Aspiring chief operating officer programme
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Starting in summer 2018, NHS Improvement and Ashridge Executive Education will launch a development programme for aspiring NHS provider chief operating officers (COOs). The programme will provide up to 25 senior professionals from inside and outside the NHS with the opportunity to take part in an intensive development process, bringing out the necessary leadership qualities and skills to take up a role fundamental to improving the quality of patient care in the NHS. NHS Improvement will run this exciting programme in partnership with Ashridge Executive Education who have an international reputation for developing healthcare leaders.
Who is the programme intended for?

The programme is aimed at individuals identified as having the potential to move into their first chief operating officer role within the next 12 to 18 months. As a broad guideline, applicants already working in the NHS may currently be operating at Band 8D to Band 9, or equivalent, in an assistant director or head of service role. However, we want to stress that we also encourage applications from suitably qualified people outside the NHS and are keen to recruit from a diverse range of backgrounds and experiences, including people from clinical and non-clinical backgrounds.

You will be able to demonstrate you have the initiative and determination for a post at this level and, the commitment to complete a challenging development programme that will make demands on your energy and time. You will be ready and looking for stretching development that challenges your view of what it takes to be a successful leader at this level in the NHS. In addition, you will be interested in being part of a learning community, contributing to the development of others as well as your own. You will be someone who aspires to offer patient-centred operational leadership and quality improvement.

Please note the programme will be fully funded by NHS Improvement. We only ask you to invest your time and energy, and to cover your cost of travel and any accommodation on the nights before any of the modules begin.
Design components:

The programme will be anchored in a number of core themes including the development of compassionate, inclusive and patient-centred leadership. Research shows that leaders who model compassion, inclusion and dedication to improvement in all their interactions are the key to creating cultures of continuous improvement in health and care (Source: National Improvement and Leadership Development (2016), Developing People, Improving Care).

The programme will help you develop the key skills and capabilities required to be a successful chief operating officer, including:

- learning how to operate effectively at board level, influencing and managing important stakeholders, and the essentials of good governance
- understanding how to successfully lead healthcare operations and meet necessary targets
- exploring how successful chief operating officers create supportive, collaborative and high performing ‘patient-focussed’ cultures
- gaining exposure to good improvement practice and how it improves patient experience
- developing the personal resilience necessary to function in the COO role
- learning from healthcare leaders who have been successful in the role
- developing your interview skills in readiness for your next career move to COO.
Delivery components:

Over the period of a year the programme will consist of:

- a recruitment process that will include a panel interview
- a formal launch event that will introduce the programme and form the learning community
- completion of psychometrics and a personal development plan, supported by a professional coach
- three residential modules and two regional workshops with Ashridge Executive Education, that will expose you to new ways of thinking about leadership, change, operational and quality improvement, and build your skills and confidence as a leader
- shadowing senior leaders in other service areas
- completion of a work-based ‘stretch assignment’ in groups which you will present to a panel of Ashridge Faculty and programme sponsors in a closing conference.

Benefits:

Among the benefits to joining this unique learning community will be:

- first-hand insight into the real demands of the COO role and what it takes to lead successfully at that level
- equipping you with the skills to develop high quality local health and care systems
- further developing compassionate and inclusive leadership capability, presence and impact
- building knowledge of improvement methods and how to use them at all levels
- access to knowledge of best practice in patient-centred operational leadership and quality improvement in the NHS
- building your professional profile in the NHS, career development advice and interview preparation
- expert feedback and coaching on your performance, capability, personal impact and top level leadership potential
- contributing directly to your organisation through a critical stretch assignment
- excellent networking and peer learning opportunities – you will be working alongside experienced NHS professionals enabling you to share and learn from their knowledge and experience.
Thinking of making an application?

If you have the energy, enthusiasm and ambition for this level of leadership in the NHS, please discuss this programme with your chief executive, COO or other executive director. One of those three will need to endorse your application and your release from day-to-day operations to attend the programme.

Applications must include your CV and our application form outlining your interest in the programme. They must be sent by email to: nhsi.coo@ashridge.hult.edu. We will not consider applications from candidates below the levels of Band 8C or equivalent; Band 8D – Band 9 is expected to be the appropriate level for the programme. If you have any questions please call Ashridge on +44 (0)1442 841142.

Please note we reserve the right to close the application process early if we receive enough good quality applications for this development programme.
## Timetable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date/Details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Closing date for applications</td>
<td>Friday 11th May 2018</td>
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<tr>
<td>Face-to-face interviews</td>
<td>Wednesday 6th June or Tuesday 12th June 2018</td>
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<tr>
<td>Offer letters sent</td>
<td>Monday 18th June 2018</td>
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<tr>
<td>Closing date for acceptance into the programme</td>
<td>Monday 25th June 2018</td>
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<tr>
<td>Virtual programme launch</td>
<td>Wednesday 4th July 2018</td>
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<td>Module 1 – venue TBD</td>
<td>September 2018</td>
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<tr>
<td>Regional workshop 1 – venue TBD</td>
<td>October 2018</td>
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<tr>
<td>Module 2 – venue TBD</td>
<td>November 2018</td>
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<tr>
<td>Regional workshop 2 – venue TBD</td>
<td>January 2019</td>
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<tr>
<td>Module 3 at Ashridge’s campus in Hertfordshire</td>
<td>February 2019</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final conference at Ashridge’s campus in Hertfordshire</td>
<td>March 2019</td>
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Dates for the remaining programme components will be released in due course and will be hosted in venues across the country from September 2018 to March 2019. Venues will be confirmed shortly but will be easily accessible by public transport.
Programme Overview

Recruitment & selection
Begin program preparation

De-brief Psychometrics and personal development planning

Virtual Launch
1.5 hours

Regional workshops
1 day

Residential Module 1
3 days

Residential Module 2
2 days

Residential Module 3
3 days

Final conference
1 day

Stretch assignments

Shadowing, developing personal networks

Recruitment & selection
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1 day

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3 days

Residential Module 2
2 days

Residential Module 3
3 days

Final conference
1 day

Stretch assignments

Shadowing, developing personal networks
Contact us about the programme

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This publication can be made available in a number of other formats on request.

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