

# National Graduate Development Programme feedback survey

July 2018



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## Summary

During July 2018, 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 91 graduates who comprised cohort 18 of the NGDP, which finished in the summer of 2018. The survey was sent out in July 2018, shortly after the graduates attended their final wrap up event. A total of 49 replied – a response rate of 54 per cent.

## Results

- **Satisfaction with the NGDP overall:** Ninety two per cent (45 respondents) were very or fairly satisfied with the NGDP overall. Ninety two per cent (45 respondents) felt that the NGDP had made them more confident in their ability to gain a management role in local government, to a great or moderate extent. The most common objective for taking part in the NGDP was to gain experience (mentioned by 92 per cent, 45 respondents); overall, 88 per cent (43 respondents) felt that their objectives had been fully or largely achieved.
- **Subsequent employment and future plans:** The vast majority of respondents either had no time remaining (43 per cent, 21 respondents) or 1-3 months remaining (49 per cent, 24 respondents) on their NGDP contracts. Among those who have secured a job, 67 per cent (22 respondents) reported having secured it between 13 and 18 months after joining the NGDP; this is generally faster than experienced by graduates of previous years. Seventy-nine per cent of graduates who had secured a job (26 respondents) reported that their employer will be their host council from the NGDP.
- Respondents getting jobs outside of local government tended to cite the appearance of a good opportunity and the need to gain a greater scope of work and build new skills as a reason for leaving the sector. Ninety one per cent (10 respondents) of those searching or planning to search for a job felt very or fairly positive about their chances in the job market, an increase from 57 per cent (eight respondents) in 2017.
- **Impact of the NGDP on careers:** All 49 respondents felt that the NGDP has had a positive impact on their ability to further their careers, to a great or moderate extent. Ninety-eight per cent (48 respondents) said that they would be very or fairly likely to recommend the NGDP to others if asked about it.

## Introduction

During July 2018, 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 91 graduates who comprised cohort 18 of the NGDP, which finished in the summer of 2018. The survey was sent out in July 2018, shortly after the graduates attended their final 'wrap up' event. A total of 49 replied – a response rate of 54 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 2018 NGDP graduates, this level of response means that the results are likely to provide a good indication of the views of cohort 18 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.

# National Graduate Development Programme Feedback Survey

This section provides full results for each survey question.

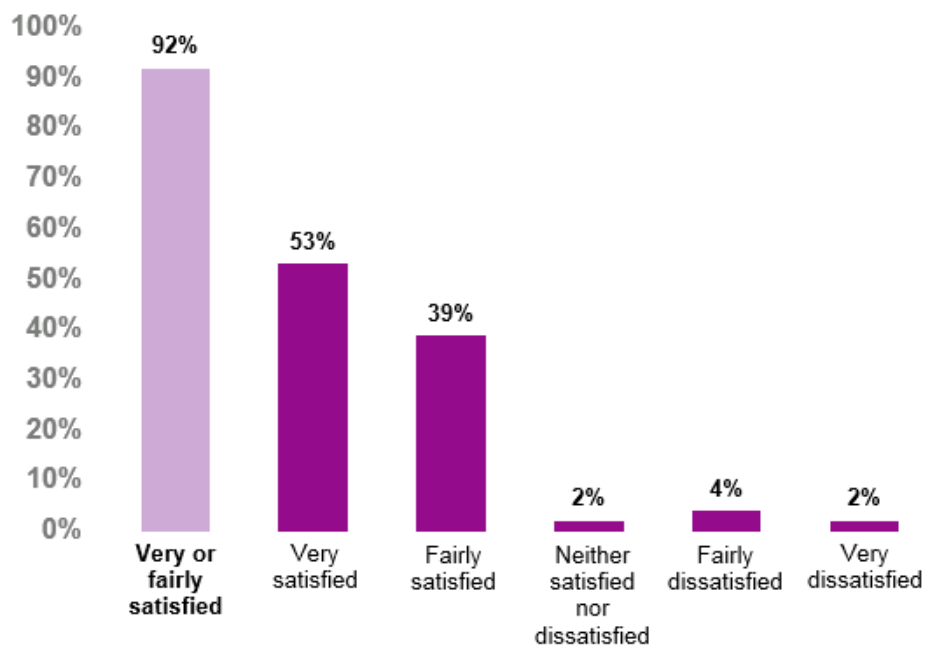
## Satisfaction with the NGDP overall

All respondents were asked how satisfied or dissatisfied they were with the NGDP. Most (92 per cent, 45 respondents) were either very or fairly satisfied. Three respondents (six per cent) were dissatisfied with the NGDP overall.

