



National College for  
Teaching & Leadership

# **Leadership Targeted Support Fund 2015 to 2016: Analysis of the participant survey**

**Research brief**

**November 2016**



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## Executive Summary

The Targeted Support Fund (TSF) provides grant funding to schools to develop and deliver leadership programmes in areas or types of school where it has traditionally been difficult to recruit (for example faith and special schools, primary, coastal and small schools).

This report provides findings from an online survey which all participants from the 2015-16 programmes were asked to complete during summer term 2016. The survey was developed (with input from analytical experts) by the project team at the National College for Teaching and Leadership (NCTL). Participants were contacted at the end of their programme by their project lead and asked if they would be willing to complete it so that NCTL could assess how the project helped their development.

The aim of the survey was to gather participant feedback and identify any areas of the programme which may need changing for future rounds. The results of the survey provide feedback on respondents' perceptions of the programme, providing insight as to how well they feel the programme has helped them to increase their presence, develop their leadership style and ultimately to achieve next stage promotions.

The survey was sent to all 70 of the project leads by the teaching school council regional representative in their region. Each project lead completed an online end of project report in July 2016, where they reported their final participant figures. These show that 1,817 completed the programme. There was a clear expectation that it would be forwarded to all of the participants on the programme. A total of 539 responses were received, which represents a 30% response rate.

## Findings

The vast majority of respondents (93%) believed that the programme met its objectives; to close development gaps and provide confidence to either help recently qualified teachers (RQT) move in to middle leadership or to help aspiring heads (AH) gain their first headship position.

Overall, all aspects of the programme were rated very positively. For the majority of the statements, most participants agreed or strongly agreed that the programme had positive benefits for them. The most positively rated aspect of the programme was helping participants to gain a better understanding of their own strengths and limitations. Four aspects had slightly less agreement, which were, 'Improved my ability to motivate others', 'Given me greater confidence at undertaking interviews', 'Allowed me to construct stronger job applications', and 'Improved my facilitation/presentation skills'.

In open-ended responses, many reiterated benefits of the programme that were included in the multiple choice options around improved confidence and leadership skills. Another common theme included networking, sharing knowledge and hearing others' experiences.

The survey asked respondents when they thought they would apply for the next stage promotion; 25% (135) of participants had already gained a promotion, while others were

planning to in the next year. Only 9% of participants were not planning to apply for a next stage promotion.

# Background and aim

## Leadership targeted support fund

The purpose of the Leadership Targeted Support Fund (TSF) in 2015-16 was to provide grant funding to schools to develop and deliver leadership programmes in areas or types of school where it has traditionally been difficult to recruit (for example faith and special schools, primary, coastal and small schools). The key performance indicator is that at least 80% of participants' progress to next stage promotion within 18 months of completing the programme. This funding stream is part of a wider package of measures to support school leaders, or those who aspire to school leadership.

The aim of this funding stream is to help increase the flow of high quality school leaders (and improve the consistency of talent management approaches) from areas where it has traditionally been difficult to recruit. The fund was the result of a reconfiguration of NCTL's national targeted succession planning activity to make the work more school led than had been the case before.

Nine Teaching School Council (TSC) regional representatives (one in each region) were grant funded to lead the design and delivery of leadership development opportunities for teachers within their region. In consultation with the Teaching School Council (TSC) it was agreed that priority groups were primary, small, rural, faith, special and coastal.

In 2015-16 there were three strands of activity:

- **Aspiring Heads:** This strand focused on developing programmes within the priority areas to grow school leaders where it is hard to recruit to headship positions.
- **Recently Qualified Teachers:** Anecdotal evidence shows that some new teachers leave the profession in the 2nd, 3rd or 4th year of teaching. This fund allows school leaders to design and develop creative solutions to help this group bridge the gap to middle leadership.
- **Bespoke Regional strand:** TSC regional representatives were able to identify their own target group, based on local need, which had to be clearly identified and quantified prior to the release of funding.
- Round one took place in 2014-15 with 500 recently qualified teachers and 375 aspiring heads. Round two took place in 2015-16 with over 1,200 recently qualified teachers and over 500 aspiring heads benefitting.

