Evaluation of the NHS Leadership Academy Intersect systems leadership programme

Post-programme Evaluation Report

Alan Boyd, Adrian Nelson and Karen Shawhan

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About the Authors

Alan Boyd, Research Fellow, Alliance Manchester Business School, University of Manchester
Email: alan.boyd@manchester.ac.uk

Alan leads the research team from Alliance Manchester Business School that is evaluating the Intersect Programme. He has been involved in conducting a number of evaluations, including an evaluation of a large scale regional capacity building programme for local authority staff and councillor, and a national evaluation of health scrutiny committees. Alan has experience of working in healthcare and social care and the voluntary sector and has expertise in systems approaches to problem structuring.

Dr Adrian Nelson, Lecturer in Healthcare Management, Alliance Manchester Business School, University of Manchester

Adrian is an organisational psychologist with particular interest and experience in designing evaluations of training and development programmes and in the development of psychometric tools and surveys. Adrian has an in-depth knowledge of the Group Relations approach, having been a member of the professional staff of the Tavistock Institute between 1999 and 2005. During this time he led an evaluation of a ‘cross-boundary’ management development programme which examined the effectiveness of Group Relations approaches in improving cross-sector working between health and social care across Hertfordshire Health Economy.

Karen Shawhan, Associate Lecturer, Alliance Manchester Business School, University of Manchester

Karen has significant experience in NHS management, consultancy, project management, evaluation skills, and teaching and development, including being a tutor on the Elizabeth Garret Anderson Programme. Karen led a large evaluation of GP care and treatment relating to diagnosis of cancer, using a range of quantitative and qualitative tools. She also has significant experience of working with senior teams in developing solutions to ‘wicked’ problems within the NHS, and has worked with NHS providers, social care, independent providers and third sector providers.

Acknowledgements

We are grateful to the participants in the first Intersect Programme for their generosity in giving their time to complete our evaluation surveys and be interviewed. We hope that this evaluation report will be helpful to you as you continue your system leadership development journey.

We are also grateful to the many colleagues of participants who also gave generously of their time to complete surveys for this evaluation.

We would like to thank the Intersect Programme Faculty, and other colleagues at the NHS Leadership Academy for their engagement and cooperation, which have enhanced this evaluation.
Executive Summary

The need for effective systems leaders is acknowledged across all sectors, and is characterized in health and social care by a leader able to engage with and positively respond to wicked problems related to issues such as reduced public funding, on-going need for large-scale transformation and integration, increasing demand for services, and medical and technological advances.

The Intersect Programme is a new leadership development programme, framed by a phenomenological approach, and drawing on Group Relations and psychodynamic approaches to personal and leadership development. It aims to develop social and emotional intelligence, to promote more effective inter-personal relationships within the workplace, and to increase self-awareness and reflexivity, all of which are acknowledged as important attributes of effective systems leaders.

An initial cohort of 40 participants, drawn from a range of public and third sector organisations, commenced the programme in July 2014, completing it in July 2015. The programme consisted of six 3-5 day residential workshops that incorporated a variety of activities, interspersed with facilitated on-line discussion.

The evaluation was a longitudinal, mixed methods design incorporating semi-structured telephone interviews and structured online surveys, both during the programme and up to 6 months after it ended. Data collection was informed by the development of a programme theory, drawing on academic literature, programme documentation, and interviews with the inaugural faculty.

Summary of Quantitative Findings

Self-assessed measures of emotional intelligence, transformational leadership and civic capacity, which are related to systems leadership capability, all increased substantially for the group of programme participants we surveyed. These increases were substantial, and statistically significant. The increases were greater than for a matched comparison group of colleagues, and observer colleagues also detected increases, but there was insufficient data to demonstrate statistical significance of these increases.

Summary of Qualitative Findings

25 interviews were conducted with participants. These showed that participants had realised a number of profound changes which they reported had positively impacted on their leadership roles. Following programme completion, participants reported a range of impacts which would be helpful in engaging effectively in inter-organisational systems, including improvements in self-confidence, relationships within the system, self-awareness, self-awareness through reflection and reflexive capacity, and valuing diversity. Participants were also able to recount practical examples of how their personal development translated into positive leadership actions and responses in the workplace.

The developmental process was not always clear to the participants themselves, so they could not attribute particular changes to particular components of the programme, but they did attribute change to the programme as a whole.

Conclusion

The first Intersect Programme provided substantial value to many of the programme participants, providing them with insights into their leadership behaviours and giving them the confidence to engage more in the leadership of systems. We will produce a further evaluation report on longer term impact in summer 2017.
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1 Introduction

This report describes the findings of an independent evaluation by researchers from Alliance Manchester Business School of the NHS Leadership Academy’s Intersect Programme, which aims to develop systems leadership capability among public sector leaders. The findings pertain to impacts during the programme itself and up until the end of 2015, approximately 6 months after the final programme module. A second report will be published in 2017 which covers impacts up to 18 months after the conclusion of the programme.

In this first section of the report we provide an overview of the importance of systems leadership in contemporary healthcare systems, an outline of the Intersect Programme for systems leadership development, and the objectives of the evaluation.

1.1 The need for systems leadership

The importance of cross-sectoral working has long been recognized in areas such as community care and public health where problems span organizational boundaries. Integrated care is increasingly important as more patients have multiple and long-term conditions and more services are provided by private and voluntary organisations. Recent policy initiatives such as Vanguards and New Care Models aim to achieve greater integration between the disparate parts of the health and social care system. The overriding requirement to deliver more for less, across time and cash-strapped local health economies means that system working has never been more important.

“Patients and service users want services that are organised around, and responsive to, our human needs. We are sick of falling through gaps. We are tired of organisational barriers and boundaries that delay or prevent our access to care. We do not accept being discharged from a service into a void. We want services to be seamless and care to be continuous. That means primary and community health services, social care services, and services from voluntary organisations should all mesh together to help us succeed in managing our lives and conditions.”

Systems leadership is required to deliver integrated care, person-centred care, and also in some areas, local devolution. No single organization can catalyse and sustain the transformation change required in the face of complex, fluid, “wicked” issues. Strategic planning guidance requires leaders to plan service delivery in partnership, across their health economy.

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Systems leadership differs greatly from leading within the authority structure of a single, sovereign organisation. Key characteristics of systems leaders have been described thus:

“they recognise the need to build alliances and collaborations by engaging their peers and many others in working towards a better future. They lead through influence and persuasion, recognising that delivering sustainable improvements usually takes time. They are also resilient in the face of obstacles, keeping faith with their purpose even when they encounter resistance. They have learnt how to work across organisational boundaries through networks that bring together services around the needs of populations and people who use these services.”

The ability to frame, understand and respond to wicked problems (as outlined by Grint, 2008) is characterized by the need for ‘bricolage’, where decisions and responses are developed in the moment, working with the threads of chaos. This reflects the inherent complexity in the delivery of contemporary healthcare, characterized by multiple organisations, conflicting and shifting priorities, time pressure, rigid organizational structures and multiple sub-cultures, advancing medical technology and pharmaceuticals, and vast heterogeneity in the populations served.

Senge (2015) describes three capabilities of system leaders as an ability to see and appreciate the larger system, being reflective as a precursor to creative solutions, and ‘co-creating the future’, relating and engaging with others to effect change. Indeed, the need for system leadership is acknowledged in all sectors, and is not specific to healthcare.

There is however a lack of programmes in the UK which address the development of systems leadership through learning about unconscious processes and group dynamics. We are only aware of the King’s Fund Top Manager Programme, which has some similarities of approach to that of the Intersect Programme.

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10 http://www.kingsfund.org.uk/leadership/leadership-development-senior-leaders/top-manager-programme

Original Thinking Applied
1.2 The Intersect Programme for developing systems leadership

The NHS Leadership Academy’s Intersect programme\textsuperscript{11} aims to provide systems leadership development for leaders across the public sector. Although there are some taught elements, the programme is designed primarily as an experiential leadership development programme, underpinned by a phenomenological approach to leadership, and making use of Group Relations methods. Some of the theory underpinning this approach is outlined in Section 2.2.

The first programme was targeted at leaders across the public sector who were already in, or close to executive roles, with cross-sector experience and influence. Individuals in such positions were believed to be best placed to lead system-wide change across sectors. The programme was free, but participants were liable to be charged £5,000 if they did not complete it. Subsequent instances of the programme have not been free. The full charge for the 2016/17 programme is £9,000, with a subsidised price of £4,800 for participants from the NHS, public and third sectors.

Following online written applications through the NHS Leadership Academy website, shortlisted applicants attended face-to-face or virtual interviews from late June 2014. The full planned cohort of 40 participants registered on the programme, but one person withdrew early on after struggling to attend on account of personal circumstances.

The programme ran for a year from July 2014. There were six residential modules, the first and last spanning 5 days, the others spanning 3 days:

Module 1: July 2014
Module 2: September 2014
Module 3: December 2014
Module 4: March 2015
Module 5: May 2015
Module 6: July 2015

The programme brought together a wide range of pedagogic and experiential elements. There were a range of group-based exercises, giving opportunity to engage, notice and reflect on interpersonal and intrapersonal processes; plus various inputs and experiences to stimulate debate and personal reflection. For example, the first module included a visit to a sculpture park, singing in a choir, a workshop on transformational thinking and a session on diversity and power. The programme was facilitated throughout by two NHS Leadership Academy staff and two experienced external faculty. Visiting experts/speakers led various one-off sessions within the programme.

Participants were expected as part of the programme to develop actions to address a systems issue in their local work situation. Praxis group sessions were scheduled in the programme for participants to support each other in progressing this work-based change initiative. Participants were also expected to share their learning and to develop an understanding and capability around systems leadership in their locality.

\textsuperscript{11} http://www.leadershipacademy.nhs.uk/programmes/intersect-systems-leadership-programme/
Participants were presented with journals that they could use to keep a reflective diary if they wished. In between modules weekly online discussions were held using the NHS Leadership Academy’s online system – the ‘Virtual Campus’. Faculty initially, and then participants took it in turns to share a ‘provocation’ – a challenging issue, question or insightful experience, which might be in the form of prose, video, or other online media. The other participants then responded to this, posting their reactions and reflections in the online forum.

1.3 Objectives of the evaluation
Through initial discussions with staff from the NHS Leadership Academy, we established the following objectives for the evaluation:

1. Assess the impact of the Intersect programme:
   a. On participants
   b. On local health and care systems
2. Generate insights to help improve this first programme as it proceeds, and future Intersect programmes:
   a. Understand how the various components of the programme contribute to the impact that is achieved.
   b. Understand how contextual factors affect the impact of the programme
   c. Engage participants and faculty in generating these understandings and making use of them
3. Develop and test tools to facilitate effective and efficient monitoring of the programme by the NHS Leadership Academy.
2 Methods

In this section we first provide an overview of our overall approach to the evaluation, based on initial thinking about the nature of the Intersect programme. We then describe in more detail the programme theory for the programme which we developed to inform the focus and timing of our data collection. Then we provide details of the surveys and interviews we conducted.

2.1 Overview of our approach to the evaluation

It is challenging to evaluate a complex leadership development programme such as the Intersect programme, which involves a diverse range of participants with different circumstances. There are many potential outcomes and many factors which might influence the achievement of those outcomes. It would not be feasible to collect data about all of these, so we developed a programme theory in order to focus the evaluation on the most pertinent factors and outcomes. We derived the programme theory by conducting a rapid literature review of Group Relations theory and methods, analysing the Intersect Programme documentation and website, and interviewing programme faculty.

For ease of data collection and analysis, we collected much of the evaluation data through online surveys. Many of the questions asked participants to use Likert scales to indicate the extent of their agreement with various statements regarding the programme and its impacts. Such questions are relatively quick for participants to answer, and provide quantitative data that is amenable to statistical analysis. Previous evaluations of leadership development or transformational change programmes similar to the Intersect Programme, such as Erhard et al (2013), have obtained useful information from structured questionnaires.

