

# Workforce Race Quality Standard (WRES) Experts Advancement Programme Update



**"This [programme] is unique because there is a personal focus to it - it's amazing how effective it has been given that it's all been virtual"**  
(Anonymous)

**"It has been really helpful, not only for development but also it has simplified things and been a huge wellbeing boost. I think it has helped me put some negative experiences well and truly behind me and to look up and out!"**  
(Anonymous)

**"... many of the group are BAME and having that gives comfort that you are not the only one, there are people to aspire to."**  
(Anonymous)

**"The WRES Experts Advancement Programme, has given me the confidence to move up in my career, challenge systems and processes, put in mechanisms that highlight inequality. I have realised that I am a leader and will be a leader for the NHS in the many years to come, paving the way for others ..."**  
(Anonymous)

## Overview

The WRES Experts Advancement Programme was launched in June 2020 by the South East Region EDI team. There are 14 WRES Experts in the region.

Over half had advanced in their career by January 2021 – 6 had moved on to higher paid roles and others were involved in stretch assignments. At the start of the programme, on a scale of 1 to 10, participants rated themselves as a 4 or 5 in terms of confidence. By January 2021, this rating had risen to 7 and 8. Over 80% of the Experts agreed that they benefitted from being brought together and that being able to network had helped with their work and confidence.

A brochure was produced with biographies of those on the programme. This helped promote the group and established their subject matter expert status in the region.

## Process

Before the launch of the programme, the Experts were surveyed. Their responses underpinned the subject matter of workshops and meetings. The overarching theme was to find ways for individuals to psychologically give themselves 'permission' to move forward and recognising that they have a right to do so, regardless of the impact routine micro-aggressions and experiences of overt discrimination had on their outlook.

## Content

Apart from regular 1-2-1 coaching, WRES Experts have attended meetings and workshops covering the following areas. Some of the workshops were delivered by subject matter experts from other industry sectors. The workshops and meetings provide a psychological safe space for WRES Experts to support one another and benefit from the vast experience they all have as a collective group.

NHS Boards and Leadership	Strategy and influencing for change
Online skills and presence	Communicating with impact
Gantt charts and organising tools	Career and interview tips
Identifying strengths and weaknesses	Stress management
Clarify career development goals	Confidence and self-esteem
Personal biases and progression	Psychological safety

In addition to the above, the WRES Experts have come together for consultation meetings on the following topics: COVID-19 and risk assessments; staff vaccinations; national 6 actions; BAME staff networks.

## Evaluation

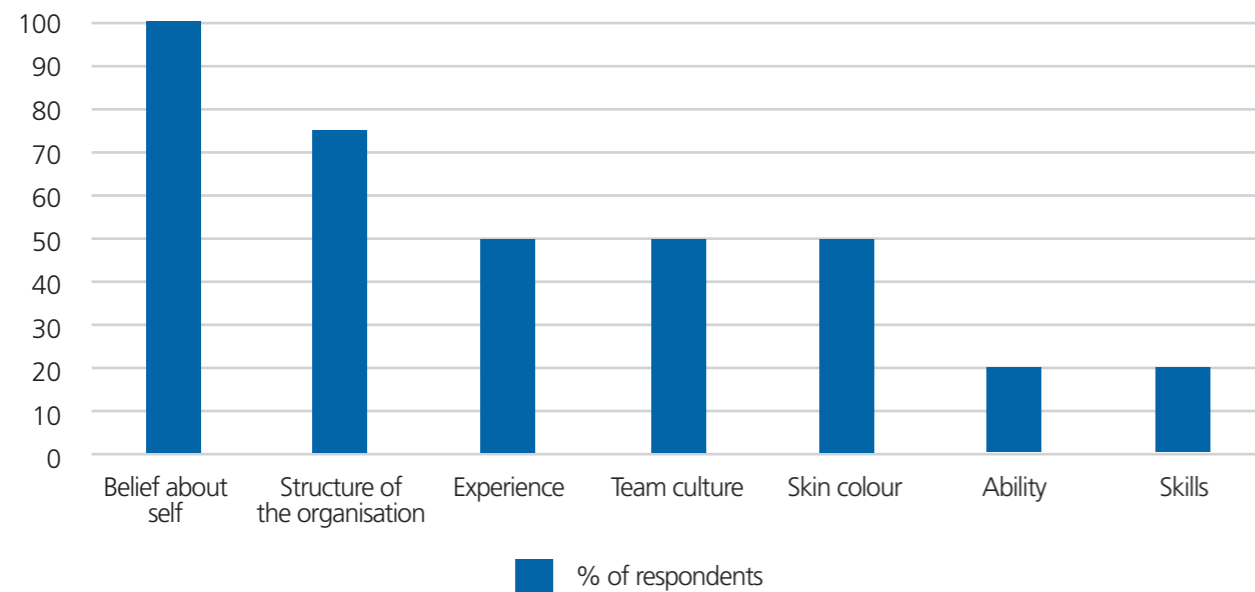
### Which sessions have you found the most useful?

