

South East Aspiring Executive Talent Pool:

Information Pack

December 2024

Overview of the approach, joining process and new leadership and career development offers for potential pool members and leaders who can identify them.

Pool applications by 30th January 2025

You can request our [full Equality Impact Assessment](#).

Welcome

We're building the future of health and care fuelled by innovation, impact, and excellence—and we need diverse leaders to help shape it. The **South East Aspiring Executive Talent Pool** is an opportunity for exceptional leaders to contribute to our shared mission.

For those who aspire to join, this initiative **offers unparalleled opportunities** for growth and influence. Participants gain access to **leadership and skills development**, build **relationships** with peers and current Executives, and get **support to secure roles** where they can have great **impact on care**.

For those nominating, this is your **chance to spotlight exceptional talent** and help shape the next generation of leadership. We value different perspectives and are committed to creating a supportive, inclusive environment where we can all thrive.

Whether you see yourself as a candidate or know someone who exemplifies our vision and values, **this is the moment to act**. Together, we can build a future of shared success and lasting impact.

Take the first step today by **joining, nominating, or learning more** about this transformative opportunity.

We're here to guide and support you every step of the way—let's shape the future together.

Anne Eden, Regional Director (pronouns: she/her)
NHS England South East

About the Pool

"This pool is an opportunity not just for individuals to grow and develop but it also enables us to progress our people across health and care in the South East. The leaders of tomorrow are here today, let's give them the tools they need to thrive. Join us in shaping the future."

Louise Hall (she/her), Director of Workforce Training and Education,
NHS England South East

Purpose and Benefits

We will identify, develop, support and connect our top talent with employers. We will do this by building a diverse, thriving pool and pipeline of leaders who deliver effective, safe, and sustainable health and care services for the South East.

Pool purpose

- **Recognise and retain** our talented leaders.
- **Connect employers with aspirants** ready to take on the top jobs now and in the future.
- Ensure access to **development** and support is **purposeful, equitable** and **transparent**.
- **Creating a pool and pipeline of thriving leaders** who provide effective, safe and sustainable health and care services for all our people in the South East.

Member benefits

- A **higher profile** and increased regional visibility for career progression opportunities.
- **Support and opportunities** from beyond your organisation to increase your insight, skills and networking.
- **Expert guidance** to help you turn your career goals into reality.

Aspiring Exec Pool Summary

Eligibility: We seek **Aspiring Executives** in health and care, who expect to be ready within 2 years, having high levels of **Aspiration, Ability, and Agility**. The developmental and candidate-led application is made with the support of an **Executive Sponsor**.

Joining: Applicants apply by submitting a **Portfolio** (Personal Statement, CV, Sponsorship Form), ratified by the **South East Regional Talent Review Board**.

Readiness review: The pool is segmented to help prioritise appropriate development, mobilise people into roles more easily and strengthen our pipelines.

Support: Members **co-design a personalised Executive Development** programme with support of a Talent and Leadership specialist that grows strengths and address gaps.

Refine and return: Applicants who are considered more than 2-years away will receive feedback with tangible actions to enable reapplication.

Members graduate from the pool on appointment, with on-boarding support.

Eligibility summary

Readiness measures are provided within the Portfolio Guide.

Part-time contracts, parental leave, caring responsibilities, or any protected characteristic need not be a barrier.

- **Aspiration: You aspire to an Executive role in the South East NHS services.** This includes aspiring VSM-level leaders in Provider, Primary Care, ICBs, ALBs, and similar health and care organisations in our region.
- **Ability: You have the expertise, skills, and mindset to achieve this goal within two years.** Your Sponsor endorses your readiness for an Executive role as a sensible and appropriate next step.
- **Agility: You actively seek support and stretch and apply your abilities in new contexts.** You commit to actively engaging in development for yourself and other members of the pools.

Ambitious but not feeling ready? Get on the [Talent Map](#). You might be more ready than you think.

Executive Sponsors

Aspirants need a Sponsor to apply. Sponsors play a pivotal role in shaping an aspirant's career trajectory by endorsing their potential and helping them

turn career ambitions into achievable goals.

Unlike mentors or coaches, Sponsors **actively advocate** for candidates. They have firsthand experience of the candidate and executive-level insight to guide them.

A Sponsor's Role:

- **Endorse realistic goals:** Sponsors help develop achievable objectives to turn ambitions to reality, offering feedback that clarifies needs and maintains motivation.
- **Know the candidate:** Sponsors have direct experience managing the aspirant, giving them a clear understanding of their unique strengths, gaps and potential.
- **Understand the role:** Sponsors use their own executive-level experience to help aspirants navigate challenges, opportunities, and expectations effectively.
- **Invest in their success:** Sponsors publicly endorse their candidate and use their social capital, helping turn a promising candidate into a successful appointee.