Where feasible we used readily available measurement instruments that were relevant to the specific outcomes of interest in our programme theory and had been subjected to validity testing. This also raised the possibility of benchmarking the results against those of other programmes or interventions to develop leadership capacity. We used instruments that measured emotional intelligence, transformational leadership and civic capacity. Section 2.2 explains why we focused on these outcomes, while sections 2.3.3, 2.3.4 and 2.3.5 describe what the outcomes are, and the particular measurement instruments we used.

Programme participants may find it difficult to provide unbiased assessments of impact owing to their investment in the development process, and may be unaware of some of the ways in which their behaviours affect others. We therefore did not rely solely on self-reporting by participants, but conducted 360° surveys, surveying colleagues who were in a position to observe the systems leadership behaviour of participants.

Another challenge was to be able to attribute observed changes to participation in the programme, rather than to other factors. For example, abilities might change through having other developmental experiences unconnected with the Intersect Programme. This can be addressed by having a comparison or control group. We achieved this by matching participants with colleagues working in the same local system, and who would therefore be subject to similar influences from their workplace environment. We compared changes in the self-assessments of participants and colleagues over the same time period: if the Intersect programme was having a particular impact, then we should see greater changes among participants than among their colleagues.

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A danger of focusing the evaluation on particular factors and outcomes is that it may fail to identify unexpected outcomes and may not adequately capture the variety and richness of participants’ ‘lived experiences’ of being on the programme. Such data may provide further, detailed insights into how the programme works, and in what circumstances. We recognised that this lived experience could well be very different for each of the 40 participants on the programme. Each individual participant has their own unique prior experiences, personalities and values, which would ‘play in’ to how they experienced the programme and how they interpreted those experiences. Thus, in addition to the surveys we also conducted semi-structured telephone interviews with participants and faculty members during the course of the Intersect programme and after its completion. We also analysed postings made to the online ‘provocations’ discussion forums and invited free text comments in some of the surveys.

Not only are participants likely to have differing experiences of the programme, but those experiences will vary during the course of the programme. Participants may travel on different “journeys” and the timing of impacts may vary. We therefore collected longitudinal data at different points throughout the course of the programme and afterwards. Long-term assessment was regarded as particularly important by faculty, as their previous experiences suggested that some changes might emerge only after a long period of time. Data collection was planned and conducted as follows:

- As soon as possible after module 1: “baseline” surveys of participants, observers and comparators about emotional intelligence; feedback survey of participants
- After module 2: 1st interviews with participants
- Between modules 4 and 5: feedback survey of participants
- After module 6: feedback survey of participants; emotional intelligence surveys of participants, observers and comparators
- 6 months after the programme; 2nd transformational leadership and civic capacity surveys of participants, observers and comparators
- 6 months after the programme; 2nd interviews with participants
- 12 months after the programme; 3rd emotional intelligence surveys
- 18 months after the programme; 3rd transformational leadership and civic capacity surveys
- 18 months after the programme; 3rd interviews with participants

We also recognised that assessing the impact of the programme on local health and care systems would be a difficult challenge, both in terms of obtaining data about impact when we did not have the resources to conduct case studies; and in terms of being able to attribute impacts to the programme, when a wide range of other factors would likely be influential in determining changes (or lack of them) in inter-organisational systems. In addition to interviewing participants during and after the end of the programme, we also collected survey data about the work-based change problems that participants had identified in advance of the programme, and the action plans they developed during the programme, detailing concrete changes they intended to make in order to address these problems.

The evaluation would be reliant on information being provided by programme participants, their colleagues and the programme faculty, with programme participants being particularly crucial. High response rates would be needed or the survey element of the evaluation to work, given the relatively small number of participants from a statistical point of view. We engaged participants in the evaluation by attending the first and final modules to give very brief presentations about the evaluation, and to stress the importance of participants providing data. We also offered feedback of information from the evaluation in the form of brief summaries of the assessment data provided by individuals and their observers. We
endeavoured not to demand too much time from participants for the evaluation by monitoring response rates to each successive survey and using these as a guide to the frequency and length of subsequent surveys. This should avoid the risk of survey fatigue and a drop-off in response.

In order to facilitate on-going improvement of the programme and of the evaluation, and involvement of the programme faculty, after each survey of participants we distributed a brief highlight report of key findings, learning and actionable suggestions to faculty and other NHS Leadership Academy staff for discussion.

2.2 Programme Theory
Formulating a programme theory was important in helping us to produce a focused and manageable evaluation. This theory expressed our preliminary understanding of how the Intersect programme is intended to work, incorporating insights from a rapid review of relevant literature on leadership development and its evaluation, from an analysis of programme documentation supplied by the NHS Leadership Academy, and from initial interviews with the faculty members. These interviews provided information about programme processes (E.g. participant recruitment and selection, Group Relations methods), and the rationales for the inclusion and design of these particular processes. The draft programme theory was then shared with programme faculty so that they could provide feedback on it.

2.2.1 Insights from academic literature
The outcome of most direct interest to the programme is of course systems leadership. So in our rapid review of the literature we sought to identify measures of systems leadership. The systems leadership that the Intersect Programme seeks to develop is akin to public integrative leadership, which Crosby and Bryson (2010) define as leadership necessary to bring:

“diverse groups and organisations together in semi-permanent ways, and typically across sector boundaries, to remedy complex public problems and achieve the common good”

Sun and Anderson (2012) argue that integrative leadership is made up of transformational leadership, for which well-tested measures exist, and a new concept called civic capacity. We decided to use these as the basis for our measurement of systems leadership. See sections 2.3.4 and 2.3.5 for further details.

Our rapid literature review also aimed to provide a basic understanding of theory underpinning phenomenological and Group Relations type approaches to leadership development. Erhard et al (2013) describe a phenomenological approach to leadership as distinctive from other approaches, focusing on the lived experience of leadership:

“when a person is “on-the-court” engaged real-time in the exercise of leadership, it is for that person a first-person experience, an “as lived” phenomenon.”

14 Crosby BC and Bryson JM (2010). Special issue on public integrative leadership: Multiple turns of the kaleidoscope. The Leadership Quarterly, 21, 205–208
A Tavistock-style Group Relations ‘conference’ is designed to create opportunities for participants to engage in institutional dynamics (groups within an overall conference)\textsuperscript{16}. They learn about leadership by trying to make sense of what they see happening in the groups, and in the conference as whole:

“It is about learning (‘engaging with’) rather than teaching, about the unconscious mind in relation to the conscious (the ‘private’ vs the ‘public’), and about the group as the creature of the individual and the individual as the creature of the group (the ‘personal’ and the ‘organisational’). In essence, this spare conference structure provides a unique chance to experience the self in relation to others and in relation to a shared task. Beginning to see yourself as others see you is but one potential outcome.” \textsuperscript{16}

The primary requirement of the participants is that they study their own behaviour in relation to organisation and leadership\textsuperscript{17}. What that behaviour should be is left unspecified.

“The individual member works with what is inside his or her mind in the context of what others are both saying to and seeing in him or her.”

There are opportunities to learn and develop by trying out new roles and assimilating different perspectives of other participants. The experience of this process can also provide insights into leadership, as it involves taking risks that leaders take – of being rejected or misunderstood; of acting without insight or producing negative outcomes.

The facilitators’ task is to focus on offering participants opportunities to learn about leadership in groups, which may entail creating space by not contributing content, not providing leadership, and not responding to individual demands. This lack of explicit help can be experienced by participants as stressful and ungenerous.

Transformational leadership programmes based on psychodynamic approaches can allow participants to develop their identity in ways that are congruent with their role or opportunities ahead, or to look for what they consider to be their true self and develop it further\textsuperscript{18}. Participants will likely need to be helped to lower their defences so as to look deeper into themselves and their unconscious behaviours, and hence to become more aware of their underlying feelings and conflicts. This can lead to a reappraisal of professional goals, and sometimes life goals, and to experimenting with alternative ways of dealing with issues. This may require support from others over a long period of time E.g. through participants peer coaching each other. Participants may change how they do things in their role, or change their role. It is also possible that they may fall back into previous behaviours, or not succeed in making changes for lack of organizational support. Programmes have been criticised for focusing on the individual to the neglect of more structural and systemic organizational

\textsuperscript{17} Halton W (2010). Group Relations: achieving a new difference. Organisational and Social Dynamics, 10(2), 219-237.
issues that may limit change or improvement\textsuperscript{19}. Realistic action plans and making explicit commitments can contribute to impact\textsuperscript{20}.

### 2.2.2 How the Intersect Programme might work

The Intersect Programme webpages highlighted the importance of a systems leader knowing about themselves – their leadership style and how they address issues. They also stress shared leadership with others on the basis of shared goals; being able to contribute energy, ideas and expertise; and working with uncertainty towards a solution.

Key considerations in the recruitment and selection process included: the fit between applicant motivations and what the programme offers; readiness to cope with the challenges of the programme, such as the significant time commitment, uncertainty, stress and engaging with the unconscious; and having sufficient leadership experience and qualities on which to build, such as cross-sector experience, and emotional and political literacy. Commitment from participants and their managers to staying the course - the “transformational journey” - was imperative:

“We were very clear about the methodology of the programme and the commitment to it. So if anybody said, I can’t make the first week, for example, if they were telling us messages that they were going to dip in and dip out, then we dipped them out.”  
Faculty member A

“I think we were all looking for people that were open enough to experience a different and very demanding – emotionally demanding – leadership programme. I think we’d got those people. I think we were also looking for people with a chance to really apply their learning. Now, sometimes that manifests as seniority, and I think in the majority of cases actually it has manifested as seniority. But the essence of that criteria really is people that can use this learning for impact during the life of having been on the programme.”  
Faculty member B

Faculty interviews indicated that a key aim of the Group Relations approach was to make people more aware of the situations they find themselves in, in terms of what is happening in the group and what their feelings are towards others and their behaviour. The reason for this focus on interpersonal relationships comes from the logic that given the diversity of backgrounds of the participants, the large group is in effect a microcosm of the wider systems in which they operate and this is reflected in the backgrounds of the participants. For example on the first programme, there were participants from an area police constabulary, the Diocese of the Church of England, the Third Sector, Clinical Commissioning Groups, Central Government departments and so on. Within this there are various configurations of groups: the large group, which includes all participants; four small groups consisting of ten participants each; and ten praxis groups of four participants, one from each of the small groups. In the praxis groups, participants are to act as co-consultants or co-coaches with regard to each person’s efforts to address their work-based change problem. The underpinning message of those meetings would be, “what have you done? And how can you improve what you’ve done?”


\textit{Original Thinking Applied}
In a number of modules there were group visits to ‘whole systems’ to learn about systems leadership from practitioners in the field. For example, during the first module, there was a visit to the City of Leeds and interaction with various parts of the system:

“the very first activity was a purposeful enquiry into the City of Leeds as an integrated system. And so from the very first moment, really, from the very first morning, the participants were up and out and active and interacting with real people, with real stories to tell, looking...and working with each other in a very real way. So...and it was all around systems, systems leadership, integrated systems and complexity and interaction between players and systems. So...and that set the scene very clearly about systems leadership, and that carried on all the way through the week. So people drew on that as they went through the other activities” Faculty member A

Principles that faculty outlined included:

- The programme being experience-based and accessing tacit knowledge. The unconscious is critical to understanding a complex adaptive system such as an organisation
- Catalysing creativity by de-familiarisation – enabling people to perceive, taken for granted things in new ways E.g. through appreciating artistic representations of everyday objects or situations
- Matching abstract knowledge inputs with relevant sense-making experiences, as abstract knowledge or models can be hard for participants to understand until they have experienced something relevant to the model.

