Leading in Uncertainty:
A Programme for leaders working in turbulent times

VUCA (Volatile, Uncertain, Complex and Ambiguous), a leadership theory of Warren Bennis and Burt Nanus, explores decision-making in turbulent environments.

Leading in Public Services is a privilege that demands navigating uncertainty, political change and shrinking resources. Supporting families requires relationships and a connected system response, beyond technical processes and transactions. These challenges call for different leadership skills and practices to navigate uncertainty.

This is a unique opportunity to thematically use this programme across a particular authority or other areas/regional boundaries to work on real life issues and develop solutions together .

The programme's impact depends on bringing the right people together. Targeted recruitment will help identify colleagues who can strengthen partnerships and drive change across services. Potential participants could include:

- Representatives from across ICB membership
- Safeguarding across all ages – looked after children, care leavers and child protection duties
- SEND – education, health and care
- Youth Justice services, including policing
- Health integration and transition into adult health services
- NHS trusts
- Mental health leads



SESLIP
South East Sector Led Improvement Programme

Staff College

Who is the programme for?

For public-service leaders who need to work across organisational boundaries on a live local challenge.

Built around your place

Your authority chooses the partnership challenge, and the programme will then be tailored to your local context and priorities.

FULLY FUNDED	SESLIP covers the programme cost.
LOCALLY TAILORED	Focus the programme on the issue that matters most in your place.
EXPERTLY FACILITATED	Each session will be facilitated by two associates who will support the group to use the dedicated space and time to proactively work through the issue together through the duration of the Programme.
BUILD THE RIGHT COHORT	Bring together up to 24 leaders from your authority and partner agencies to strengthen relationships, explore the issue and develop solutions together.

Choose the live challenge
Your partnership focus could be:

- SEND
- Families First reforms
- Safeguarding
- Local government reorganisation
- Another locally agreed priority

Programme Overview

If you are interested in participating, please contact Mark Evans by 26/02/27

This Programme is being delivered through SESLIP and is offering up to four cohorts of this four-day programme, bringing together colleagues from across the sector, with the aim of strengthening partnerships across the system and develop ways to navigate uncertainty together. Proposed dates for the first cohort, subject to confirmation, are:

- Residential 1: 14th – 15th April
- Residential 2: 20th – 21st May

We will co-produce each programme with colleagues from the region to reflect local context and regional priorities. Together, we will shape relevant, up-to-date content that strengthens multi-agency working and maximises impact. The outline opposite may therefore evolve during this process.

Residential 1
An Introduction to Systems Leadership

- Introduction and connecting to the Programme
- Understanding systems leadership and thinking
- Complicated and complex systems - differences
- Creating conditions for success - personal leadership
- Navigating complex systems
- Futures thinking – exploring scenario planning
- Spheres of control, influence and interest

Residential 2
Exploring and Applying the VUCA toolkit

- Reconnecting to the Programme
- VUCA: Exploration
- Political intelligence and the power of influence
- Conflict handling and styles
- Managing change in human systems
- Being at my best
- Sharpening the saw – moving forward individually and collectively
- Reflecting on the Programme

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