The approach differed in each region. TSC regional representatives were allocated funding and asked to develop proposals across their region. Funding was released once proposals had been approved by NCTL, but key was the autonomy provided to the TSC representatives to develop bespoke programmes to suit their specific context and local circumstances. This led to a range of delivery models. For example, in the East Midlands the lead school designed a programme centrally and offered it to all teaching schools in the region, whereas 'next door' in the West Midlands the TSC representative conducted an

application round to distribute the funding and this resulted in over 20 projects being funded. All programmes had some form of classroom-style sessions, and an element of coaching/mentoring. The programmes tended to run for between 3-6 sessions, most of which were half day or day sessions. All looked at specific leadership styles and how to be a more confident leader.

This report provides findings from an online survey which programme participants were asked to complete during summer term 2016. The results of the survey provide feedback on respondents' perceptions of the programme, providing insight as to how well they feel the programme has helped them to increase their presence, develop their leadership style and ultimately to achieve next stage promotions.

## Approach

The survey was developed (with input from analytical experts) by the project team at the National College for Teaching and Leadership (NCTL). Participants were contacted at the end of their programme by their project lead and asked if they would be willing to complete it, so that NCTL could assess how the project helped their development.

The survey was sent to all 70 of the project leads by the TSC regional representative in their region. Each project lead completed an online end of project report in July 2016, where they reported their final participant figures. These show that 1,817 completed the programme. There was a clear expectation that it would be forwarded to all of the participants on the programme.

The survey was hosted on SmartSurvey<sup>1</sup> and was opened at the beginning of May and was closed on 1 August 2016. A total of 539 responses were received. This represents a 30% response rate.

## Limitations

The results presented here only reflect the views of the 539 individuals who responded to the survey, and therefore are not a complete representation of everyone who attended the programme. This means it is not a true random sample, and is therefore not possible to say if these responses are representative of the wider population of TSF participants.

Some of the results commented on in this report are based on small base sizes, which may not be representative of the wider population.

The findings from this survey are respondents' retrospective perceptions of how the programme benefitted them, not an independent evaluation. Therefore, without a comparison group we cannot say how many of these people would have applied for a promotion without having participated in this programme.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/>



## Findings

The results below are for both the Aspirant Headteachers (AH) strand and the Recently Qualified Teachers (RQT) strand. These were similar programmes that looked at specific leadership styles and how to be a more confident leader. The main way that they differed was the level of the learning; the AH strand was focussed on those very close to headship so the learning tended to be more strategic, while the RQT strand was for very new teachers so tended to be more of an 'introduction to leadership'.

## Demographics

Three quarters of survey respondents were female (391) and a quarter male (141). The majority were British (499), with 36 participants identifying themselves as from another background. A range of age groups took part in the survey; 11% were aged 18-24, 47% were 25-34, 41% were 35-54, and 1% was aged 55+. Respondents were from all regions of the country, with respondents from the East and West Midlands tending to be slightly less positive overall about the programmes. Annex A provides further breakdowns by region while Annex B provides the number of respondents on each strand by region.

## Results

The purpose of the programme was either to help RQTs move into middle leadership or aspiring heads to gain their first headship position. The vast majority of respondents (93%) believed that the programme met its objectives.

Participants were asked to rate their agreement with a series of statements, from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The statements related to how they felt the programme had benefitted them. Figure one shows the responses to these statements.

Overall, all aspects of the programme were rated very positively. For the majority of the statements, around 80% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that the programme had positive benefits for them. Four aspects had slightly less agreement, which were, 'Improved my ability to motivate others', 'Given me greater confidence at undertaking interviews', 'Allowed me to construct stronger job applications', and 'Improved my facilitation/presentation skills'. These aspects had fewer participants strongly agreeing and more who neither agreed nor disagreed. The most positively rated aspect of the programme was helping participants to gain a better understanding of their own strengths and limitations. Previous feedback from participants indicates that lack of confidence to apply for a promotion is one of the key barriers that participants on this programme face; however, the third most positively rated aspect of the programme was improving participants' confidence to apply for a next stage promotion – an important benefit of the programmes

Participants were asked whether there were any other benefits they had experienced from attending the programme, and provided their answers in a free text box. Ninety-eight participants provided additional information. Many reiterated what was included in the

multiple choice options around improved confidence and leadership skills. A common theme included networking, sharing knowledge and hearing others' experiences:

- “Being able to listen to a number of current educators with "real life" experience has been hugely beneficial and to be able to do this out of school has been even better!”
- “Superb opportunity to network and collaborate with other schools and organisations I wouldn't have been able to. Great links and training for trainers and a wide range of experienced leaders”
- “Helpful to build networks with other teachers in a similar position”
- “A fantastic opportunity to share experience and to network with other professionals who are in a similar position”
- “Forming contacts within my Local Authority and across other London Authorities was really useful”