Our interpretation of the literature, programme documentation and faculty interviews was that the programme modules could provide an environment conducive to learning, through:

1. Effective facilitation by the facilitators:
   a. Setting expectations, framing the group process and establishing ground rules and a psychological contract – building on the application and interview process
   b. Encouraging participants to be supportive and encouraging of appropriate/safe experimentation, reflection and learning by other participants
   c. Modelling these behaviours by being supportive and encouraging of appropriate experimentation, reflection and learning by participants; and by facilitators’ reflecting and learning themselves
   d. Providing insights/interpretation from a psychodynamic perspective where this may be helpful to participants
2. The design of the modules:
   a. Having small group sessions that will help participants to distil and reflect on large group sessions
   b. Having a suitable set of participants, identified through the recruitment, application and interview processes
In between modules, and post-programme in some cases, action, reflection and learning would be supported by:

1. Active support from the participant’s manager and organisation (E.g. the participant’s supervisor or mentor encourages their individual learning and considers how the wider organisation might learn from the participant’s experiences).
2. Explicit, structured and supported action planning and review processes (E.g. praxis groups; making public commitments to action within a group setting) to enable participants to set specific, achievable goals for action, and hence facilitate appropriate implementation of learning from the modules in the workplace.
3. Participation in the online forums in the virtual campus
4. Participants using their diary/journal
5. Networking between participants

2.2.3 Potential outputs, outcomes and impacts of the Intersect Programme

The Intersect Programme Handbook described desired outcomes of increased emotional literacy, emotional intelligence, and social intelligence. The programme webpages suggested that participants might achieve greater self-awareness, confidence to establish productive relationships and deliver change, and understanding of behaviours, practices and processes in other organisations, and cross-sector inter-organisational dynamics.

Our analysis suggested that the following chains of outputs, outcomes and impacts might be produced:

1. Participants will practice, and gain more expertise in, observing and reflecting on the actions and behaviours of themselves and others (process learning).
   a. They will become reflective practitioners who learn more from doing their jobs
   b. They will become more engaged in the present/appreciating the now, rather than being distracted – planning, acting etc.
   c. They will increasingly value the approach being used in Intersect and become increasingly committed to it. As a result the group sessions and participant interactions within the programme will become more productive both for themselves and for other participants.
2. Development of community/networks
   a. Programme participants will form a (learning) community (of practice)
   b. Some participants will identify common issues, facilitating bonding and working together on those common issues.
   c. Some participants will identify other participants as role models, further aiding their learning and development (E.g. providing ideas for new behaviours)
3. Participants will learn by reflecting on experiences outside and inside the group, aided by feedback from other group members.
   a. They will come to recognise patterns in their behaviour (both helpful and dysfunctional) and identify “behavioural anchors” from the past to which some of their behaviour patterns are related. They will gain self-awareness, understanding better who they “are”, what they do, and why. They will also gain more understanding of the perspectives and behaviours of others.
      i. They will seek “self-realisation”/improvement in their work lives and personal lives
      ii. They will experiment with, practice, reflect on, and gain more expertise in, new, more effective behaviours (and unlearning of existing behaviours), particularly with regard to roles in groups.
b. Over time, the group sessions within the programme will function better as participants learn to function better in group settings (e.g., conflict and challenge between group members will become increasingly constructive; more effective participation – quality of and appropriateness of contribution; more parity of everyone’s contribution overall)
   i. Helping others in the group sessions will foster feelings of well-being and optimism, promoting more altruistic behaviour outside of the programme

c. Participants will become better able to identify where the resources are within a group/system in order to solve complex problems such as their work-based change problem (e.g., who needs to be involved). Such problems will be better understood and more effective action will be taken
   i. Self-efficacy will increase, leading to increased locus of control and less stress and anxiety
   ii. Participants will achieve a better work-life balance, increasing their well-being and reducing burn out

d. Participants will acquire a wider repertoire of behaviours relevant to leadership

e. Participants will change their leadership style:
   i. More characteristics of shared/distributive leadership
   ii. More characteristics of transformational leadership

4. Through repressed feelings coming to the surface, or troubling past experiences being discussed, participants will experience or observe powerful emotions. They will learn productive ways of dealing with emotions in themselves and in others. Their emotional intelligence will increase, including their emotional self-regulation and ability to express emotions appropriately

2.2.4 Issues that might occur

We identified a number of issues that might inhibit or prevent positive outcomes. These might include:

1. Lack of appropriate support in the workplace, where participants will spend most of their time.
   a. If the organisational culture is action oriented, then action may be taken without sufficient understanding, and organisations may have unrealistic expectations of ‘quick wins’ from the programme.
   b. If there is work overload in the workplace then the participant may lack time to build on learning from the programme or implement action plans.

2. Personal characteristics of participants, such as narcissism, a learning style that favours action over reflection, or lack of openness to new behaviours. Such participants may have greatest scope to benefit from the programme, but it will be more difficult for those benefits to be realised, so there is potential for extreme positive and negative outcomes. Such individuals might come to premature or superficial conclusions and become subsequently become disillusioned, failing to engage fully in later modules

3. Differential rates of growth/learning among participants. These may slow the progress of the group overall, potentially leading to frustration among some, and those who “get it” excluding those who don’t – dominating discussion and categorising others as “resistant.”
4. Participants who have decided that the programme does not suit them attending purely because their organisation will be fined otherwise
5. Participants perceiving they are in the wrong job. Their job satisfaction might decrease and they might leave.
6. Structural issues in the system. The programme is aimed at individuals, but they may encounter structural issues in the system that hard for them to influence.

2.2.5 Priority evaluation topics arising from the programme theory

We used the programme theory above as a guide to identify priorities for topics to investigate in the evaluation, bearing in mind the resources available, and the existence of measurement instruments related to the topics. The priorities we identified in this way were:

1. *Emotional intelligence:* We would expect to be able to demonstrate impacts of the programme on emotional intelligence, and suitable off-the-shelf measurement instruments are available.
2. *Peer networks:* The nature, growth and impact of peer networks. Such networks could be important to sustaining impact after the end of the programme.
3. *Organisational context:* Assessing the organisational context of participants and how this affects programme participation and impact. In particular, orientations towards action and provision of support.
4. *Changes in participants over time:* How participants’ understandings of the issue that their workplace change project seeks to address change over the course of the programme; how participants’ planned actions change over time and the extent to which they are implemented.
5. *Participant engagement in the programme:* Understand why it is that participants leave the course or exhibit presenteeism; consider what the effect of paying for the course might be on course enrolment and on presenteeism.
2.3 Design and conduct of the surveys
Online surveys were conducted at various time points during and after the programme (see Section 2.1) using Qualtrics™ software. Invitations were issued by email, together with up to two reminders. There were essentially two types of survey: participant feedback surveys and 360° surveys. In the following sub-sections we first describe these two surveys, then the concepts and measures of emotional intelligence, transformational leadership and civic capacity which we used in the 360° surveys.

2.3.1 Participant feedback surveys
All participants were invited to complete three participant feedback surveys during the course of the programme: shortly after module 1, after module 4, and immediately after the end of the programme. These surveys were designed to assess participants’ experiences and reflections on the programme, and allow trends to be identified. Questions related to experiences of different components of the programme, such as the large groups, small groups and praxis groups. Many of the questions are detailed in the Figures in the Findings section 0. Data collected through these surveys was used to provide rapid feedback to faculty members.

The first feedback survey also asked participants to provide free-text information about their work-based change initiative, which was to be discussed in the praxis groups. This included a description of the issue that the initiative aimed to address; what made it a "wicked" issue that is difficult to solve; what participants had done previously to try to help address the issue; and what the outcome of these actions was.

Participants were also asked to describe the three most important actions that they intended to take with regard to their work-based change initiative as a result of attending module 1 and outline what they expected the immediate outcomes and ultimate impacts to be. They were also asked to provide similar information with regard to up to three actions resulting from module 1 that were not related to their work-based change initiative.

For the mid-programme survey, in addition to asking participants for their reactions to modules 2 to 4, we also asked about activities outside of the modules. We asked participants to briefly describe what had happened with regard to their work-based change initiatives and how the programme had helped or hindered. We also asked participants to list up to five of the other participants who they had been in regular contact with in between modules, and to indicate the nature (E.g. depth, closeness) of those contacts. Questions were also asked about the influence of the programme on participants’ journal keeping and about the usefulness of the online provocations discussions.

The response rates to these surveys are given in Table 1.

Table 1: Response rates to the participant feedback surveys

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feedback Survey</th>
<th>Number of respondents</th>
<th>Response rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>After module 1</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After module 4 (mid-programme)</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After module 6 (end of programme)</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.3.2 360° surveys

360° surveys of participants, matched comparators and their observers were conducted at baseline (early in the programme) and after the end of the programme. Participants were asked to provide the email addresses of between 3 and 5 observers who were in a position to comment in some detail on their leadership style in inter-organisational or inter-sectoral contexts. These people could be external or internal to the participant’s organisation and at any level. Participants were also asked to provide the email addresses of between 3 and 5 observers within their organisation who could comment on how the participant deals with emotions in their work. Ideally these people would include a peer, a superior/manager and a subordinate/person the participant managed. Comparators of the programme participants were recruited from among their peer observers and if necessary, by approaching non-peer observers or asking participants to nominate a comparator in addition to their observers.

The 360° surveys consisted of measures that reflected the programme’s aims and the potential benefits/outcomes that we judged to be most likely, as per our programme theory (see Section 2.2). Already existing instruments were used to measure emotional intelligence (TEIQue) (see section 2.3.3) and transformational leadership (MLQ) (see section 2.3.4). We devised our own measure of civic capacity (see section 2.3.5), as no validated instruments currently exist.

In addition, the baseline survey asked participants about potentially relevant contextual factors:

- *The preferred learning style* of participants (intuitive versus analytical) was measured using the Cognitive Style Index (CSI)\(^{21}\).
- *Work overload* was measured using a scale adapted from the role overload scale recommended by Thiagarajan et al (2006)\(^{22}\).
- *Participant anticipation of terminating employment voluntarily,* or changing aspects of their role in the foreseeable future, was measured using an adapted version of the intent to leave scale\(^{23}\).
- *Culture of action in the participant’s organisation* was measured using and adapted version of the aggressiveness/action orientation scale\(^{24}\).

Brief feedback was offered to participants and their comparators, about how their self-perceptions of their emotional intelligence, transformational leadership and civic capacity, as measured by the survey instruments, compared with the assessments their observers made. Self-assessment baseline feedback was offered after module 1, and observer feedback after the end of the programme.

The number of responses to each of these surveys is given in Table 2.

---

Table 2: Number of responses to the 360° surveys from different respondent groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instrument</th>
<th>Time point</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Observers of Participants</th>
<th>Comparators</th>
<th>Observers of comparators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TEIQue</td>
<td>Baseline</td>
<td>36 (92%)</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Post-programme</td>
<td>30 (77%)</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MLQ</td>
<td>Baseline</td>
<td>36 (92%)</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6 months post-programme</td>
<td>26 (67%)</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0^25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civic capacity</td>
<td>Baseline</td>
<td>36 (92%)</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6 months post-programme</td>
<td>26 (67%)</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0^25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.3.3 Emotional Intelligence and the TEIQue measure

It is unclear when the term Emotional Intelligence (EI) was first defined, but what is clear is that it has become one of the most prominent theories of personal effectiveness to emerge in the last century. There are a number of different theories within the overall rubric of EI and therefore a number of definitions. For the purposes of this evaluation we use the definition from Coleman (2008)^26.

“Emotional intelligence can be defined as the ability to monitor one’s own and other people’s emotions, to discriminate between different emotions and label them appropriately and to use emotional information to guide thinking and behavior”

In this context, EI refers to an individual’s self-perceptions of their emotional abilities. This definition of EI encompasses behavioral dispositions and self-perceived abilities and is measured by self-report.

^25 No post-programme MLQ or civic capacity surveys were issued to the observers of comparators, on account of the low response from comparators.

The TEIQue\textsuperscript{27} was rigorously developed by Dino Petridis and Adrian Furnham (2006)\textsuperscript{28} to provide an assessment of ‘Trait’ emotional intelligence. This means there is an expectation for the various facets of EI to be relatively stable over time, but susceptible to change in the light of new experiences. The elements of TEIQue are listed in Figure 1.