Sponsors may support multiple candidates but must dedicate time and effort to building trust, setting clear boundaries, and maintaining effective communication throughout the process.

The **Portfolio Guide** covers how to find one and practical tasks. Access it by registering on our [Talent Map](#).

Member offers

“This is more than encouragement, it’s empowerment. Let us help you turn potential into progress.”

Karen Chummun (she/her), Deputy Director People, Leadership and Culture
NHS England South East

Offer overview

- Pool members **co-design a personalised Executive Development** programme with the support of a Talent and Leadership professional.
- Your **cohesive plan** connects a range of opportunities - including our **regional** menu, **national** programmes and support from your **employer**.
- We look comprehensively at **work-based learning**, formal and informal **development, individual support** and of course, prioritise **work-life balance** and your wellbeing.
- We ensure it **reflects your needs**, is **fully accessible** and is **aligned to your goals**, keeping you motivated and progressing.
- We help you **build your own tools and habits** to continue curating your own development programme for the rest of your career.

The 5 part offer includes:

- Home room
- Personal insight
- Learn and grow
- Career support
- Remove barriers

What do you already have in place?

Home room

Your Home Room is a consistent, facilitated peer group where you share successes, challenges, and progress with colleagues at similar career stages across health and care.

Unlike our menu of content-based workshops, it offers continuity with regular meetings (1.5 hours every 4-6 weeks) led by experienced Executive Coaches who are experts in Leadership and Talent. They provide individual and group guidance as well as a safe space to supportively hold yourself and others to personal career goals.

Home rooms are facilitated for the first 3-6 months, after which the group may choose to self-facilitate. While optional, active participation is highly recommended for maximising this valuable growth opportunity.

Our previous group fed back that this was an incredibly impactful part of the support they received from us. Members valued listening to others’ career goals and challenges, having a safe space to share successes without fear of judgement as well as encouragement on the days when stepping up felt too much.

Personal insight

As an Executive, self and social awareness are vital. Here are some of our psychometric and diagnostic tools that can help you tap into and use your personal strengths more effectively.

When used alongside [Executive Coaching](#) impact can be even higher.

- **Hogan tools:** Understand what drives you, your strengths, potential derailers, how to manage them all to best effect.
- **Cultural intelligence:** Understand your skills and preferences for different cultural contexts – organisations, ethnicities, generations and professions.
- **Healthcare Leadership Model:** Explore your leadership style, preferences and breadth and consider how others experience your words and behaviours.
- **NHS Board Leadership Competencies:** This new 360° feedback tool lets you review your competencies the same way they will be measured at interview.

Learn and grow

Whether you seek a [formal programme](#), or more focused elements, we can signpost or support.

Here are some examples of our offers coming soon. We curate support from current and emerging themes across our pool. Share your needs - chances are you're not alone.

Increase your insight

The Inner Shift – Mastering the mindset of Transitions.

Dr Gilly Shapiro explores the relationship and psychology of our experience of transitions. Unlock your most resourceful self to be ready to step up and lead others through change.

Candid conversations on career success.

A series of workshops with current Executives, sharing the daily reality and insights into their success in the role, not just at the interview.

Taking the reins on your career conversation.

Discover what makes great career conversations and how to lead your manager toward better outcomes.

From networks to relationships.

Dr Gilly Shapiro helps you find YOUR way into authentic, energising networking and relationships to grow your career.

Grow your abilities

Media skills for Executives.

Join Adrian Warner for our half day face-to-face workshop preparing your public narrative for memorable and impactful media interviews.

Learn on the job: Turning work into growth.

This practical virtual workshop will look at the NHS Leadership Competencies and help you recraft your role into a learning playground.

Career hacks with AI.

Everyone else is using it, so why aren't you? This mini virtual workshop looks at a range of tools to help you boost your productivity for work, career development and learning.

The Left shift: Citizen-centred collaborations.

Consider how we can create the conditions for more collaboration and co-production in healthcare settings with service users and citizens as equal partners.

Practical transitions

Telling stories with a growth mindset.

Gilly Shapiro helps you tell interview stories that demonstrate your commitment to growth.

Mastering Executive-level interviews.

Stephen Lambe runs through what's different at Exec-level interviews and how to succeed.

Beyond the template – CVs that succeed.

Join Stephen Lambe and Fi Rodden for a practical workshop to understand the principles and recraft your CV with your peers, experts and AI tools.

Succeeding with Stakeholders. Learn how to ace stakeholder panels. This virtual session covers what they look for and how to deliver it authentically.

Career hacks and head-hunters. Join our 'poacher-turned-keeper' Moira Johnson and learn how to get what you want from the exec search firm.