Similarly, participants found it beneficial to hear from inspirational leaders and about outstanding practice:

- “I really enjoyed listening to the key speakers who were largely inspirational and had some super advice and experience to offer the group”
- “To see and hear about outstanding practice”
- “There was lots of insightful advice given by other leaders”

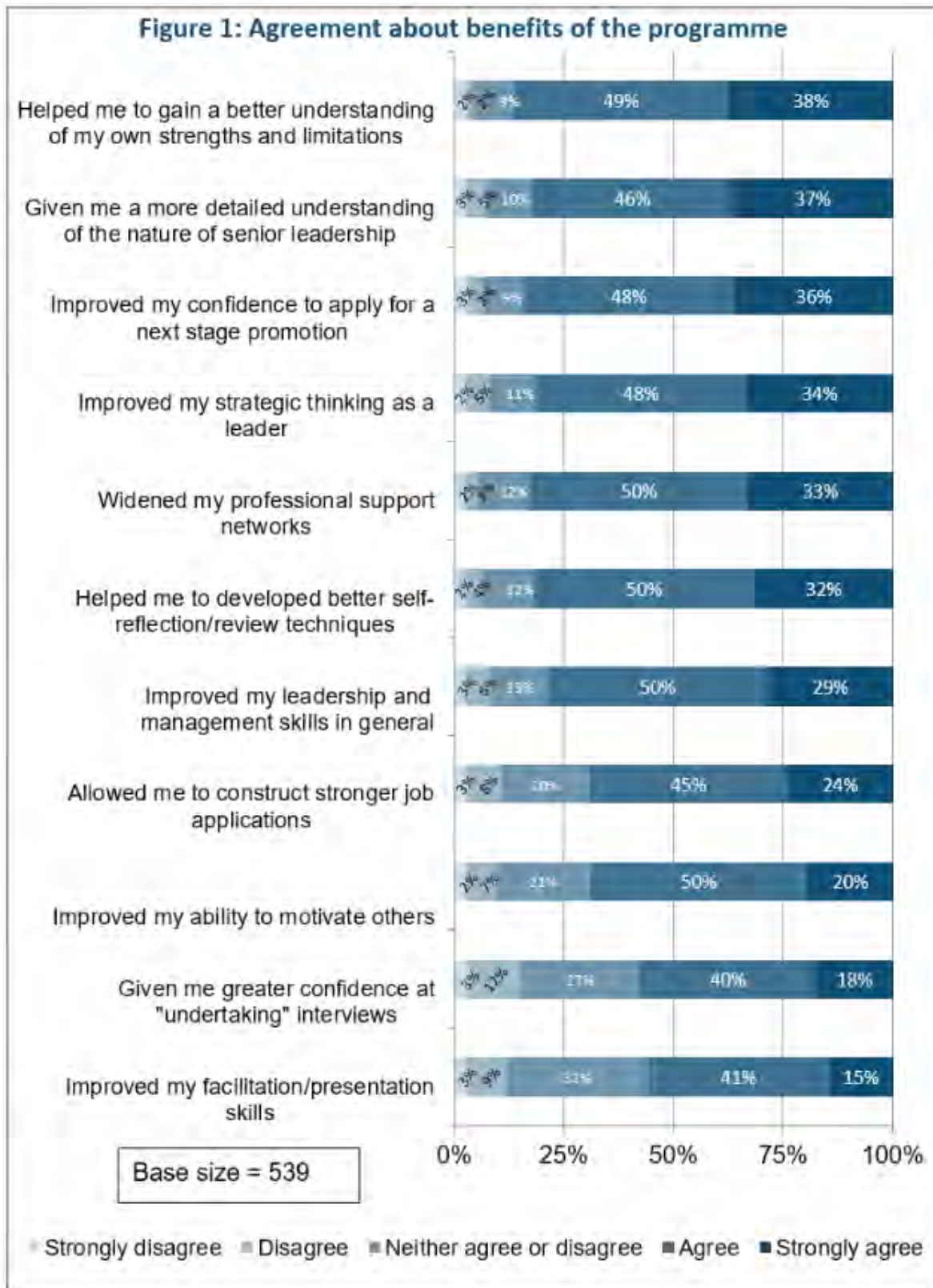
Many found the opportunity to visit other schools and shadow head teachers valuable:

- “At this point in my career, I hadn't seen many schools in action, and it was really beneficial to have a solid grounding for the theoretical side of the training”
- “Opportunity to shadow inspirational heads has been truly invaluable”
- “Shadowing a current Headteacher for a day is invaluable experience”