**Figure 1: Elements of the TEIQue measure of emotional intelligence**

![Diagram of TEIQue](image)

One form of the TEIQue was administered to all participants and their comparators, and an alternate, shorter form to observers.

### 2.3.4 Transformational Leadership and the MLQ measure

Transformational leadership was assessed using the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ5)\textsuperscript{29,30}. The MLQ5 has generally attained the position of primacy with regard to assessing transformational leadership and contrasting alternative or antithetical leadership behaviours. The MLQ5 evaluates three different leadership styles: Transformational, Transactional, and Passive-Avoidant. Hence, the model has been termed the ‘Full Range Leadership Model’. See Figure 2 for the model's constituent elements. It allows individuals to measure how they perceive themselves with regard to specific leadership behaviours and


\textsuperscript{29} [http://www.mindgarden.com/products/mlq.htm](http://www.mindgarden.com/products/mlq.htm)

the MLQ5 also comes in the form of a 360° multi-rater feedback system to gain peer feedback on the same constructs. The dimensions of the MLQ5 are as follows:

1. **Charisma/Inspirational** - Provides followers with a clear sense of purpose that is energizing; a role model for ethical conduct which builds identification with the leader and his/her articulated vision.

2. **Intellectual Stimulation** - Gets followers to question the tried and true ways of solving problems; encourages them to question the methods they use to improve upon them.

3. **Individualized Consideration** - Focuses on understanding the needs of each follower and works continuously to get them to develop to their full potential.

4. **Contingent Reward** - Clarifies what is expected from followers and what they will receive if they meet expected levels of performance.

5. **Active Management-by-Exception** - Focuses on monitoring task execution for any problems that might arise and correcting those problems to maintain current performance levels.

6. **Passive Avoidant** - Tends to react only after problems have become serious to take corrective action and may avoid making any decisions at all.

Figure 2: The Full Range Leadership Model

![The Full Range Leadership Model](image-url)
2.3.5 Civic capacity and our measure of it

Civic capacity is composed of three components: civic drive, civic connection and civic pragmatism (Sun and Anderson 2012)\(^{15}\) (see Figure 3). Civic drive is the motivation to be involved with social issues and see new opportunities; civic connection is the strength of social capital among the leader’s social networks that enable successful collaboration; civic pragmatism is the ability to translate social opportunities into practical reality.

**Figure 3: Sub-constructs of civic capacity**

Our measure of civic capacity consisted of the following 14 items, each rated on a 7 point scale from Completely Agree to Completely Disagree:

- I can devise appropriate incentives to secure key stakeholder support for implementation of system-wide initiatives
- I can build up relationships of trust with key external individuals and organisations
- I have a passion to serve the community and create public value
- I regularly engage with activists and staff in community-based projects
- I have a wide network spanning key external individuals and organisations
- I am good at identifying new opportunities to improve health across the system
- I regularly engage with service users
- I am experienced in setting up innovative projects, working jointly with external partners

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• I can work with others in multi-sector collaborations to jointly facilitate the formation of clear shared expectations
• I can articulate a compelling vision that appeals to diverse stakeholders in multi-sector collaborations
• I can establish governing and accountability mechanisms that ensure multi-sector collaborations are fair and transparent and deliver on their commitments
• I regularly engage with community members
• I can rally staff within my organisation to deliver on commitments made in multi-sector collaborations
• For any system-wide initiative, I can identify the key individuals who need to be involved to move it forward

2.4 Design and conduct of interviews with programme participants

Interviews with programme participants were conducted at two time points. The first round of interviews was conducted after module two, in October and November 2014. This enabled anonymised feedback to be provided to faculty prior to module three. The second round of interviews was conducted approximately six months after the end of the programme, in December 2015 and January 2016.

The interviewees were selected on the basis of their initial reactions to module 1 of the programme, their professional and organisational backgrounds, their gender, and whether they responded to the first evaluation survey. Selection for interview was by what is termed ‘maximum variety sampling’. In this approach, interviewees are selected in order to maximise the diversity of participants and therefore their experiences and perspectives towards a particular topic.

Participants were emailed to request their participation three weeks prior to the proposed interview period. Given the range of locations in which the participants were based interviews were conducted by phone and recorded verbatim then transcribed for the purposes of analysis. 14 participants were interviewed in round one, four of whom had not responded to the first survey. We interviewed 11 of these participants again in round two – second interviews could not be arranged with three of the participants. Table 3 shows the background characteristics of the participants who were interviewed.
Table 3: Characteristics of participants who were interviewed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Job Title</th>
<th>Sector/Organisation Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Consultant in Public Health</td>
<td>Local Government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Associate Director, Business Improvement</td>
<td>NHS commissioning support unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>Chief Inspector</td>
<td>Police</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Chief Officer</td>
<td>Clinical Commissioning Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Corporate &amp; Social Impact Director</td>
<td>Third Sector/community interest company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>Director of Clinical Commissioning</td>
<td>Clinical Commissioning Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>Chief Officer / Executive</td>
<td>Third Sector Charity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Senior Commissioning Manager</td>
<td>Clinical Commissioning Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Chief Executive</td>
<td>Third Sector Hospice Care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Group HR Director</td>
<td>Central Government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Director of Quality Improvement and Assurance</td>
<td>NHS Foundation Trust Hospital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>Deputy Director, Professional Standards</td>
<td>Central Government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>Consultant Vascular Surgeon</td>
<td>NHS Hospital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>GP and Clinical Advisor</td>
<td>Local Authority</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The aim of the interviews was to understand how the programme was experienced and understood among different people, in different settings and at different times, and the outcomes and impacts that had resulted. The interviews were semi-structured, with participants being given the opportunity to relate actual examples of personal experience about the programme or within their wider working lives. This reflected a qualitative, broadly ‘phenomenological’ approach\(^{31}\), aiming to discover and develop understanding of how people themselves experience a phenomenon. It asks what this experience is like for them and what does it mean? It is the job of the evaluator therefore to help participants to express their world as directly as possible. With this approach it was hoped that participants’ stories of their experiences could be related back to inform and enrich the evidence about the Intersect programme. The themes covered during the interviews are shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Themes explored in the 1st and 2nd rounds of interviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; round: Mid-programme (Winter 2014)</th>
<th>2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt; round: 6 months post-programme (Winter 2015/16)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The person and their role</td>
<td>The person and their role (and how this may have changed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisational context in which they operate</td>
<td>Organisational context (and how this may have changed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hopes and expectations of the Intersect programme</td>
<td>Reflections on the Intersect programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early outcomes/benefits of the programme</td>
<td>Main impacts of the Intersect programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work issues they hoped to address</td>
<td>Has the programme led to any changes in the way they operate?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understandings of systems leadership</td>
<td>Understanding of systems leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other issues not covered?</td>
<td>Other issues not covered?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3 Findings

In the following sub-sections we report our findings about the first Intersect Programme in chronological order, starting with participant expectations, then their experiences of the programme at various points, through to post-programme impacts. The sources of the findings are as follows:

- Sections 3.1 to 3.4 – first participant feedback survey, after module 1
- Section 3.5 – first round of participant interviews, after module 2
- Sections 3.6 to 3.8 – second participant feedback survey, after module 4
- Section 3.9 – third participant feedback survey, after module 6
- Section 3.10 – baseline and post-programme 360° surveys
- Section 3.11 – second round of participant interviews, 6 months post-programme

3.1 Expectations of the Programme

31 participants (response rate 78%) responded to our first survey, issued shortly after module 1. Responses suggested that the opportunity to network with senior cross-sector leaders from across England was the most influential factor in participants’ decision to apply for and attend the programme (see Figure 4). This was very or extremely important to over 80% of respondents. The lack of other systems/cross-sectoral leadership programmes was also a very important factor for over half of respondents, as was the programme being fully funded by the Leadership Academy and the prior reputation of the NHS Leadership Academy. The prior reputation of Programme Faculty was of some importance to a majority of respondents, while there was a roughly 50-50 split of participants with regard to whether or not the programme’s use of the Group Relations psychodynamic approach was important to their participation.

There was a range of familiarity with the Group Relations approach to leadership development used in the programme. Over 60% of respondents had little or no previous experience of Group Relations approaches. Reflecting on their experience of module 1, over 40% of respondents did not feel they were well informed about the programme prior to attending. This largely related to the nature of the Group Relations approach and the relatively small amount of formal taught input.

“I hadn't realised the extent it would be about Group Relations and psychodynamics - I thought it would be more about developing structured solutions to cross-sectoral problems and more common understanding of the cultural norms and rules within different parts of the public sector”

“The group sessions formed a large part of the first week. Given their nature (ie free of any content (initially) about systems or leadership), this had me doubting what learning about leadership I would get from the programme. By the end of the week I was getting more out of the group sessions but still yearning for more learning. The weekly provocations have begun to bring in more content”
This was not however necessarily a negative. Some respondents felt that their uncertainty and initial lack of understanding of the programme presented an opportunity for development.

“I struggled to see what it offered me to begin with…but…the very fact that it is so beyond my experience is going to be one of the major developmental aspects of the programme”.

“The beauty of the programme was in its uncertainty to begin with, when none of us knew what is it going to bring along?”

Others were prepared to make the best of whatever the programme offered, reflecting the process of selecting participants, where energy and an attitude of giving things a go were important criteria.

“I came with an open curious mind eager to be party to something new. I am comfortable working with uncertainty knowing and trusting the purpose”

“I was unclear about how the group sessions would develop. I am, though, very keen to put my full energy into making the programme as it is structured, work for me.”

Others reckoned that they had already during the course of the first module come to understand more about the Group Relations approach and its potential.

“[I] thought there would be more practical exchange of ideas on solution, which I now get why that was wrong”
“the first couple of days had me thinking as to what was it all about and what was I going to get out of it ... it was definitely not in my comfort zone. After a third big group session, I felt I had the light bulb moment - understanding what I could take from the course and give back as well”

77% of respondents were either quite confident or very confident that the Intersect programme would be suitable for them. This did however leave almost a quarter who were not very confident about the suitability of the programme.

Over 80% of respondents expected to see tangible benefits for them personally within quite a short period: 3-6 months of the start of the programme. Demonstrable organisational benefits to sponsoring managers were expected to occur over a slightly longer timescale, but half of respondents still expected such benefits within 3-6 months. 40% of respondents expected organisational benefits within 12-15 months.

3.2 Experiences of module 1 and benefits arising

Respondents were broadly positive about module 1, with many agreeing that the mix of participants on the programme provided lots of scope for learning and that the workshops and other sessions led by programme faculty provided useful information (see Figure 5).

“The greatest benefit to me personally has been to be in the same room as many very experienced 'leaders' and to see their qualities (and weaknesses) and to learn from them what is required if I want to become a leader and what mistakes to avoid”

The majority of respondents also felt that much of the module was relevant to their work and that the facilitators modelled effective reflective practice. Although most of the respondents valued the group sessions, views about particular aspects of these sessions were more mixed, with a majority feeling uncomfortable. There were also minorities who did not feel able to experiment in the sessions, that the sessions were inclusive, nor that conflict and challenge were constructive. As one participant observed:

“It was certainly a little unsettling. There was one member of the cohort who seemed to me to be emotionally fragile perhaps, and another who was quite reactive ... I felt a little inadequate amongst so many talented and opinionated people ... I felt very self-conscious, and found it difficult to relax.”

