

# Scottish Cross Sectoral Leadership Exchange Programme

## Executive Summary

### Background

ACOSVO\* offer Scotland's only FREE cross sectoral **Leadership Exchange Programme**. The initiative pairs leaders at middle, senior and executive levels in brief exchanges to learn from each other, develop an understanding of other sectors, cultures and environments, encourage collaborative working and improve leadership skill capacity.

The **Leadership Exchange Programme** was an ACOSVO initiative, developed in 2012, which has more recently become a work-stream of the Scottish Leaders Forum established by Workforce Scotland. It offers a practical response to the Christie Report, enabling leaders to develop their leadership skills required in order to support the Scottish Government's core priorities around; inclusive economic growth; public services reform; community empowerment; and tackling inequalities. It further aligns with Scottish Government's strategy to improve public services by making services more joined up through collaborative working.

### How it Works

The peer learning initiative provides a flexible framework for participants to work alongside each other in their respective organisations, (be it third, public or private sector). A series of usually 3 – 6 meetings takes place over a 6 – 12 month period.

Exchange activities can involve; on-the-job shadowing; meeting colleagues or front-line staff; paired conversations; attending meetings or events together. The activities are however non-prescriptive, coordinated by the participants to suit their own learning objectives and fit round diary commitments.

To date 238 participants have been matched, and 56 new applications received in the last 12 months. Incredibly positive outcomes have resulted from these exchanges and it has proven to be instrumental in building leadership capacity across Scotland's public services over the last 4 years.

### Benefits Identified

- ✓ Insight into different cultures, languages and environments
- ✓ Seeing challenges other leaders experience
- ✓ Offering a fresh perspective on your own leadership role
- ✓ Develop a new relationship with a colleague in another sector
- ✓ Peer support and the ability to share best practise
- ✓ New essential connections in another sector

### Participant Feedback

*"The flexibility and the duration of the programme is what made it manageable in terms of time and commitment. For learning and CPD, I don't think I could have had a better opportunity at this particular point in time, it has been fantastic."* (External Services Coordinator, Aberdeen Council of Voluntary Organisations (ACVO))

*"For sure, give it a go! There are lots of great people out there and it's good to share your 'challenges' with a fresh pair of eyes"* (Programme Manager, The Improvement Service)

*"Seeing things from a different perspective was more than just a momentary insight, it helped me leave my bubble and look around me..... You meet some great people and find a renewed enthusiasm for your work".* (Head of News and Digital, The Scottish Government)

*"The Leadership Exchange Programme has been a refreshing way for me to take time from the day to day of my organisation's operations to reflect, share and learn from a leader from a different sector – outcomes on both sides have been very positive."* (Chief Executive, Young Enterprise Scotland)

### Next Step

From 2017 the Leadership Exchange Programme will be moving towards a twice yearly cohort approach. Application deadline dates will be in **February and September**.

For more information on the programme, including application dates & submission process:

Visit: <http://www.acosvo.org.uk/leadership-exchange-about>

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\*ACOSVO (Association of Chief Officers of Scottish Voluntary Organisations) – Established in 2000, with a current third sector Scotland-wide 450+ membership.

ACOSVO provides leaders with opportunities to develop, influence and excel through; facilitation of 45+ annual events; networking; access to the 'leadership exchange programme'; a variety of membership benefits to include free mentoring and discounted personal and professional development opportunities.