Several stated that the course gave them self-belief:

- “The biggest thing for me was the course instilled the belief that I could actually take on a headteacher position. It is now something I am working towards”
- “Self-belief!”
- “It has improved my self-belief that I can do a senior leader role”

Figure 1: Extent of agreement about benefits of the regional targeted support programme



A key performance indicator of the programme is that at least 80% of participants' progress to next stage promotion within 18 months of completing the programme. All programme

activity was completed by the end of June 2016, and programme leads will keep track of how many participants have been promoted by June 2017. The survey asked respondents when they thought they would apply for the next stage promotion; 25% (135) of participants had already gained a promotion. Table 1 provides details on when other participants were planning to apply for a promotion. Only 9% of participants were not planning to apply for a next stage promotion. Those participants (47) provided their reasons why not in an open ended question. Some participants stated that they had already been promoted, but other responses included wanting to maintain a good work-life balance, or family commitments preventing them from changing jobs:

- “Decided I prefer my work life balance as it is now so I can spend more time with family and continue working part time”
- “I have a 20-month old baby and am not ready to go back to full time whilst he is so young. I reflected on the head teacher role and realised it would need to be full time or a job share”
- “Planning on having a baby next year”

Several participants were happy in their current role so were not interested in a promotion:

- “I am currently very happy as a teacher and I would like to just continue becoming better at this”
- “I am very happy in my current post, and want to lead 'Nurture' projects to promote mental wellbeing in Early Years”

Some were either considering re-locating, or changing their career:

- “I am unlikely to apply for a promotion in the near future as I am currently debating whether to stay in the teaching profession”
- “I am going to be doing a PhD at university”
- “I am relocating and will be doing supply”

Other reasons included wanting to gain more experience:

- “I want to gain more experience in whole school matters so that I have a broader experience when applying for the role”

Or were related to frustrations with the education system:

- “Am not interested in promoting to the top heavy system of SLT”
- “Time of problematic change in primary education from Gov't at the moment which is calling me to question my future in the profession”.

**Table 1: When participants are planning to apply for next stage promotion**

	<b>Percentage of participants</b>	<b>Number of participants</b>
I have already gained a promotion	25%	135
During summer term 2016	5%	27
During autumn term 2016	7%	36
During spring term 2017	7%	36
During summer term 2017	10%	55
After summer term 2017	9%	49
As soon as an appropriate vacancy becomes available	29%	154
I am not planning to apply for next stage promotion	9%	47

## **Comparison of RQT and AH strands**

The programme delivery of TSF for both recently qualified teachers and aspiring heads is similar, however, when results are compared for the two, there are slight differences in some aspects of the programme<sup>2</sup>. As Table 2 shows, respondents who attended the AH programme reported significantly more agreement with the statements that the course 'Improved my confidence to apply for a next stage promotion', 'Widened my professional support networks', 'Allowed me to construct stronger job applications', 'Given me greater confidence at "undertaking" interviews', 'Given me a more detailed understanding of the nature of senior leadership', and 'Improved my leadership and management skills in general'. Other aspects of the course such as developing self-reflection techniques were rated similarly by both RQTs and AHs.

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<sup>2</sup> The Bespoke Regional Strand is not included here as there were only 23 respondents from this strand. Annex B provides the number of respondents on each strand by region.

**Table 2: Perceived benefits of the programme split by RQT and AH**

	Programme	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Significant difference*
Improved my confidence to apply for a next stage promotion	RQT	2%	6%	13%	50%	29%	Yes
	AH	4%	0%	5%	46%	45%	
Widened my professional support networks	RQT	1%	4%	18%	50%	28%	Yes
	AH	4%	3%	7%	48%	40%	
Improved my facilitation/presentation skills	RQT	2%	12%	28%	43%	15%	
	AH	3%	7%	35%	40%	15%	
Allowed me to construct stronger job applications	RQT	3%	13%	20%	43%	21%	Yes
	AH	3%	2%	21%	48%	28%	
Given me greater confidence at "undertaking" interviews	RQT	4%	18%	31%	37%	11%	Yes
	AH	3%	6%	22%	44%	26%	
Helped me to developed better self-reflection/review techniques	RQT	1%	7%	11%	50%	32%	
	AH	3%	2%	13%	49%	34%	
Helped me to gain a better understanding of my own strengths and limitations	RQT	1%	3%	10%	51%	36%	
	AH	4%	1%	9%	46%	41%	
Improved my strategic thinking as a leader	RQT	2%	8%	11%	48%	32%	
	AH	3%	3%	11%	47%	35%	
Given me a more detailed understanding of the nature of senior leadership	RQT	2%	7%	12%	48%	31%	Yes
	AH	3%	3%	10%	42%	42%	
Improved my ability to motivate others	RQT	2%	10%	20%	51%	18%	
	AH	3%	5%	24%	48%	21%	
Improved my leadership and management skills in general	RQT	2%	10%	13%	52%	25%	Yes
	AH	3%	3%	13%	47%	34%	