Although perhaps difficult for participants, such experiences might however be expected in the early stages of a Group Relations approach, and might provide potential for learning and growth. The same participant also reported:

“But was able to monitor how I was feeling all the time, and what that says about me. ... All of what I have said is material for me to consider .... Since the residential, I am extremely conscious of my commitment to learning ... I have shared my learning with leaders outside and inside my organisation”
Figure 5: Experiences of participants during module 1

- I felt safe to experiment with new behaviours in group sessions and learn from the experience
- The facilitators modelled effective reflective practice
- The facilitators provided helpful insights and interpretation of events in group sessions
- The small group and large group sessions complemented each other well
- Conflict and challenge within the group sessions was constructive
- The mix of participants in the programme provided lots of scope for learning
- The contributions that participants made in group sessions were helpful
- Much of the module was relevant to my work
- Workshops and other sessions led by programme faculty provided me with useful information
- I found the group sessions uncomfortable
- The contributions that participants made in group sessions were helpful
- I valued the group sessions
- The facilitators modelled effective reflective practice
- The mix of participants in the programme provided lots of scope for learning
- Conflict and challenge within the group sessions was constructive
- The small group and large group sessions complemented each other well
- The facilitators provided helpful insights and interpretation of events in group sessions
- The facilitators modelled effective reflective practice
- I felt safe to experiment with new behaviours in group sessions and learn from the experience

- I helped other participants to get the most out of the programme
- The group sessions were inclusive, rather than people being excluded or excluding themselves
- I valued the group sessions

Legend:
- Completely Disagree 1
- Neither Agree nor Disagree 4
- Completely Agree 7
3.3 Benefits arising from module 1
For all of the ten outcomes we, over 70% of respondents said that the programme had helped them to some extent, with this figure being over 90% for six of the outcomes (see Figure 6). Across all of the outcomes, typically 15-20% of respondents found the module very helpful. As might be expected, there appeared to have been greater impact on the understanding and thinking of respondents, compared with behaviours such as establishing meaningful relationships and managing conflict which would likely need to be practised outside of the programme. The programme was most helpful with regard to being observant and engaged in interactions with others, a skill which the group sessions would be expected to promote directly.

“The impact of the first module has been significant on my work. I have been far more engaged with what is happening around me, I am listening far more intently to what people are really saying and I am conscious of the dynamics in the room. Not saying yet I am an expert but I have begun to look at interactions in a very different way. I did not expect this outcome so quickly”

The programme helped the understanding of respondents, in relation to their own awareness, insights into their behaviours and driving forces for behaviours, and increased clarity about their personal identity. This was particularly the case with regard to “being clear about the person I want to become in the future”, where the programme had been very helpful to over a quarter of respondents. Some further clarity about career and job had also been produced, but to a slightly lesser extent. One participant spoke of the impact of the first module as,

“Awakening my sense of self as a positive, capable and inspiring individual.”

A minor concern was that one respondent felt that module 1 had been a little unhelpful in helping her/him to be more positive and optimistic, while a quarter felt it had made no difference in this regard.
3.4 Support for taking action provided by module 1

Almost 90% of respondents felt they had capability and drive to overcome difficult issues (Figure 7), but there was less certainty that they could resolve the main issues they faced. Over 30% of respondents believed that other actors in their system would try to undermine positive action, and over 20% that some would never change their approach. While a majority of respondents felt they had been helped to set specific, achievable goals for action, this was only strongly felt by just over a third of respondents.

“I don’t think there has been any specific discussion with participants or guidance about goal setting. The praxis group was helpful, but there wasn’t a lot of time together”

This wasn’t a concern though for some respondents, who either already had a plan in place prior to the programme, or who felt they could get on with change without an action plan.
Making planned actions public might indicate commitment to those actions and might be expected to promote implementation. According to our understanding of the programme outline, the workplace change initiative should have been discussed in the praxis groups, and over 80% of respondents indicated that this had happened (Figure 8). As most participants had been sponsored by their manager, they too should have been aware of the workplace change initiative, and 75% or respondents had told their managers. Action planning may however not have been well developed in a quarter of cases, or indicate a lack of manager support or involvement.

On the other hand, notwithstanding the systems nature of the programme, that almost 40% of respondents had told colleagues in external organisations may indicate that a proportion of actions were fairly well developed and had high commitment.

Other actions had not been reported as widely, other than to friends and family and, to a small extent, with the Intersect faculty. Only 50% of respondents had told their manager. This may well reflect that these actions are more personal, and also be an indicator of how open a relationship respondents have with their work colleagues.

The overall situation at the end of module 1 is perhaps summed up by the following participant’s comment:

“I think it is early days to be certain about the impact of the course on workplace actions. However, it has provided me with the space and opportunity to discuss ideas with others who have offered me a different way of looking at things”
3.5 Experiences following module 2

14 participants were interviewed by phone after module 2. These interviews aimed to find out more about participants’ role and organisational context and the relevance of the Intersect programme to the challenges they faced; about early experiences and outcomes from the programme; and the work-based change issue they were seeking to address.

Role and Organisational context

The majority of interviewees were working at a senior level across organisations and so their main motivation was to become more effective at working at a ‘systems level’ with a strong desire to make a difference for the ‘greater good’.

The vast majority of interviewees described significantly excessive workloads, related to: the number and complexity of challenges within their organisation/system, and also, the impact of fiscal restraints leading to overall reductions in staff. Negative impacts were described as personal, that is detrimental to personal relationships but also to teams in the workplace, where pressure on teams could become dysfunctional.

Many employing organisations were described as disjointed and chaotic, with equal amounts of high pressure and high risks. Some participants described this as having a particularly negative impact on culture, again linking back to excessive workloads. One interesting point was made that in their service, difficult conversations were avoided and so sometimes decisions were based on consensus rather than what was best:

“There’s innate desire to be consensual in everything, [staff in my organisation] tend not to like making decisions that might upset people, they want everybody to be in agreement before they go forward....”

More positive descriptions of the employing organisation were also offered, some of which related to the same organisation therefore demonstrating that organisations could be highly pressured and chaotic but also dynamic and progressive simultaneously. Other

Original Thinking Applied
organisations were described purely in positive terms, as being open, progressive and supportive.

**Hopes and Expectations**

Participants were clear about their hopes and expectations prior to the start of the Programme, although some were unclear on exactly what to expect and were unfamiliar with the Programme methodology. Some participants viewed the Programme as an opportunity for personal/leadership development, to improve their knowledge, experience and skillset as a systems leader, and also to grow in confidence and self-belief. For some, a recent or imminent transition in their roles meant that they wanted to address the new challenges they might face, many of which centred on more cross-boundary working with other agencies and organisations.

**Impact of the programme**

Some participants were able to identify positive changes and were able to speculate as to the process of change whereas others were able to identify positive changes but felt unable to attribute this to a specific element or experience within the Programme, and were also unable to articulate or speculate as to the process of change.

Positive changes attributed to the programme to date included:

- Improved confidence and self-belief
- Improved empathy
- Linked to empathy, an improved quality of interactions and better relationships
- More reflective process, both privately and openly involving colleagues
- A feeling of calm and patience
- Greater focus on process as well as outcome

For some, the introspection and focus on self-identity had stimulated questioning of future career choices. Other participants were already undergoing a change in role, often linked to changes within their immediate and/or organisational context.

Since the start of the programme many participants had changed the workplace change issue they were focusing on, sometimes linked to a change in role (within the same organisation). Clear features of the workplace change issues were working on integration and working in partnership. Some participants commented that as a result of the Programme, they were now in the process of re-framing their issue.

**Impressions of the programme**

There were a range of positive responses from interviewees when asked about their impressions of the programme, with some expressions of concern. The positives included the ability to draw on the experience of a group of senior people from a wide range of professional backgrounds. Another was the appreciation of having ‘protected space’ to think deeply and reflect on their working issues with such a rich resource as provided by 39 colleagues. Coupled with this was the appreciation of the strict boundaries in place with respect to both time and phone/electronic devices.

Overall, there was a mixed response to the groupwork within the programme, with many finding this element challenging, particularly the large group activity. Expressions such as ‘floundering’ were used and there was some uncertainty of the ultimate purpose of the large group process. Even at this early stage there were concerns that participants had limited time to make the group process ‘work’.
“I think it’s going to be good but what worries me a bit really was that we’re, sort of, running out of time to make it work”

Some participants felt that there was need for more of a ‘steer’ from faculty with regard to the large group’s functioning because some felt they were getting ‘stuck’. This was often coupled with the observation that the Faculty did not interact with participants very much — or as much as expected:

“What this systems leadership programme is teaching me, is you don’t get on with everybody, but what it’s challenging me to think is, so why is that, what stereotypes, what bias, what is it that judgements I’m making that’s saying ‘oh I can get on with X and I’m not sure about Y’. But, as I say, the first thing is the unnerving experience of not really understanding who the four faculty are.”

Many participants therefore felt that the large group needed more interventions from faculty and some participants observed negative behaviours emerging in the light of this lack of intervention — ‘Lord of the Flies behaviour’ was one analogy used.

Although some participants appreciated and enjoyed the online aspect of the programme through the Virtual Campus, many found the on-line engagement difficult for a variety of reasons including: frequency of provocations/too little time, and this not being viewed as useful as the residential element, and were discouraged by a perceived lack of engagement across the group.

Some participants felt that a clearer view of the programme going forward in terms of content and activities would be helpful, particularly with regard to locations of future modules, which would in turn, help with domestic arrangements.

### 3.6 Experiences of modules 2-4

This section is based on an analysis of a survey of programme participants, conducted between modules 4 and 5. Many of the survey questions from the first survey were repeated, omitting some whose ratings were already very high, so there was relatively little scope for improvement. Responses were received from 33 participants.

The proportion of respondents who were now very confident in the programme’s suitability for them had risen from 29% to 39% since the survey following module 1, while the proportion who were not very confident about its suitability had fallen from 23% to 12%.

Overall, respondents’ experiences of programme activities were rated broadly similarly to how they had been after module 1, but with some changes with regard to individual activities. There was some suggestion of greater diversity of reaction, with positive reactions becoming a little more positive, and negative reactions becoming a little more negative.

“The relevance and effectiveness of some of the interventions has been mixed … The "lived experience" elements have been the most productive. The quality and fit of the other participants on the programme is mixed and whilst this reflects real life, it feels a missed opportunity. I feel I am giving more to others in the programme than I am learning from others”

“I would get more out of the programme if there was more about actual systems and systems leadership (the sort of case study work one gets with an MBA), and less about trying to learn from treating the programme/group as a system, and less focus on the process of inquiry. The latter are more effective in exploring behaviours”
“The less traditional elements of the programme have been the most successful for me. The more traditional "leadership" elements have often been a switch off.”

“Although I have struggled to understand the impact of some of the activities, overall I have found the conversations and activities that we been doing on this programme very interesting and has certainly led to me thinking and reflecting on my role within the system that I work within”

There was an increase in the extent to which participants reported helping other participants to get the most out of the programme. The group sessions were reported to be less uncomfortable (although there remained a wide diversity of experience in this regard) and marginally more respondents found conflict and challenge within the group sessions to be constructive. On the other hand, there was a slight decrease in participants feeling safe to experiment with new behaviours in group sessions and learn from the experience, and in respondents feeling that the large and small group sessions complemented each other well.

“I’ve gained more confidence and belief in myself and I think that has a lot to do with X who is my small group facilitator. The small group and the big group have probably had the biggest impact on me and I never thought I’d say that - the first week in Leeds when we started the big and small group - I thought they were pretty much a waste of time. I absolutely don’t believe this now. Rhetorical question: I wonder, is the course designed this long because it takes time to really understand the purpose of the small and large group and get the most out of them - I don’t know”

“the large group has floundered for large parts in early modules. Still many voices not heard…I wonder if they are getting as much out of the experience”

“Small group has been the real impactful experience on the course.”

“Not convinced the big and small group sessions are having the impact that they should be having. Some individuals on the programme are using these sessions as ‘therapy’ sessions which I’m not sure are the purpose”

There was also a lower proportion of respondents reporting finding much of the modules relevant to their work. For some it was too focused on the NHS, and for others it did not take sufficient account of what the NHS is looking for from leaders.

