Our Future Leaders

Sponsors Information

If we did all the things we are capable of, we would astound ourselves

*Thomas Edison*

Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure.

*Marianne Williamson*

# Introduction

## Why? Who is it for?

Life is about choices and the programme is about helping participants develop the skills and tools to make the choices that are going to help them live the healthiest, happiest and most fulfilled life as possible. This programme is designed for people who have learning/intellectual disabilities and are already involved in volunteering, paid employment, boards of management or campaigning and/or self-advocacy.

The course is designed to be practical, becoming part of a journey towards greater independence, at the same time recognising the learning style and pace needed for the individuals on the course. The programme is uniquely tailored and is designed to be practical, giving participants the opportunity to apply what they learn into their own everyday life.

The programme will cover the skills, attributes, and self-understanding that people need to develop the leadership skills they need in their current life and into the future.

Over the longer term this will develop skills within the community of people with intellectual disabilities that will ensure they are, as a community, empowered to participate as equal and valued citizens with the full range of rights that other citizens enjoy.

## Intended outcomes

After completing the programme Our Future Leaders will:

* Know what being a leader means. Be more confident in their abilities and enjoy sharing their experiences.
* Be able to express themselves clearly and make themselves understood in different situations.
* Be confident in asserting their rights and responsibilities. Be able to advocate on behalf of themselves and/or their organisations.
* Be able to make themselves understood in different situations.
* Be able to contribute to society as a whole and work to affect long lasting change.
* Be ready to take on more responsibility and also take on new leadership roles.
* See themselves as potential role models for others.

What the course will help participants with:

* Increase their self-awareness.
* Understand the impact they make as a leader.
* Know how to consciously change that impact.
* Achieve a step change in their ability to influence, persuade, motivate, and inspire others.
* Understand different leadership behaviours.
* Be flexible in their handling of difficult situations.
* Be able to present with confidence in a way that suits them and gets their message across.
* Understand how to develop and exploit networks in the workplace/community.
* Recognise their strengths and how to use them as a leader.

## Course structure

The first Our Future Leaders programme will be restricted to 10 participants allowing us to be flexible to the needs of the group. And to build trust amongst participants and create a safe, relaxed learning space with no judgment. It is also important for participants to get to know one another and have fun whilst learning. Participants will be asked to set their own course outcomes/goals at the start of the programme.

The entire course will be delivered on Zoom by external trainers carefully selected by Inspiring Scotland and SCLD. All supporting course materials will be emailed to participants at least a week before each module. All course materials will be held in Google drive accessible to all participants and IS and SCLD will add any other relevant material to this central depository. A closed FB Group will be set up for participants to exchange ideas about leadership out with the tutored modules.

A unique feature of the course is the role of a participant sponsor. The sponsor would know the participant well and might be a work colleague or friend, preferably not a family member. They would attend all the modules and play the role of a **silent observer**, taking notes and offering tips/ideas as to how the participant could put what had been discussed/learnt in the module into practice. Equally importantly they would work alongside the participant in collating feedback after each module.

The sponsor would also have access to all course material and remind the participant of any homework that needed completed before the next module.

## Role of the sponsor

The sponsor is a critical part of the success of this programme. The sponsor will help the participant to link their learning to their real-life experiences but be careful not to inhibit what the participant wants to do themselves.

It is anticipated that the course participants will already be engaged in work, volunteering, campaigning, self-advocacy or serving on boards of organisations. It would be beneficial if the sponsor is someone who knows the person through their involvement in one or more of these areas. This offers an opportunity to get to know each other better and offers sponsors a learning experience too.

During the sessions, the sponsor will be expected to support and encourage participants to identify opportunities to actively apply the skills and knowledge covered in the sessions back into their role.

At the start of each session participants will be asked to share how they have used their leadership skills and knowledge back in their role and sponsors will be required to help the participant to reflect on how it went and what they might do differently next time.

Similarly, when sessions have homework or pre session prep to do the sponsor is there to support this.

It is important that the sponsor is the same person throughout the programme as they need to understand the full content of the programme and the skills that should be practiced by participants.

Key to the success of the sponsor/participant relationship is for the sponsor to help the participant engage with the programme content, regularly connect with them to discuss how they can put the learning into practice and to share the participant experiences and successes in each session.

Knowing the course content is important for the sponsor so they can encourage the participant to practice the new things they have learned as well as being able to help them to reflect when they have used their new skills.

Role of the sponsor during sessions

During the sessions, the sponsor is there primarily to observe, it may be useful if they took notes on behalf of the participant. They should limit their own active contribution to the sessions only when asked by the participant or the facilitator to do so.

They will have helped the participant to prepare for the session and they may be required to help the participant to share their experiences at the appropriate section of the programme.

Course sessions will be recorded so that if a sponsor needs to miss a session time slot they can catch up later.

## Role of the sponsor at the end of the programme

As the sponsor will be taking notes throughout the sessions it is anticipated that at the end of the programme the sponsor will be able to work with the participant to submit a short “case study” of their observations of changes in the participant relating to the intended outcomes of the programme. They could also support the participant to ask other friends/colleagues etc. if they had noticed a change in their leadership behavior.