	Number	Per cent
<b>Very or fairly satisfied</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>92</b>
Very satisfied	26	53
Fairly satisfied	19	39
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	1	2
Fairly dissatisfied	2	4
Very dissatisfied	1	2
Don't know	0	0

Base: all respondents (49 respondents)

**Chart 1: Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the NGDP?**



Base: all respondents (49 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. Most (92 per cent, 45 respondents) said that this was the case to a great or moderate extent.

**Table 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?**

	Number	Per cent
<b>To a great or moderate extent</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>92</b>
To a great extent	35	71
To a moderate extent	10	20
To a small extent	3	6
Not at all	1	2
Don't know	0	0

Base: all respondents (49 respondents)

All respondents were asked to identify their objectives in taking part in the NGDP. They were permitted to select multiple objectives, and to specify their own. The most frequently selected objective was “to gain experience”, which 92 per cent (45 respondents) reported.

**Table 3: What were your objectives in taking part in the NGDP?**

	Number	Per cent
To gain experience	45	92
To learn about new subject areas	37	76
To fast-track my career	37	76
To develop key skills for fast-track management progression	35	71
To network and learn from other trainees	23	47
Other (please specify)	3	6
Don't know	0	0

Base: all respondents (49 respondents)

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

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

- To see different areas of local government and a sense of how it all fits together.
- Working in a range of services, in order to have a clearer idea of what area I want to pursue long-term.
- To make a difference straight away.

All respondents were asked if their objectives had been achieved. Eighty-eight per cent (43 respondents) said that these had fully or largely been met.

<b>Table 4: Were the objectives that you had for taking part in the NGDP achieved?</b>		
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Per cent</b>
<b>Fully or largely achieved</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>88</b>
Fully achieved (met all goals)	10	20
Largely achieved (met most goals)	33	67
Partially achieved (met some goals)	5	10
Not achieved (met none of the goals)	1	2
Don't know	0	0

Base: all respondents (49 respondents)

## Future plans and impact

All respondents were asked how long they had remaining on their NGDP contract. Forty-three per cent (21 respondents) had no time remaining, and a similar proportion (49 per cent, 24 respondents) had 1-3 months. No respondents had more than six months remaining on their contracts.

<b>Table 5: How long do you have remaining on your NGDP contract?</b>		
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Per cent</b>
No time	21	43
1-3 months	24	49
4-6 months	4	8
7-9 months	0	0
10-12 months	0	0
Don't know	0	0

Base: all respondents (49 respondents)