“it’s interesting to explore ourselves. However, are the skills and behaviours being developed what the NHS wants? … Getting on in the NHS seems to be about technical skills … The course is great, but it has to be appropriate. While I enjoy it, I am left asking if it’s really what I needed right now”

“I do feel that the later modules have been very heavily rooted in the NHS, and as an outsider this can be a little excluding”

“The programme has been well structured and managed. It has felt a safe, albeit challenging environment. I have gained a huge amount. Probably the best training I have ever undertaken - will miss Intersect when the course ends, as it has become part of my life!! If I could change one thing, it is still too NHS centric for a course that is meant to be addressing systems leadership in the broadest sense”

“This programme came at exactly the right time for me. Having just stepped up into a Chief Officer role I lacked confidence in myself and found I allowed others to make
me feel negative about my performance and my abilities. This programme has taught me that, and how my behaviour can influence people and situations”

Some participants would have liked more active facilitation and support from the facilitators.

“There also needs to be engagement more with the facilitators as human beings. It is not normal for me not to be able to make relationships with people and as they intentionally exclude themselves this part of the experiment is not normal. I have benefited greatly from the very few but significant interactions with [them]”

“It might have been helpful to have more of a push / steer from the faculty earlier in large and small group to speed up engagement / understanding. The relationship between the faculty and participants is often very false and this is not always helpful. Add to this the fact that the course has opened up some huge issues for people about who they are and their history - including childhood abuse for example. These are massive issues to deal with and yet the faculty does not seem to be there in a supporting role when these issues come up.”

3.7 Benefits from modules 2-4

For all of the ten outcomes asked about there was an increase from the first survey in the proportion of respondents saying that the programme had been very helpful – typically now 25-35%. On the other hand, there were also increases in the proportion of respondents saying the programme had been to some extent unhelpful – typically now 3-12%.

Awareness and understanding, with which module 1 had been the most helpful, had tended to increase further. However, views about the helpfulness of the programme with regard to behaviours appeared to be broadly similar to after module 1.

Respondents reported that tangible personal and organisational benefits were being achieved in line with the timescales they and their sponsoring managers envisaged at the start of the programme. 88% of respondents said that the programme was already demonstrating tangible benefits to them, and 61% that the programme was already demonstrating tangible benefits to their organisation.
3.8 Activities in between modules

3.8.1 Journal keeping

A quarter of respondents are keeping a journal/diary as a result of the programme; a third began to do this, but had not kept it going; and just over a third did not start keeping a journal/diary (see Table 5).

Table 5: Respondents keeping a journal/diary to record their thoughts and experiences regarding systems leadership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes - I was already keeping a journal/diary prior to the programme</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes - I started after joining the programme, and have kept it going</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partly - I started after joining the programme, but haven't kept it going</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The diary-keeping group found it useful.

“Helpful to reflect through a diary the key concepts learned and whether they are being applied in practice. Also a stress reliever to write it down!”

“I have particularly used the journal book provided to record the content, my thoughts and others words which provoke a reaction in me to reflect on what I am learning about myself and others.”

“I have always made reflective notes following training/CPD significant events so I have continued this, if something grabs my attention from an article or talk on the provocations I will note it down and think about it, and try and use it”

A number of respondents said they used their journal during the modules, but not outside of them. Not keeping a diary seemed usually to be a conscious decision that this method didn’t suit the individual, although pressure of work was also mentioned.

“I guess it works for the sort of person for whom keeping a journal works!”

“I understand why it’s useful but I just haven’t managed the time when back in the work situation, I have used it during the residential and also when something major happens but on a day to day basis I haven’t managed to fit this into my timetable”
3.8.2 Online “provocations” discussions

The evaluation team monitored the engagement of participants in the online “provocations” discussions. Some participants read and commented on the provocations posts enthusiastically and in detail, and found them useful.

“Some of the provocations have also been very thought provoking and led to a lot of further reading / thinking for me.”

Involvement reduced over time however. The survey therefore asked what might have made participating in online discussions more productive or attractive.

Some respondents had IT problems or found the virtual campus difficult to navigate. Lack of time was also mentioned by some respondents.

“I don’t feel we are really having a conversation. However I feel that in general online discussions are not very personal, are prone to misinterpretation, and I prefer face to face discussions any day”

“The provocations have been allowed to die a natural death. The virtual campus is poorly utilised because a large number of participants have been [un]able to figure out a few basic things.”

Alternatives which would enable the discussion that some respondents felt was missing from asynchronous online postings were suggested.

“I think it would have been useful to have a small group, (rotate people round each week so small group never the same) that you conference call into and discuss a provocation - for me, this would a) make me keep up to date with each provocation knowing I had to discuss it with a small group X days later and b) have a real discussion with people.”

“A page that operates more like a social media page i.e. twitter and macbook would probably got me more interested and maybe if there was an app on my phone I would of participated more on the go”

3.9 Feedback from participants shortly after the programme ended

This section is based on an analysis of a survey of programme participants, conducted shortly after module 6 ended. Many of the survey questions repeated those asked in previous surveys, conducted shortly after module 1 and between modules 4 and 5, in order to look for trends. 30 responses were received.

Responses indicated that a greater proportion of respondents were now finding the programme very helpful with regard to various outcomes that we might expect to contribute towards systems leadership (see Table 6). Ratings were highest for three outcomes concerning relating to other people: being observant and engaged in my interactions with others; awareness of my behaviours and the impact they have on others; and understanding the perspectives and behaviours of other people.

Comments from a number of respondents mentioned transformation and being energised by the programme, in both work and family situations.

“I feel energised and as if I am seeing the world and myself with new eyes - that my senses have been switched on to max. I am wanting to stay in this heightened state
of awareness and wondering how I can keep it. The course has improved my relationships outside work and in my family … enormously too”

“The course was hugely beneficial to me & has transformed the relationships in work & how I approach new projects”

Although ratings had improved, they were relatively low for being able to recognise and manage conflict (27% found the programme very helpful) and for being clear about what I want from my job/career (23% found the programme very helpful).

Table 6: Percentage of the responding participants finding the programme very helpful with regard to various outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Initial survey</th>
<th>Mid-programme survey</th>
<th>Post-programme survey</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Awareness of my behaviours and the impact they have on others</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding what underlies my behaviours</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding the perspectives and behaviours of other people</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being observant and engaged in my interactions with others</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being clear about the person I am now</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being able to establish meaningful and productive relationships with others</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being able to recognise and manage conflict</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling positive and optimistic</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being clear about the person I want to become in the future</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being clear about what I want from my job/career</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

63% of respondents said they were now very confident that the programme was suitable for them, compared with 39% in the mid-programme survey and 29% in the initial survey. No one now felt that the programme was not suitable for them, compared with 23% in the first survey. 83% of respondents reported that the programme was now demonstrating tangible benefits to their organisation.
For all programme activities asked about, a greater proportion of respondents reported positive experiences during modules 5 and 6 than they had been the case when asked about previous modules. Many respondents reported positive experiences (see Table 7). A substantial minority continued to find the group sessions uncomfortable, but nevertheless valuable.

Table 7: Percentage of the responding participants agreeing to some extent with various experiences of modules 5 and 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experience</th>
<th>Agreement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I felt safe to experiment with new behaviours in group sessions and learn from the experience</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The small group and large group sessions complemented each other well</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict and challenge within the group sessions was constructive</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The contributions that participants made in group sessions were helpful</td>
<td>97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I found the group sessions uncomfortable</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Much of modules 5 and 6 was relevant to my work</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I valued the group sessions</td>
<td>97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The group sessions were inclusive, rather than people being excluded or excluding themselves</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I helped other participants to get the most out of the programme</td>
<td>97%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“The programme has indeed been life-changing for me, not only in my work area but also in my personal family life … The module 6 especially, in Leeds was great as it reinforced all the learning and change throughout the year, I came out invigorated with positive energy and enthusiasm for the future”

77% of respondents completely agreed that one-to-one conversation sessions with faculty (introduced following earlier feedback from participants) added value to the programme – a greater strength of agreement than for any of the other aspects of the programme asked about in Table 7.

“The 1-1 sessions were extremely helpful and perhaps could have been introduced earlier in the modules but appreciate the need for the faculty to know the participants first.”

Participants’ comments suggested a few reasons why the ratings of the programme might have increased over its course:

- Perhaps informed by learning during the earlier modules, the later modules had been more effective. E.g. greater interaction with the facilitators was appreciated.
- It took time for participants to understand the potential of the Group Relations approach and make best use of it. Some participants suggested that this process
might have been quicker had there been greater input about the way Group Relations was intended to work. It is possible that some participants never reached this stage of understanding the approach, or rejected it as not productive.

- Leadership development as supported by the Group Relations approach is a journey of learning and discovery that takes time (and potentially might never end). This suggests that impacts might continue to accrue post-programme.

“It took a while for me to "get" what the programme was all about, and having completed it I feel in many ways that I am only just starting to obtain the benefit from it. As I’ve said before, I had the lightbulb moment about half way into the course and the last 2-3 modules only further cemented my thinking”

“Intersect is a journey of discovery and change and invites you to be curious and notice yourself and others. For me this has resulted in personal revelation, an inner peace and a new way of being. The programme has helped me move from being an okay leader to being an impactful leader. I have grown massively in self confidence, helped by understanding and dealing with internal conflict whilst remaining authentic to the values I hold. I can now more easily move beyond the remits of my control, take risks, build relationships that are meaningful and influence the wider system within which I live and work. I have found a power that is humble, just and innovative, and it seems to work!”
3.10 Impact of the programme on measures of emotional intelligence, transformational leadership and civic capacity

To assess the impact of the programme we compared participants' pre-programme and post-programme scores. There was only sufficient data to conduct a participant-comparator analysis for TEIQue, but not for MLQ or civic capacity.

The mean scores for participants and comparators on the different instruments are given in Table 8. All mean scores increased between pre- and post-programme, but the scores of participants increased by more than those of comparators. The baseline scores were somewhat higher for participants than for comparators, particularly with regard to civic capacity.

Table 8: Pre- and post-programme self assessed scores of participants and comparators on TEIQue, MLQ and civic capacity instruments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instrument</th>
<th>Assessment point</th>
<th>Mean score for participants</th>
<th>Mean score for comparators</th>
<th>Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TEIQue</td>
<td>Pre-programme</td>
<td>5.44</td>
<td>5.34</td>
<td>0.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Post-programme</td>
<td>5.82</td>
<td>5.39</td>
<td>0.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MLQ</td>
<td>Pre-programme</td>
<td>2.99</td>
<td>2.98</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Post-programme</td>
<td>3.37</td>
<td>3.08</td>
<td>0.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civic capacity</td>
<td>Pre-programme</td>
<td>5.11</td>
<td>4.66</td>
<td>0.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Post-programme</td>
<td>5.79</td>
<td>5.21</td>
<td>0.58</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Statistical tests (Table 9) suggest that, given the usual caveats/assumptions (representativeness of the respondents and of this instance of the programme; accuracy of the self-assessments and indicators; absence of other factors that might be responsible), we can be confident that participation in the Intersect programme leads to increases in emotional intelligence, transformational leadership and civic capacity, and hence systems leadership capability.

Comparisons with norms for MLQ scores published in 2004 indicates that the average pre-programme score for participants was equal to the average self-ratings obtained from a large sample of Europeans (2.99; 50th centile). The average post-programme score for participants (3.37) is roughly half way between the 70th centile score (3.28) and the 80th percentile score (3.45) in the European sample. This therefore represents a substantial increase.

32 TEIQue and Civic Capacity are measured on a scale from 1 to 7, MLQ on a scale from 1 to 5.
33 Bass BM and Avolio BJ (2004). MLQ International Normative Samples, Table 10b (Europe) and Table 21b
Table 9: Paired samples test of differences between post- and pre- programme self assessments of participants on TEIQue, MLQ and civic capacity instruments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instrument</th>
<th>Mean difference</th>
<th>Lower 95% Confidence Interval</th>
<th>Upper 95% Confidence Interval</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TEIQue</td>
<td>.383</td>
<td>.132</td>
<td>.635</td>
<td>3.12</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>.004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MLQ</td>
<td>.382</td>
<td>.159</td>
<td>.605</td>
<td>3.52</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civic capacity</td>
<td>.676</td>
<td>.267</td>
<td>1.084</td>
<td>3.41</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>.002</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comparison between the responding participants and the comparators (Table 10) provides some further evidence suggesting that factors unrelated to the programme did not cause the increase in self-assessed TEIQue ratings. This evidence is limited however, as it is based on only 10 matched pairs of participants and comparators, due to incomplete data.