Career Support

- **Career conversations:** We keep this short and regular. A 30-minute Scope for Growth-based conversation to help set your plans and check in on your progress as often as needed, but ideally quarterly.
- **Mock interviews:** Book in a practice run up to 3 months in advance of a planned recruitment or assessment centre to help you tune up. Like any skills, we get rusty over time. We can also provide guidance on how to set up your own.
- **CV Review: Human and AI-Driven Insights to Perfect Your Resume.** We provide both expert human reviews and cutting-edge AI-based reports to highlight your strengths, identify gaps, and ensure your CV reflects you at your best.
- **Career coaching:** We have a range of specialist NHS and external coaches who can help you navigate a wide range of issues from career planning,

clarifying your motivations and aspirations, preparing for recruitment, Remove barriers and more.

- **Executive mentors:** We connect you with current Executives, CEOs or NEDs for conversations that increase your insight into the role to better understand and realise the unique executive you will be.
- **Upcoming roles:** Employers often share roles with us in advance of advertising so we can connect them with candidates.
- **Virtual resources:** Pool members get access to extensive national and regional libraries of resources to help you plan, prepare for interviews and more. Workbooks, guidance, videos and tools to create your own 'modules'.

Remove barriers

We need diverse leaders to address staff, health and care inequalities. We're here to help with support, expertise, and connections to keep you moving forward. Want a safe space with others facing similar issues, we offer that too.

Let's amplify diverse role models. If you see a gap, step up and let us know.

Strong female leads: For all female-identifying members

Chasing Sparks – A creative reset for life and career. This half-day workshop offers a safe space to reflect and craft joyful plans that prioritise you for once.

Unapologetically you: 'Good girl' to owning your worth. Jane Galloway tackles imposter syndrome, mum-guilt, menopause and caregiving. Reclaim your power and dream big.

Aspiring Disabled Directors

Disabilities represent 70% of our healthcare spend, yet under 5% of Board members declare Disabilities.

This group is for members with long-term physical and mental health conditions, whether you identify as Disabled, or not.

Focused on accessibility and staying well while stepping up.

Explore our [full Enabling Our Disabled Talent report](#) and [summary](#).

Let's talk about race. Our work with black and minority ethnicity pool members has been showcased as best practice nationally. We have dedicated support to help you navigate the impacts of racism personally and professionally. We can help you to heal or handle the situation now.

Neurospicy Executives: **Not less, just not you**

An estimated 20% of people are neurodivergent, rates may be higher among executives. Join our workshop miniseries on building neuroinclusive boards. Basic assessments and neuroinclusive coaching support are available too.

Trauma-informed intersectional career support

Exclusion and discrimination based on any characteristic can cause long-term impacts on your career. We have coaches and other experts who can support you 1:1 for both practical and transformational change.

For active allies:

All for one: Board Leaders with High Impact on EDI.

Join now

Apply to join the South East Aspiring Executive Pool in 4 easy steps.

1. **Get on the map.** Applicants express interest by joining the [SE Talent Map](#). Register to access your Portfolio Guide or [contact us](#) to access it in another format.
2. **Secure support.** Members require an **Executive Sponsor** who endorses their application. If you can't find your own. **Let us know** and we will do what we can to help.
3. **Submit a portfolio.** Your portfolio includes a personal statement, CV and Sponsorship form. Full guidance on what to include and how to submit are in the Portfolio Guide.
4. **Path forward.** Your Portfolio is reviewed by a regional panel and your outcome is shared. All Portfolio submissions will receive feedback and tangible next steps.

Further information

Join one of our virtual sessions to hear more and get more information in the **Portfolio Guide** once you register on our [Talent Map](#).

Links to the drop-in meetings:

- [Monday 23rd December, 12.00 - 13.00pm](#)
- [Tuesday 7th January, 9.30am – 10.30am.](#)
- [Friday 10th January, 12.30 – 1.30pm.](#)

You can [ask a question anonymously here](#).

Fiona Rodden (she/her) is the Head of Talent and Leadership, Exec Pipeline

[Book in a 1:1 if you can't make a group session or want to discuss details privately.](#)

Fi runs the Exec pools and is an experienced Executive Coach (ILM7) with over 20 years coaching and working in Leadership, Talent and Development with both a clinical and managerial background.

Your move

Act now.

1. **Share the message.** Great leaders create more leaders. Send this pack to current and high potential Executive leaders.
2. **Get on the [Talent Map](#).** Sharing your goals turns them into possibilities. Register to access your Portfolio Guide or contact us to get it in another format.
3. **Prioritise.** Your time is your currency, spend it on what is important to you. Protect time to plan and take your next steps.

Not found what you need? Check these out instead:

- [Competencies for Board Leaders](#)
- [NHS Executive Leaders' Wellbeing Programme](#)
- [Formal leadership programmes](#)
- [Senior leader resources](#)
- [Executive Career Learning hub](#)

Contact details

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