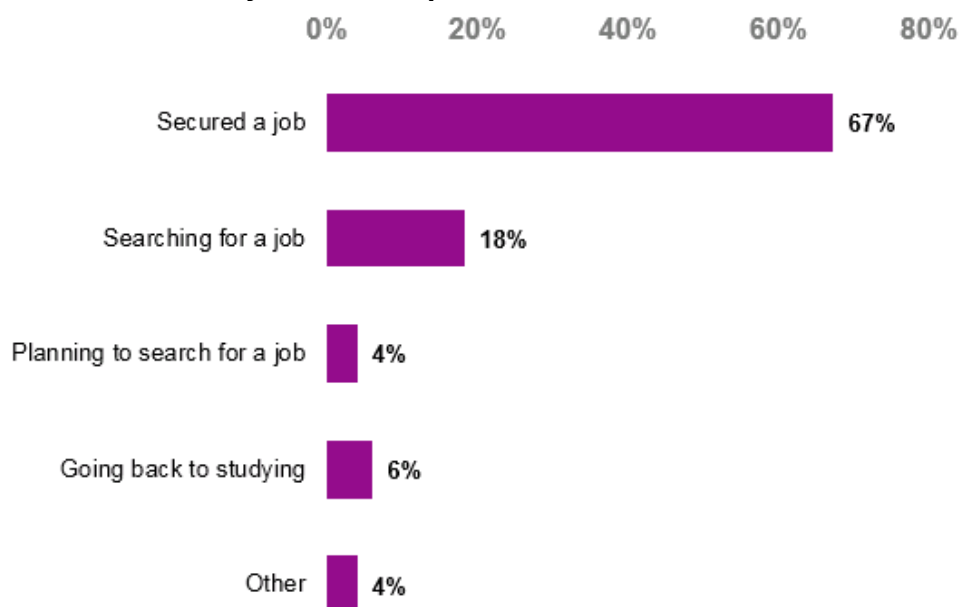
All respondents were asked about their current plans for the future. The majority (67 per cent, 33 respondents) said that they had secured a job post NGDP.

<b>Table 6: What are your current plans for the future?</b>		
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Per cent</b>
I have secured a job post NGDP	33	67
I am currently searching for a job post NGDP	9	18
I plan to search for a job in the coming weeks	2	4
I plan to go back/have gone back to studying	3	6
Other	2	4
Don't know	0	0

Base: all respondents (49 respondents)



**Chart 2: What are your current plans for the future?**



Base: all respondents (49 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. Most (67 per cent, 22 respondents) had secured their new job between 13 and 18 months into the NGDP. In 2017, over half (53 per cent, 21 respondents) secured their new job between 19 and 24 months into the programme, a statistically significant difference demonstrating that 2018 graduates generally secured jobs at an earlier stage in their NGDP contract than 2017 graduates<sup>1</sup>.

**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	1	3
13-15 months	7	21
16-18 months	15	45
19-21 months	9	27
22-24 months	1	3
Don't know	0	0

Base: all respondents who said that they had secured a job post NGDP (33 respondents)

<sup>1</sup> 2-tailed p value: 0.01, a 1% probability of the true values being the same between years.

Those respondents who had secured a job were asked to identify the sector in which their new job was located. A large majority (79 per cent, 26 respondents) were being employed by their host council from the NGDP programme.

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

	Number	Per cent
My host council(s) from the NGDP	26	79
Other local government	1	3
Other public sector	3	9
Private sector	1	3
Third sector	0	0
Self employed	0	0
Other (please specify)	2	6
Prefer not to say	0	0
Don't know	0	0

Base: all respondents who said that they had secured a job post NGDP (33 respondents)

The six respondents who said that their new job was outside of local government were asked for their reasons on making this choice. Respondents could select more than one answer. The reasons most commonly chosen were that a good opportunity came up, and to gain a greater scope of work (both 83 per cent, five respondents), followed by wanting to build new skills (67 per cent, four respondents) and being unable to find a role in local government (50 per cent, three respondents).

No respondents expressed frustration with the structure of local government, or indicated that they specifically do not wish to work in local government immediately or in the future. One respondent provided their own reason: that they wanted to secure a job with an easier commute than their commute whilst taking part in the NGDP.

**Table 9: What was your reason for choosing a job outside of local government?**

	Number	Per cent
A good opportunity came up	5	83
To gain a greater scope of work	5	83
To build new skills	4	67
I couldn't find a permanent role in local government	3	50
I wanted a higher salary	1	17
I was pursuing a management position	1	17
Change of geographical location	1	17
Frustration with the structure of local government	0	0
I don't want to work in local government right now	0	0
I don't want to work in local government again	0	0
Other (please specify)	1	17
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 (6 respondents)

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

The 11 respondents who were searching or planning to search for a job post NGDP were asked how confident they felt about their chances in the job market. Most (91 per cent, 10

respondents) were either fairly or very positive, a statistically significant increase from 57 per cent (eight respondents) in 2017<sup>2</sup>.