Table 10: Paired samples test of differences between post- and pre- programme self assessments of participants and of comparators for TEIQue

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instrument</th>
<th>Mean difference</th>
<th>Lower 95% Confidence Interval</th>
<th>Upper 95% Confidence Interval</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TEIQue</td>
<td>.577</td>
<td>.055</td>
<td>1.098</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>.034</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Observer assessments of participants who responded to the survey indicated rises between pre- and post-programme scores for TEIQue, MLQ and civic capacity, but these were smaller than the changes in participant self-assessed scores (see Table 11). The changes in MLQ were just statistically significant at the 5% level, but the other changes were not statistically significant.

Table 11: Paired samples test of differences between average post- and pre- programme observer assessments of participants on TEIQue, MLQ and civic capacity instruments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instrument</th>
<th>Mean difference</th>
<th>Lower 95% Confidence Interval</th>
<th>Upper 95% Confidence Interval</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TEIQue</td>
<td>.112</td>
<td>-.044</td>
<td>.269</td>
<td>1.46</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>.154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MLQ</td>
<td>.259</td>
<td>.005</td>
<td>.513</td>
<td>2.13</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>.046</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civic capacity</td>
<td>.250</td>
<td>-.132</td>
<td>.632</td>
<td>1.37</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>.187</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Average observer ratings of participant TEIQue and civic capacity at baseline were higher than the average of participants’ self-assessments, whereas observer ratings of participant MLQ at baseline were lower than the participants’ self-assessments. Whether this indicates that observer TEIQue and civic capacity scores were subject to ceiling effects would require further analysis.

There were no statistically significant correlations between the contextual factors that we measured (cognitive style, work overload, anticipation of changing role, organisational culture of action) and the pre- to post- programme changes in participants self-assessed scores for TEIQue, MLQ and civic capacity.

3.11 Impact of the programme according to participants

In the second round of interviews with participants, focus was to a large extent centred on the participants’ perception of the immediate impact that they felt the programme had had on their workplace behaviours and what impact they felt this had had on the wider systems in which they operated. The participants’ responses were both diverse and interesting. Some participants saw themselves as better equipped to forge new relationships across organisational and institutional boundaries – to more readily look for common aims and agendas with other stakeholders. This seems to align to the aims of the programme inasmuch as the participants were starting to think beyond the institutional silos and become more entrepreneurial in creating connections across the systems they worked within:

“...just this last week I’ve had some inspiration about some folk that we could work with and, you know, quickly contacted a few people in setting up some action learning sets …and I think I might not have had the insight to see there were some commonalities before. So, you know, I think perhaps what I’ve done to actually be proactive in saying, let’s work together on this, how shall we work together on this may have been something that has helped, by having done the programme.”

Aligned to this finding was the view from some participants that their spheres of influence and engagement were wider than previously assumed and there was a value in engaging with a broader range of groups and institutions:

“One of the things that I’ve encouraged my senior team to do is to get out; as well as me doing it for them to get outside the walls of this building, get outside Leeds, be represented on a national stage however that may be, so whether it’s presenting at conferences or being on national advisory groups. So I think all five of us now have got a national role which certainly we didn’t have when we began this process.”

An interesting and challenging aspect of systems leadership is the general observation made by many of the participants and some observers34 (NHSIQ 2012) that very often you are leading systems without formal authority over all the parts of the system. It is therefore essential to have the right ‘soft power’ (Kings Fund 2015)35 and influencing skills in order to create the conditions for effective collaboration. As one participant from a central government department stated:

“So I don’t think the change in role has made it any more relevant but what it has done is I think that the course has allowed me to refine the techniques and skills. They’ve become super useful given that, you know, there’s the whole dynamic of

with this extended group now we previously didn’t have direct power over them. So that whole issue of influencing and using levers through system leadership without necessarily having direct power or control over an organisation has come in really, really handy.”

The vast majority of participants talked about Intersect increasing their confidence in their role as system leaders and this was described and contextualised in a variety of ways. For some it was an enhanced confidence to envisage and drive change within the system and overcome some of the old traditional barriers to change:

“I think I, through Intersect, I feel more confident and as somebody that can actually drive that change. And I felt as though I could drive before, as a senior manager but I think for me, it’s around...in the NHS, there’s lots of barriers to overcome, before you can make that change. And I found that very difficult at first. But now that I feel that I’m able to move mountains, rather than little stones.”

For most participants, it was a more generic feeling of personal confidence that had developed as a result of their experiences on the Intersect programme. This was characterised by a feeling of being more resilient, more patient in the face of frustrations and a greater sense of self efficacy. Similarly, many participants could not attribute this enhanced confidence to any one aspect of the programme. Within that feeling of increased confidence, there was sometimes a new sense of developing a greater sense of resolve:

“It’s really hard to sum it up. I do feel like it has had a massive impact, but I think it’s the impact on me, like, as a person, you know. So, I think I’m much more resilient, I think all of these things would have fazed me previously, whereas I just feel like I’m just taking it in my stride, and what will be will be, and we’ll do what we can.”

“I found a voice I didn’t know I had. Yes, so it helped me to stand up for what I believed in and what I thought was right for me and yes, helped me to get where I am.”

“I think it’s made a difference in the way I now stand up to a few things that I’m passionate about, and actually go on and do it without waiting for somebody to tell me, or ask me can you kindly do that, can you look into that?”

Although, like many participants, who were unsure of when and how it happened, this renewed sense of confidence was expressed by some as giving them a sense of self-worth and credibility in their interactions with others:

“I think the other thing that I had scribbled down before I spoke to you, which we haven’t picked up on, it’s about being one whole person, which sounds really odd, but actually to be authentic and to come across with integrity and be credible and believable”

For some participants, this feeling of enhanced confidence and mastery could be related directly to specific instances and actions they had instigated within the systems they were leading:

“It feels odd talking in this way, but I could give a...I just felt more confident, more able to set out clearly the, sort of leadership challenge for that group and, as I say, it’s a senior group, a UK-wide group. And I felt that probably for the first time in that group that I was...that I had a significant impact on how things were done, and what the outcome of that was at that meeting.”
Although, as mentioned above, participants found it difficult to attribute the impact of the Intersect programme to specific aspects of the programme, some aspects which ran through the programme were seen of particular value in their contribution to their development as system leaders. One of the common themes was the value of the diversity of the participants in the large group as a whole. In particular it gave some participants an appreciation of the perspectives of others:

“It’s a huge privilege actually to have engaged with that group of people, they’re just so diverse and I think the opportunity to meet people from lots of different backgrounds in that context did make me more open to how I could work or see positions in the perspective of others”.

A core aspect of the Intersect programme has been the aim of creating a microcosm of a complex system within the group and the centrality of the application of a Group Relations methodology in order for participants to gain an appreciation of group dynamics. Many participants reflected on the value of that approach and how this had led to a greater appreciation of the unconscious biases and assumptions can influence our perceptions of others, but also an appreciation of others’ perspectives in order to work with them more effectively:

“I know that it should be more than relationships, but I think it’s the ability to step back and see it from other peoples’ perspectives as well. So it’s about it not just being about your agenda, and I think that’s probably where I’ve gathered, like, quite a lot there.”

“I mean some of the most interesting bits for me on the Intersect course was about how we marginalise people and how we don’t listen to them, and how we react to what we think they’re saying and not what they’re actually saying and how we project our fears and anxieties onto other people and we accept their projections onto us”.

One of the strong points of the programme, in terms of its impact on participants was the almost universal view that it had instilled a greater ability to reflect in the ‘here and now’ on events and emotions, particularly in terms of dealing with others in sometimes difficult situations:

“Yeah, so I think the main impact of the Programme on me and on the way I do my job is that I am much more reflective, much more questioning in my mind, much more seeking of feedback from people, much more engaging with people, so in actually how I speak, what I’m doing, how I handle meetings. I have the ideas, the challenges, from the Intersect Programme at...almost at the forefront of my mind.”

As one would expect, the Intersect programme seems to have fulfilled one of its main objectives; which was to help participants gain a greater appreciation of what it is to be a systems leader. For some, this has led to a reframing of their roles in the light of their experiences on the programme and to a greater understanding of the challenges of the role.

“...it is how you have to take a, in a way, a more visionary view of change to be able to link up with people who are across a system and understanding things and that extra bit of work where you need to understand things from different perspectives and also the different level of challenge and complexity that you have when you have whole organisations, I think, to make adjustments to their authority, their interests, their traditional ways of doing things and it’s just realising actually you just have to give so much at a really personal level in order to build that joint capital, that, kind of, social capital that...”
“I think, on system leadership. When I signed up for the course I had a view of what I thought system leadership was and I don’t think it was wrong but I don’t think it was…I don’t think I had a full appreciation for what system leadership was. So the course has definitely given me a fuller appreciation of system leadership. So…and I know that to be true because I was surprised at the beginning about how much we were going into understanding individuals and what makes them tick.”

In some cases, preconceptions about what it is to be a systems leader were significantly transformed in the minds of participants and the focus on the importance of the situational dynamics and self-awareness rather than academic theory was felt to be of more value in the long run:

“So I think it’s been more of a personal development to allow me to be a more effective leader in a system, as opposed to some of the theory on the system’s leadership stuff. I think a lot of people will have probably entered Intersect thinking it’s going to be an academic theoretical input about how to be a system leader. And it’s not been about how to be a system leader, it’s how to be a leader, ie, how do you just be better as yourself, which is what I wanted, in order to respond to and behave and act and deliver in a system.”
3.12 An individual story of leadership development

This illustrative individual story of leadership development and personal growth through the Intersect Programme, derived from our interview data, comes from a leader of a third-sector organization, working with a range of health and social care partners. The sub-headings are seven characteristics commonly associated with leadership success in whole systems, as identified in Welbourne et al (2012)\(^7\)

**Go out of your way to make new connections:**

A senior leader of a third sector organization reflected on how the Intersect Programme had qualitatively transformed the way in which she undertakes her role – the tasks and activities are not much different but the relationships, risk-taking, and a re-framing of the status quo to enable possibilities are apparent. This is illustrated by additional roles with greater breadth across the system, increased engagement with the system (working more, and more closely with partners), and an appreciation of the diversity of voices.

“It’s I suppose being more aware when you’re in a situation about actually what’s going on and whose voices you’re listening to and whose you’re not listening to, and being more conscious of that just facilitates better relationships and so better leadership I think.”

This leader highlighted a chance in the approach to decision-making and actions, moving to more conscious, deliberate and intentional decisions and actions, which built a sense of momentum and illuminated future possibilities.

“I suppose my role is deliberately more outward facing than it was before. Or not deliberately more outward facing; I’m choosing where I engage more carefully and deliberately.”

**Adopt an open, enquiring mindset, refusing to be constrained by current horizons**

This leader described a fundamental change in how she and her organization approached the agenda for change across the city, which resulted in sharing funds, and agreeing on a shared leadership and accountability arrangement, with the patient as the central driving force.

“So rather than us all ploughing our own furrow and doing our own separate things, we’ve always met as a city but this is actually slightly different in that it’s funding time with agreed outcomes from the work that we’re doing”

**Embrace uncertainty and be positive about change – adopt an entrepreneurial attitude**

This leader had been drawn to change that challenged previous modes of delivery, and to take risks:

“We’ve also made some changes in our clinical care provision, so we’ve put in place a strategy and I think we are taking more risks – well we are definitely taking more risks – in saying, let’s do this, let’s try it, let’s see if it works; if it does, it does, but if it doesn’t, it doesn’t”

Original Thinking Applied
Draw on as many different perspectives as possible; diversity is non-optional

A deeper understanding of the dynamics within relationships, and the importance of understanding and choosing to respond differently was apparent, leading to relationships that were capable of progressing system change. This understanding, coupled with a feeling of empowerment, enabled more challenging conversations to take place, which again, harnessed the potential to make progress across a health and social care system.