\* Significant at  $p < .05$ . Significant differences are between the numbers of RQTs vs AHs that strongly agreed with the statement.

## Conclusions

The data received from this survey indicates that the vast majority of participants felt the programme met the objectives set and believed that it had several positive effects, such as helping them to gain a better understanding of their own strengths and limitations, giving them a more detailed understanding of the nature of senior leadership, and improving their confidence of apply for a next stage promotion.

There was less agreement that the programme improved participants' facilitation and presentation skills. This may be because they are already well skilled in this area, having to do this on a daily basis in the classroom.

The opened ended responses on the survey were overwhelmingly positive, with many participants stating that they now have the confidence to apply for a next stage promotion. A common theme in responses was how beneficial having the opportunity to visit other schools was, as well as the opportunity to network and share experiences with like-minded people.

The results presented in this report only reflect the views of respondents to the survey, and therefore is not a complete representation of everyone who attended the programme. It is not possible to say if these responses are fully representative of the wider population of TSF participants. The findings presented are respondents' perceptions and provide feedback on the programme rather than a full evaluation.

## Annex A

Table 3: Percentage of respondents who 'Agree' or 'Strongly agree' with the benefits of the programme.

	East Midlands	East of England	London	North East	North West	South East	South West	West Midlands	Yorkshire and the Humber
Total number of respondents	57	43	58	80	73	70	84	20	54
Improved my confidence to apply for a next stage promotion	63%	88%	93%	93%	79%	91%	87%	75%	80%
Widened my professional support networks	58%	79%	93%	85%	79%	83%	94%	60%	93%
Improved my facilitation/presentation skills	39%	51%	72%	49%	53%	64%	65%	50%	50%
Allowed me to construct stronger job applications	35%	77%	83%	78%	67%	80%	68%	70%	63%
Given me greater confidence at "undertaking" interviews	25%	60%	76%	59%	58%	71%	61%	50%	50%
Helped me to developed better self-reflection/review techniques	54%	84%	88%	84%	82%	90%	85%	70%	89%
Helped me to gain a better understanding of my own strengths and limitations	74%	91%	93%	89%	85%	93%	83%	75%	89%
Improved my strategic thinking as a leader	63%	84%	93%	86%	79%	87%	81%	75%	78%
Given me a more detailed understanding of the nature of senior leadership	63%	88%	88%	86%	84%	91%	86%	75%	69%



	<b>East Midlands</b>	<b>East of England</b>	<b>London</b>	<b>North East</b>	<b>North West</b>	<b>South East</b>	<b>South West</b>	<b>West Midlands</b>	<b>Yorkshire and the Humber</b>
Improved my ability to motivate others	40%	74%	78%	75%	71%	77%	65%	65%	70%
Improved my leadership and management skills in general	47%	81%	90%	84%	84%	93%	80%	60%	70%

## Annex B

**Table 4: Number of aspiring heads, recently qualified teachers and bespoke regional strand participants who completed the programme, by region.**

	East Midlands	East of England	London	North East	North West	South East	South West	West Midlands	Yorkshire and the Humber
Total number of AH respondents	32	147	76		50	75	25	51	53
Total number of RQT respondents	138	116	25	83	234	53	140	292	124
Total number of respondents on the bespoke regional strand				86	17				

**Table 5: Number of aspiring heads, recently qualified teachers and bespoke regional strand survey respondents by region.**

	East Midlands	East of England	London	North East	North West	South East	South West	West Midlands	Yorkshire and the Humber
Total number of AH respondents	11	29	52	22*	33	53	22	8	13
Total number of RQT respondents	45	14	6	36	40	17	62	12	41
Total number of respondents on the bespoke regional strand	1*			22					

\*Note: individual's self-selected their programme on the survey and so it is likely that human error is responsible for participants indicating they took part in programmes on the bespoke regional strand and aspiring heads strand even though there were no such programmes in those regions.