1. Gantt chart and organisational tools
2. WhatsApp communication and staying in touch
3. Group meetings and networking in general
4. Career tips and exercises
5. Coaching sessions

Although coaching was listed as the least useful, qualitative feedback revealed that this was because participants wanted more regular sessions and felt they would have benefitted more. Staying in touch with the programme lead (Cavita Chapman) and other participants via WhatsApp was considered community building and helping to improve self-esteem and general wellbeing. In general, over 90% of participants felt that the programme helped them gain clarity around career development goals.

### What do you feel has prevented you from moving up in your career?

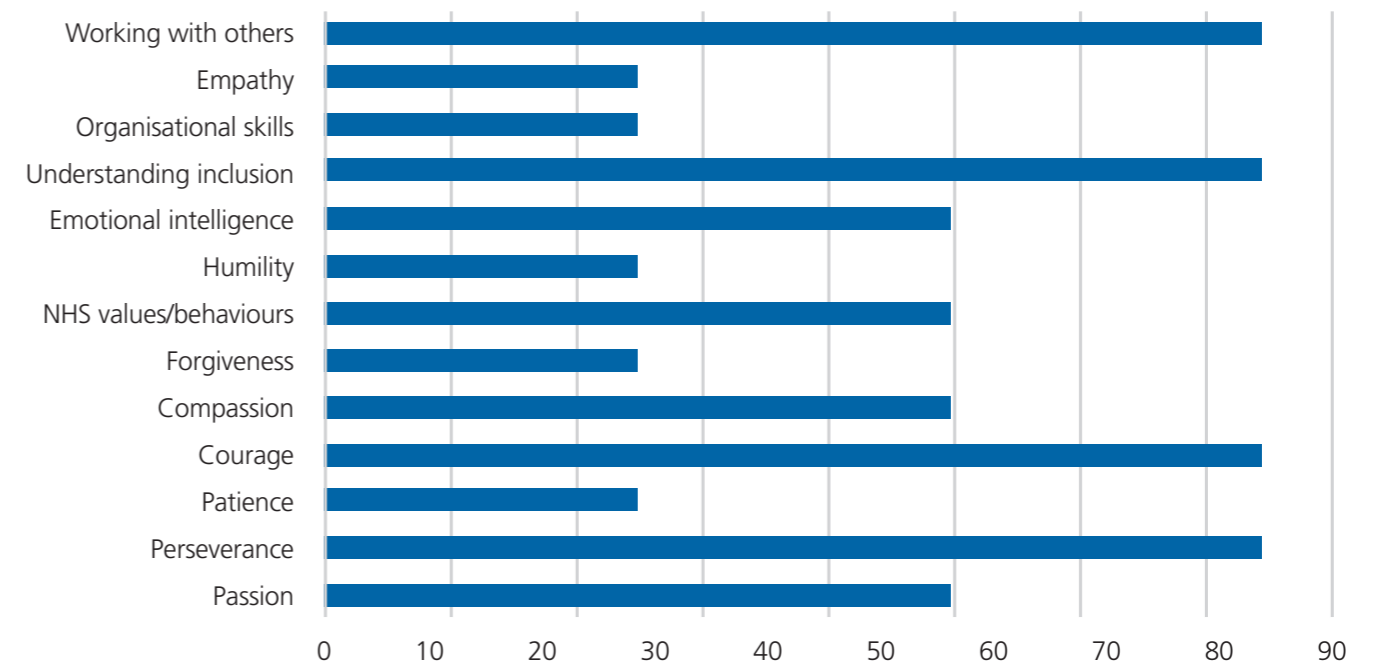
Belief about self was the most cited reason holding participants back from moving up in their career.



### In what ways has the programme improved your leadership skills?

Over 70% of participants felt that working with others, courage and perseverance had improved by being on the programme.

Areas considered to have improved, %



### How much has the programme challenged personal beliefs that may be holding you back in career and professional advancement?

Participants rated the programme highly at an average of 9 (out of a possible 10).

## Conclusion

Developing the WRES Experts in the region has benefitted organisations, the Experts and improved communication. The Experts have been given the opportunity to work with one another, network and share lived experience about their leadership journey. The opportunity to talk to one another in a safe space and have dedicated support for their individual career journey has helped over half of the Experts move into more senior roles and/or duties in less than a year.

## WRES Experts Advancement Programme Update V 1.0 19/05/2021

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