“You then start to understand why people might be behaving like that, so I suppose it gave me a clearer understanding of different behaviours and also a better awareness of my own reactions and behaviours, and those reactions and behaviours on both sides are what creates a difference.”

Ensure leadership and decision-making are distributed throughout all levels and functions

“So having more conversations with them about how their relationships with each other matter, what are our values together as a team, how are we going to work together, how are we going to manage difficult behaviours, our own and other people’s, so we’ve started to have some conversations that we’ve never had before and I do begin to see a change; there’s a few of that level of staff where I begin to see a real change and them saying, no, this is my responsibility, not yours. Kind of, back off; taking on responsibility that we wanted them to take and they’re now doing it more.”

Establish a compelling vision which is shared by all partners in the whole system

This leader described a different approach to engagement, developing a vision, and realizing the vision’s potential:

“I mean since where we were 12 months ago, I think we’ve made some significant headway in deliberately working more in an outward facing way, working more with our partners across the city, and not just interacting with them but actually taking more of a leadership and a facilitative role within the city, so we are one of a number of …providers....”

Promote the importance of values – invest as much energy into relationships and behaviours as into delivering tasks.

This leader recognized the importance of values in action – at all levels – and driving actions:

“When you stop being driven by the task and become more driven by, what’s our end goal, what are my values, what are our organisational values, what is it that we want to achieve for patients, then you start to have different conversations with people because you’re actually focussing on, this is the way we want to be”

Further, this leader had developed their personal courage to act – their ability to ‘be braver’.
4 Discussion

In this discussion section we consider our findings in relation to the objectives of the evaluation: the impact of the programme on participants and on local health and care systems; how different elements of the programme contributed to impact, and the influence of contextual factors; and tools that might be used for on-going monitoring of the programme by the NHS Leadership Academy.

We then reflect on the evaluation process and what might be learned for future evaluation of the Intersect Programme and other evaluations commissioned by the NHS Leadership Academy, bearing in mind that this evaluation is continuing for another 12 months.

4.1 Impact of the programme on participants and on local health and care systems

For the vast majority of participants we spoke to, for a variety of reasons, the Intersect programme was of tremendous value to them in terms of enhancing their systems leadership capability. This has mainly been described as a sense of greater confidence and personal power to work within those systems, rather than gaining tools or technical knowledge about systems. The following statement seems to encapsulate that impact:

"Intersect, it was a life changing, you know, I won't say moment, because it wasn't a moment, it's been a journey and I think it continues. But, it's certainly changed my practice, my approach to things, and made me operate in a very different way, but I think through that I am influencing others around me, so hopefully others are going to be operating in a very different way as well."

"But definitely for my life is virtually – what's the word – unrecognisable compared to when I started the course as far as belief in what I do and what I can do.....So kind of my personal confidence, personal self-belief, also having a direction of where I'm trying to get to in order to make a difference. So that kind of bigger picture has changed completely."

Our statistical analysis provides strong evidence in support of there having been a major impact on the self-efficacy of participants. Participants generally felt they had increased their emotional intelligence, transformational leadership behaviours and civic capacity by substantial amounts. All of which should contribute to improved systems leadership. There was some evidence from the observer statistics that the increase in transformational leadership behaviours in particular was noticeable to colleagues, but we cannot be certain about the extent of this. Various possibilities remain open. It might be that there have been substantial changes the emotional intelligence and civic capacity of participants that will become more visible to colleagues over time; or that our observers were not well placed to appreciate such changes; or that the changes were not visible to others, but were about internal confidence to be more active in inter-organisational initiatives.

Participants did identify some specific instances where they felt they had done new things, or done things better, as a direct result of the programme. They tended to report personal behaviour change rather than concrete impacts on local health and care systems, so we cannot assess the extent of such wider impacts. Such impacts may take time, and are subject to a wide range of contextual factors, particularly as they relate to complex systems change. The contribution to system impact of the apparent improvements in participants’ systems leadership resulting from the course remains an open question. It is also a moot point as to the extent to which sponsoring organisations have benefitted from participation of their staff in the programme. Some participants have changed job or role at least partly due to the programme, and did not necessarily remain with the same employer. While this was
very likely beneficial for the individuals concerned and to the new employer, and may have been beneficial to the previous employer if the staff member was a ‘square peg in a round hole’, some organisations may have been affected negatively by such job moves.

The evaluation has produced some statistical evidence in support of attributing change in emotional intelligence to participation in the Intersect programme, but this is relatively weak evidence. On the other hand, there is strong qualitative evidence from our interviews that changes in participants were due to the programme.

4.2 Contributions of different programme elements and contextual influences

Although the many participants attributed positive changes in themselves to their participation in the programme, they were not able to explain to us what exactly it was about the programme that had made the difference. For example, some participants referred to “lightbulb” moments and the like – realisations that came to them at some point, but not connected with any particular programme activity.

It seems to us that the Group Relations approach was likely to have been important in producing the radical changes that participants perceived – it is after all what is particularly distinctive about the programme and is underpinned by theory. But this would not have happened as effectively without the other elements of the programme coming together, such as the careful recruitment and selection process which picked out people with the resilience and other qualities to make a go of the programme, the complementary mix of other experiences and taught inputs, the qualities of participants themselves, and experienced, reflective facilitators who were flexible in growing the programme organically.

Our statistical analyses did not pinpoint any particular contextual factors (cognitive style, work overload, anticipation of changing role, organisational culture of action) as being important to the impact of the programme on the systems leadership capacities of participants. We do suspect however that impacts on local health and care systems might potentially be enhanced by a greater focus on action planning and on engaging that system through the programme. There is some theoretical support for this view.

We have already made suggestions for small, incremental improvements to the programme directly to faculty through the rapid feedback reports we produced during the course of the first programme. Our impression is that these suggestions largely mirrored thoughts that faculty were having as they reflected on their experiences of the programme. We did not provide any major insights but may have been helpful in giving a little extra impetus towards the implementation of some changes, such as faculty holding one-to-one sessions with participants.

It seems to us that the main considerations from this evaluation for the design of the programme going forward are:

- Providing additional focus on action planning for impact in the local health and care system. The early praxis group meetings at least (we didn’t gather information about later praxis group meetings) did not appear to support detailed, specific action planning and monitoring, and this may have lessened participants’ focus on system and organisational change.
- Related to this, although many participants did discuss the programme and their intended actions with their managers, we did not find much evidence (although again we did not look for it directly) of managers and organisations being engaged in the programme and becoming active partners in developing and supporting change. This...
appeared to be left very much to individual participants and their managers. The programme might perhaps benefit from trying to engage in a more structured way with stakeholders from the local health and care system.

- Continuing to reflect on how best to bring together a Group Relations approach with other programme elements. Group Relations is very different to the leadership development approaches that most participants will have encountered and it was found very difficult by some participants. If the programme is to produce radical change then it must be challenging, but not so challenging that participants are alienated, and it might be that participants would benefit from more support to help them through the programme. Such support might take the form of additional information about the approach and how it might affect participants, plus emotional support. The faculty did provide materials about the Group Relations approach as the programme proceeded, but some participants might perhaps have benefitted from having a greater understanding of the theory at an earlier stage. It is hard for faculty to provide emotional support because of the particular nature of Group Relations facilitation, and this therefore falls mainly on other participants and their existing support networks. It might be that having some further dedicated support available during modules would be beneficial for participants who are finding the programme particularly difficult and lack appropriate support networks. Some additional support for out of module networking between participants might also enhance the emotional and other support they provide for each other. Networking with other leaders was an important motivation and benefit for participants. There was a strong sense of community among a proportion of participants, who arranged to meet up as a group after the end of the programme, and this might be built upon.

4.3 Tools for on-going monitoring of the programme

The surveys that we used to gather data about the programme and its impact all captured significant changes that occurred and therefore are potentially relevant to programme monitoring. Response rates from programme participants were high, and could likely be maintained at high levels with shorter surveys than the extensive mix of surveys that we used in this evaluation.

Questions from our feedback surveys showed distinct trends over time during the course of the programme, and questions corresponding to different rates of change could be selected as indicators for monitoring in-programme participant engagement and impact.

The TEIQue, MLQ and civic capacity measures could also potentially be used to monitor post-programme impacts on participants. The measures are quite highly correlated, so for basic monitoring it would not be necessary to use all of them. Each has pros and cons:

- TEIQue is fairly quick to complete and has been widely used. As far as we are aware, however, no norm values have yet been published, and there might be a charge, as TEIQue is free to use only for research purposes.
- MLQ has also been widely used, relates to a core concept of public integrative leadership, and there are some published norms. It is however time consuming to complete, some of the questions may be becoming a little dated, and there is a charge for its use.
- The civic capacity measure relates to a core concept of public integrative leadership, contains items that refer concretely to the local system, is free to use, and is quick to complete. It is however untested outside of this evaluation, and there are no published norms.
4.4 Reflections on the evaluation process

We believe that the combination of qualitative and quantitative information from this evaluation has produced complementary evidence which provides strong evidence about the impact of the Intersect Programme on systems leadership. Grounding the evaluation in a programme theory derived from a literature review and insights with faculty members has enabled the evaluation to focus on collecting data which is relevant to the programme, as is demonstrated by the trends and statistically significant relationships which we have found. The online survey worked well and was accessible to participants and the qualitative information we collected through the survey and interviews provided material that was used to publicise the programme. The provision of rapid feedback to faculty worked fairly well, although sometimes it was difficult to time this so that results were available far enough in advance to allow any insights to be incorporated into the design of the next module. Provision of feedback on instrument scores also generated interest among survey respondents and likely contributed to the relatively high response rates. Some participants told us that they found this useful in thinking about their personal development.

There were some limitations and practical issues which might provide learning for future evaluations. Perhaps most problematic was a conflict between the provision of brief feedback of instrument scores to the participants by the evaluators and what the faculty were trying to achieve in the programme. Faculty wanted to encourage a healthy scepticism towards claims that a few figures could provide information that in some way captured something important about the complex reality of leadership, and felt that provision of such data sent a mixed message. In addition, there was no provision of support to help participants interpret the data appropriately.

This issue could have been prevented had there been greater interaction between the evaluators and the faculty in the early stages of the evaluation. The short time period between the commissioning of the evaluation and the first module of the programme was probably the main factor in this. Greater input of faculty members into the commissioning brief, and interaction with the evaluators at an earlier stage might also have improved the evaluation design. We have changed aspects in response to faculty input, collecting data over a longer period post-programme, for example, and putting greater emphasis on interviews and less emphasis on surveys. There were limitations however in what could be changed once the evaluation had started. As evaluators, we feel that some observation of module elements would have been insightful, but this was difficult to square with the Group Relations approach, and could not be resolved in the time available.

One potential improvement that it was not feasible to incorporate into the evaluation was the introduction of a case study element. The use of case studies might have produced data less reliant on participant self-reporting and enabled more exploration of local organisational issues and health and care system impacts. Our evaluation tried to address organisational impacts by focusing on the work-based change initiatives that participants were charged with developing by the programme. This proved problematic however, as these initiatives often changed as participants gained new insights through the programme. The evaluation therefore provided much more information about personal impacts than it did about workplace impacts.

Our attempt to use of structured instruments to provide quantitative evidence of impact through a matched comparator design provided important information, but was time consuming and only partially successful. For the statistical analysis to have sufficient power, high response rates were crucial. Response rates were sufficiently high among participants, but there was a substantial drop off in response rates from comparators and their observers post-programme, which made much of the comparison design infeasible.
5 Conclusion

Our overall conclusion is that the first Intersect Programme provided substantial value to many of the programme participants, providing them with insights into their leadership behaviours and giving them the confidence to engage more in the leadership of systems.

Our evaluation will continue in order to assess impact over a longer time period and the sustainability of change. We will produce a further evaluation report in summer 2017.