a job post ngdp

I am currently searching for a job post ngdp

I plan to search for a job in the coming weeks

I plan to go back to/have gone back to studying

Other (please specify)

Don't know

*To those who answered 'I have secured a job post ngdp':*

7. How long into the ngdp were you when your new job was secured?

1 – 6 months

7 – 12 months

13 – 15 months

16 - 18 months

19 – 21 months

22 – 24 months

Don't know

8. Please select the option below that most closely reflects your new job:

Private sector

My host council(s) from the ngdp

Other local government

Other public sector

Third sector

Self employed

Other (please specify)

Prefer not to say

Don't know

To those who selected 'private sector', 'other public sector', 'third sector', 'self-employed' or 'other':

9. What was your reason for choosing a job outside of local government?

*Please tick all that apply*

- I couldn't find a permanent role in local government
- A good opportunity came up
- I wanted a higher salary
- I was pursuing a management position
- I don't want to work in local government right now
- I don't want to work in local government again
- Change of geographical location
- To build new skills
- Frustration with the structure of local government
- To gain a greater scope of work
- Other (please specify)
- Don't know

To those who answered "I am currently searching for a job post ngdp" or "I plan to search for a job in the coming weeks":

10. How do you feel about your chances in the job market?

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

To all:

11. To what extent, if at all, do you think that participation in the ngdp has had a positive impact on your ability to further your career?

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

12. If you have an updated email address for our alumni records, please enter it below.

Work email	
Personal email	

13. If you have a LinkedIn profile, please enter it below.

14. Taking everything in to consideration, how likely would you be to recommend the ngdp to others if asked about it?

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

15. We would welcome any comments that we could use to help promote the ngdp to future participants. Please use the space below.

16. Finally, if you have any further comments about the ngdp, 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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