## Annex C

### Questionnaire and data tables

1. Please indicate your region:

	Response percent	Response total
East Midlands	10.58%	57
East of England	7.98%	43
London	10.76%	58
North East	14.84%	80
North West	13.54%	73
South East	12.99%	70
South West	15.58%	84
West Midlands	3.71%	20
Yorkshire and the Humber	10.02%	54

2. Name of project

3. The programme you enrolled on was for:

	Response percent	Response total
Recently qualified teachers	50.65%	273
Aspirant headteachers	45.08%	243
Regional Strand	4.27%	23

4. The purpose of the fund is to help:

- Recently qualified teachers to move into middle leadership, or
- Those close to headship to gain their first headship position.

Overall, do you feel the programme met its objectives?

	Response percent	Response total
Yes	92.95%	501
No	7.05%	38

5. To what extent do you agree or disagree that your attendance on the programme has:

	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neither agree or disagree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Response Total</b>
Improved my confidence to apply for a next stage promotion	3.2% (17)	3.2% (17)	9.3% (50)	48.2% (260)	36.2% (195)	539
Widened my professional support networks	2.2% (12)	3.0% (16)	12.1% (65)	49.5% (267)	33.2% (179)	539
Improved my facilitation/presentation skills	2.8% (15)	9.1% (49)	32.3% (174)	41.2% (222)	14.7% (79)	539
Allowed me to construct stronger job applications	3.0% (16)	7.6% (41)	20.2% (109)	45.1% (243)	24.1% (130)	539
Given me greater confidence at "undertaking" interviews	3.3% (18)	11.9% (64)	27.1% (146)	40.1% (216)	17.6% (95)	539
Helped me to developed better self-reflection/review techniques	2.2% (12)	4.1% (22)	11.9% (64)	50.1% (270)	31.7% (171)	539
Helped me to gain a better understanding of my own strengths and limitations	2.4% (13)	2.0% (11)	9.1% (49)	49.0% (264)	37.5% (202)	539
Improved my strategic thinking as a leader	2.4% (13)	5.4% (29)	10.8% (58)	47.9% (258)	33.6% (181)	539
Given me a more detailed understanding of the nature of senior leadership	2.8% (15)	4.6% (25)	10.4% (56)	45.5% (245)	36.7% (198)	539
Improved my ability to motivate others	2.4% (13)	7.2% (39)	21.3% (115)	49.5% (267)	19.5% (105)	539

	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neither agree or disagree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Response Total</b>
Improved my leadership and management skills in general	2.6% (14)	6.1% (33)	12.6% (68)	50.1% (270)	28.6% (154)	539

If there are any other benefits that you have experienced please tell us about them here:

6. When do you think you will apply for next stage promotion?

	<b>Response percent</b>	<b>Response total</b>
I have already gained a promotion	25.05%	135
During Summer term 2016	5.01%	27
During Autumn term 2016	6.68%	36
During Spring term 2017	6.68%	36
During Summer term 2017	10.20%	55
After Summer term 2017	9.09%	49
As soon as an appropriate vacancy becomes available	28.57%	154
I am not planning to apply for next stage promotion (please say why):	8.72%	47

I am not planning to apply for next stage promotion (please say why):

7. Do you have anything further you would like to add?
8. On a scale of 1 - 5 how likely are you to recommend this programme to a professional colleague? (1 being least likely and 5 being most likely)

	<b>Response percent</b>	<b>Response total</b>
1	4.82%	26
2	3.90%	21
3	10.02%	54
4	27.46%	148
5	53.80%	290

9. Please select your gender:

	<b>Response percent</b>	<b>Response total</b>
Male	26.50%	141
Female	73.50%	391

10. Age category:

	<b>Response percent</b>	<b>Response total</b>
under 18	0.00%	0
18-24	10.65%	57
25-34	46.73%	250
35-54	41.12%	220
55+	1.50%	8

11. Ethnicity:

	<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Total</b>
British	93.27%	499
Irish	0.93%	5
Other	1.68%	9
Indian	1.31%	7
Pakistani	0.56%	3
Bangladeshi	0.00%	0
Any other Asian background	0.19%	1
White and Black Caribbean	0.19%	1
White and Black African	0.19%	1
White and Asian	0.19%	1
Any other mixed background	0.19%	1
Caribbean	0.37%	2
African	0.19%	1
Any other Black background	0.00%	0
Chinese	0.00%	0
Any other ethnic group	0.00%	0
I do not wish to disclose my ethnic origin	0.75%	4



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