

Leadership & Management Programme



The organisation

Sport England is focused on helping people and communities across the country create a sporting habit for life. The organisation invests in a wide range of sports with the aim of increasing grassroots participation and supporting talent development.

Background and the challenge presented

Sport England, as the public agency charged with overseeing the funding of community sports, set out to increase regular participation via investment in 46 sports, through their national governing bodies (NGBs).

Recognising the challenges of increasing participation and requiring a strong return on its investment of Government and National lottery funding, Sport England wanted to support the development of key senior managers within NGBs.

Specifically this would focus on those individuals charged with the development of grassroots participation in their respective sports.

Aims and objectives of Sports England

Sport England therefore wanted to provide senior personnel within NGBs with an opportunity to develop a broad base of management and leadership skills to equip

these individuals with a more comprehensive understanding of business strategy, the ability to think strategically in their roles and increase their levels of influence, both inside and outside of their NGBs.

Working in partnership with Cranfield's Centre for Customised Executive Development (CCED), Sport England embarked on a journey to develop a bespoke management and leadership programme, specifically designed to meet the NGBs' learning needs and intended to help inject new skills and capacity across the NGBs. This would then allow the NGBs to achieve greater success in the future, and ultimately deliver against their participation and growth targets.

How the need was met

The Sport England Leadership & Management Programme for Development Directors of NGBs, and other personnel

employed in similar development roles, was designed as a modular programme.

Each of the programme's three modules covered two key aspects of the Development Director's role, namely:

- Strategy and Strategy Application
- Marketing (including Key Account Management) and Operations
- Leadership
- Organisational Culture.

Developing a unique and tailored programme

Sport England's senior team were very involved with the programme's design and development from the start and played a large part in shaping the programme that emerged.

Some of the Sport England senior team also took on roles as 'Module Sponsors' (also referred to as 'Topic Champions') to help bridge the gap between Cranfield's academic input and the local context of the NGBs.

The NGBs were also engaged throughout the design phase to ensure that the programme material matched their learning needs.

The programme itself is comprised of face-to-face delivery (with each session spanning three days), as well as virtual (tutor-led) sessions, one-to-one coaching, action learning sets and workplace projects.

What has the programme achieved

The programme has been a 'game-changer', providing all those involved with a fresh perspective of their organisations, their role as leaders within their organisations, and their relationships with others.

This has brought about a massive shift as delegates, their line managers, and sponsors, have all reaped the benefits of the learning opportunity.

One of the most significant achievements of the programme has been to start to re-define the Development Director role, giving those in this position (and similar roles) a much better appreciation of the importance of their role and a better understanding of the impact that they have on the NGBs and their delivery of participation and growth targets.

A by-product of this is the increased attraction and cachet of these roles for those working in the sector.

The Leadership & Management programme is delivered over a nine-month period. Alumni are then given the opportunity to re-engage with the learning journey, through a series of one-day 'Lead & Learn' sessions that are offered on a quarterly basis.

What benefits have come from the programme?

A number of benefits, and outputs, have been derived from the programme. These include the following:

- Up-skilling all the delegates in the areas of; strategy, marketing, operations, leadership and organisational culture
- Increasing the delegates levels of influence both inside and outside of the NGBs
- Developing a sharper business focus inside the NGBs, becoming more commercially astute, with a greater sense of accountability and responsibility for delivering results
- Stimulating a new, raised, level of co-operation and collaboration across the NGBs
- Increasing participation in local grassroots sport through more strategically managed and organisationally aligned new initiatives.

"It has certainly changed the way that I work and also my understanding of how to take a strategy forward."

Brendon Pyle, Development Manager, Golf Foundation

Facts and Figures

The first cohort for this nine-month programme began in January 2011, with the second cohort now having graduated on September 19th 2012.

To date, 33 delegates have completed the programme. Programme delegates are Development Directors, and other key senior officials, from various UK sporting NGBs, such as:

- The FA (Football Association)
- The LTA (Lawn Tennis Association)
- Badminton England
- England Athletics
- British Gymnastics
- British Cycling

Why Cranfield

"Sports Development Directors play a vital role in achieving our goal of driving up participation in community sport, so it's vital that our sector attracts and invests in talented individuals.

Development Directors are influencing the sporting behaviours of huge numbers of people and we're proud to be supporting their work and continual improvement.

Sport England's work with Cranfield is helping community sport's senior leaders to hone their skills and share their expertise with others doing similar roles in different sports."

Phil Smith, Director of Sport, Sport England