<b>Table 10: How do you feel about your chances in the job market?</b>		
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Per cent</b>
<b>Very or fairly positive</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>91</b>
Very positive	3	27
Fairly positive	7	64
Not very positive	1	9
Not at all positive	0	0
Don't know	0	0

Base: all respondents who said they were searching or planning to search for a job post NGDP (11 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. One hundred per cent (49 respondents) said that it had to either a great or moderate extent, a statistically significant increase from 85 per cent (51 respondents) in 2017<sup>3</sup>.

<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>49</b>	<b>100</b>
To a great extent	36	73
To a moderate extent	13	27
To a small extent	0	0
Not at all	0	0
Don't know	0	0

Base: all respondents (49 respondents)

All respondents were asked how likely they would be to recommend the NGDP to others if asked about it. Nearly all (98 per cent, 48 respondents) 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>48</b>	<b>98</b>
Very likely	32	65
Fairly likely	16	33
Not very likely	1	2
Not at all likely	0	0
Don't know	0	0

Base: all respondents (49 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:

<sup>2</sup> 2-tailed p value: <0.01, a less than 1% probability of the true values being the same between years.

<sup>3</sup> 2-tailed p value: <0.01, a less than 1% probability of the true values being the same between years.

- “I feel like the NGDP will offer great opportunities to those willing to work at it, and have been able to secure a good managerial role as a result of the programme.”
- “I feel that I have developed professionally and personally in my two years on the scheme.”
- “I found the NGDP to be an excellent grad scheme; supportive, informative and offers wonderful opportunities for someone starting a career in public policy.”

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:

- **Valuable challenges:** many respondents reported that the NGDP had been a valuable learning opportunity, that it had stretched them and challenged them to develop new skills, and that they have accrued considerable benefits to their subsequent careers as a result of taking part in the scheme.
- **Need for diversity:** several respondents mentioned disappointment at the lack of demographic diversity among their fellow NGDP participants, both in terms of ethnic identity and socioeconomic status. Suggestions for remedying this included visiting a greater range of universities, and advertising the scheme using a greater diversity of methods and channels. It was also noted that relatively fewer councils in the South West and North of England were assigned NGDP graduates, and it was suggested that this be changed to enhance the benefit to these local communities.
- **Variability across councils:** a number of respondents highlighted that the quality of their NGDP experience has largely depended on the quality of engagement which they received from their host council, and that experiences and results differed vastly across the range of councils available. A number of complaints were recorded that some councils were not adequately facilitating their placements.

## Annex A: Questionnaire

### End of programme survey questions

The previous questions asked about the wrap up event that you recently attended. The following questions focus on the ngdp overall, and the totality of all the learning modules you have attended.

q13 - Overall satisfaction with NGDP

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

q14 - Ability to gain mgmt position

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

q15 - Objectives taking part ngdp

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)\_\_\_\_\_ [*Other*]
- Don't know [*Exclusive*]

q16 - ngdp objectives achieved

Were the objectives that you had for taking part in the ngdp achieved?

*Please tick one option*

- 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

q17 - NGDP contract

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

q18 - Future plans

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)\_\_\_\_\_ [Other]
- Don't know

q22 - Job market

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

q19 - Job secured

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

q20 - Reflects new job

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)\_\_\_\_\_ [Other]
- Prefer not to say
- Don't know

q21 - Job outside LG

[Randomized answerlist]

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)\_\_\_\_\_ [Keep position ♦ Other]
- Don't know [Keep position ♦ Exclusive]

q23 - Positive impact

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

emailupdate

[Open Text ♦ Not required]

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

Work email \_\_\_\_\_

Personal email \_\_\_\_\_

q24 - Alumni records

[Not required ♦ Columns=70]

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

q25 - Recommending ngdp

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

q26 - Further comments

[Not required ♦ Columns=95]

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

*Please use the space below*

q27 - ngdp further comments

[Not required ♦ Columns=95]

Finally, if you have any further comments about the ngdp, please use the space below.

STOP

**Complete –**

*Once you press the 'OK' button below, you will have completed the survey. 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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