The Ready Now programme: the positive action programme from the NHS Leadership Academy

Frequently asked questions

Introduction to the NHS Leadership Academy

The NHS Leadership Academy is part of the NHS and works for those involved in the health care system. We know excellent leadership has a direct, positive impact on our staff and their patients, so our aim is to deliver outstanding leadership across all health professions and beyond.

At the heart of what we deliver are our professional leadership programmes, available for those aspiring to leadership roles of all levels in the health and social care sector.

We also aim to be a point of reference for excellent health and social care leadership – both nationally and internationally. Support is also available through the Healthcare Leadership Model, which the Academy developed to help everyone in the NHS explore the behaviours which contribute to outstanding leadership.

Background to the Ready Now programme

Nearly 20% of the 1.3 million people that work in the NHS are from black and minority ethnic (BME) backgrounds - without this section of the workforce, many of whom are doctors, nurses and midwives, the NHS could not function.

Snowy White Peaks (Kline 2014) found that only 1 in 40 chairs and no CEO in London are BME, 17 of 40 Trusts have all white Boards but over 40% of workforce and patients are BME with a significant decrease in BME Board members. In addition not one BME executive director in Monitor, CQC, NHSTDA, NHS England, NHSLA, HEE, with a continual decrease in BME senior managers and nurse managers in recent years.

Ready Now is the innovative and inspirational positive action programme from the NHS Leadership Academy. The year-long programme will take senior leaders from a BME background on a transformational learning journey, helping them to realise their potential and to take that next step up to a more senior role, to the boardroom and beyond.

Following a thorough selection process, applicants will be selected to take part in Ready Now, which will run across the course of 2016. The programme will combine face-to-face residential development modules with self-directed and workplace-based learning. Participants will benefit from some coaching input and will also be asked to coach at least one other BME NHS colleague to help them develop their leadership potential.

The Ready Now programme builds on the huge success of similar activity overseen by the Leadership Academy, including the Breaking Through programme, which saw 75% of its alumni go on to secure more senior roles in the NHS. It also fits in to the NHS Leadership Academy’s wider body of work to promote diversity and inclusion throughout the health service, including its work to develop more inclusive NHS boards.
Who is the Ready Now programme for?

Are you at Band 8a, or the clinical equivalent, or above? Do you aspire to go further? Do you want to be instrumental in helping to make the NHS the best healthcare organisation in the world? Then this programme is made for you.

Ready Now is a positive action programme aimed at senior leaders from a BME background. Successful applicants will already have leadership experience as the programme is designed for leaders from underrepresented groups that want to become senior leaders in the health or social care system. The programme will positively reinforce your view that the NHS should be more inclusive and representative of the communities it serves.

How will I benefit from the Ready Now programme?

The main aim of the Ready Now programme is to realise your leadership potential with the specific learning needed to progress your career, and to provide the NHS with outstanding, inclusive leaders for the future. As you would expect, it’s a truly blended learning experience, drawing on cutting edge research on the issues that influence the progression of BME leaders and affect the NHS.

At the end of your journey, you’ll be in a position to showcase your leadership learning and have the confidence in yourself to influence a more inclusive NHS. You’ll be more adept at convincing others of your potential, by providing concrete evidence that supports the difference your learning has made in an extended work context.

How do I apply to the programme?

Applications to the Ready Now Programme can be made through the Leadership Academy’s website: http://www.leadershipacademy.nhs.uk/programmes/ready-now-programme/

You will need to seek the support of your line manager and organisation prior to applying as they will be required to support you throughout the programme.

Your local delivery partner can also help and support you in your application. Find out about your local delivery partner here: http://www.leadershipacademy.nhs.uk/about/local-delivery-partners-ldps/

How does the application process work?

The application process for Ready Now takes place in three stages:

- **First stage:** Written online applications welcome from 15th October 2015 – 30th November 2015.
- **Second stage:** Successful applicants will be asked to conduct a video interview 7th December 2015 – 18th December 2015.
- **Final confirmation:** Participants will be appointed from the shortlist from 4th January 2016.

When is the programme running?

The year-long Ready Now Programme will run throughout 2016 with the first cohort commencing on 1st February 2016.
How much does it cost to take part in the programme?

The Ready Now programme is fully funded by the NHS Leadership Academy. However, this does not mean it is free. Participants must commit themselves to the full journey of the programme and will be asked to sign a document expressing their intention to do so, prior to taking up their place.

If participants withdraw from the programme before fully completing it, and without extenuating circumstances agreed with the Leadership Academy, their organisation will be liable to bear the full cost of the programme **£3000**.

Where will the face-to-face modules take place?

Face to face modules will all take place at the NHS Leadership Academy’s offices in Leeds city centre. Directions to the Leadership Academy’s Leeds offices can be found on the Leadership Academy’s website.

Joining instructions will be sent to all participants before each module and will include details about how to find the Leadership Academy’s offices.

Details of the modules are as below

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**Coaching:** The successful applicants will be offered four two-hour coaching sessions.

Is the programme open to people working outside of the NHS?

The programme is open to anyone working in the NHS or providing NHS funded care. This will include some individuals working in social care, third sector and private sector organisations.

If you are unsure whether or not this includes you, please don’t hesitate to get in touch with the Ready Now team.

What is positive action?

The Equality Act 2010 allows service providers to take action that may involve treating one group more favourably where this is a proportionate way to help members of that group overcome a disadvantage or participate more fully, or in order to meet needs they have that are different from the population as a whole. This is called 'positive action'.

Under the provisions of positive action, organisations may lawfully take measures to meet special needs or to train, develop or encourage people from a racial group that is under-represented in particular types of work – for example senior leadership positions in the NHS.

Positive action is separate and distinct from positive discrimination, the preferential treatment of a particular group at the point of selection, which is illegal in this country.
How does this programme differ from the previous Ready Now and Breaking Through programmes?

The Ready Now programme is at the same time different and the same as the old Breaking Through programme. The same in that it is a positive action programme aiming to help fulfil the potential of talented staff from BME backgrounds and different in that it is an access programme to the Academy's core programmes including the Director programme (formerly Top Leaders), Nye Bevan, Elizabeth Garrett Anderson and Mary Seacole programmes. Ready Now will give participants the skills they need to successfully participate and get the most out of these other programmes.

Who do I ask for further information?

If you have any further questions, please don’t hesitate to get in touch with a member of the Ready Now team at the NHS Leadership Academy.

You can email us at readynow@leadershipacademy.nhs.uk or telephone us on 0113 322 5662.