



The ROYAL
COLLEGE of
SURGEONS of
EDINBURGH



Future Leaders Programme

Future Leaders Programme for Surgeons (FLP) Brochure for Cohort 5 2025/6

Summary

Surgical leadership is fundamentally linked to patient outcomes. Influential leaders create an environment that promotes teamwork, quality, safety, and education, all contributing to better surgical results and patient satisfaction.

History and literature are littered with stories of heroes and derring-do. Such captains of crises are more exciting to read about than leaders who plan carefully and avoid crises...who are often considered obsessive planners. This action fallacy seduces us into watching the wrong leaders rather than looking below the surface. Leaders need to show character, competence and commitment. The field of surgery faces complex and systemic challenges, and whilst it is tempting to see leadership as a rigid set of traits, it has as much to do with organisational context as it does with individual competence.





Participants

In a complex system such as surgery, leadership is distributed, and the clinician's responsibility is to contribute to this process by fostering and empowering others' leadership capacity. This principle lies at the heart of the RCSEd Future Leaders Programme (FLP) and its key learning outcomes, reflected in the latest surgical curricula and the Medical Leadership Competency Framework from the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges.

This 12-month programme supports up to 16 surgeons and dentists (post-CCT, SAS or in the first years of consultancy) interested in being future leaders within their speciality, and it equips them with the advanced leadership skills necessary to excel. We use the building of an educational initiative to develop these leadership skills. The programme comprises four 2-day face-to-face forums over the 12 months: 2 on-line, one face to face in Edinburgh and the final one face to face in Birmingham. These are supplemented by self-directed Action Learning Sets. They are structured around four core domains:



A) Learning Outcomes

1) Personal Leadership

To develop greater self-awareness of how you impact others within your organisation, of your role as leaders in quality improvement and as a high-performing surgeon.

At the end of the module, you will be able to:

- a) Define your purpose as a leader within the NHS
- b) Evaluate your impact on others
- c) Plan practical reflection, coaching and feedback
- d) Manage your behaviour under stress
- e) Assess your style of managing conflict and develop some top tips
- f) Plan how to build and maintain resilience
- g) Recognise your limits and embrace vulnerability/failure
- h) Experiment with and learn from new behaviours in the workplace

2) Technical Leadership

To understand the science of learning: when and what methodologies are best applied in the leadership context.

At the end of the module, participants will be able to:

- 1) Explain how leadership and learning are inextricably linked
- 2) Apply principles of learning to underpin educational initiatives
- 3) Link to the surgical curricula
- 4) Facilitate small group learning
- 5) Integrate a feedback strategy
- 6) Deliver a large group presentation
- 7) Build a programme of learning from scratch
- 8) Evaluate the impact of educational interventions

Relational Leadership

o forge effective professional relationships at an individual, team, organisation or system-wide level.

At the end of the module, participants will be able to:

- 1) Apply principles of social awareness and social management
- 2) Link their life script impact to their influence on others
- 3) Use the principles of transactional analysis to improve communication with others
- 4) Think critically about decision-making, reflect on decision-making processes and explain those decisions to others honestly and transparently.
- 5) Use principles of effective persuasion and negotiation to lead change
- 6) Plan strategies to enhance performance and to support development
- 7) Polish presentation skills
- 8) Make conflict productive
- 9) Hold challenging conversations
- 10) Analyse the relationship and tensions between technical and relational approaches and where each might be appropriate



3) Contextual Leadership

To understand how participants can influence change in their immediate, organisational, and national contexts and develop the skills necessary to lead in these environments.

At the end of the module, participants will be able to:

- 1) Read and perceive organisational culture
- 2) Apply principles of how organisational culture develops to influence change
- 3) Adapt leadership style according to the context of culture and position of authority
- 4) Effectively chair meetings
- 5) Maximise power in the most effective way
- 6) Network effectively
- 7) Apply principles of scaling up to effect change at a national level
- 8) Promote a just, open and transparent culture
- 9) Promote a culture of learning and academic and professional critical enquiry.





B) Learning Methods

- 1) Eight days of face-to-face learning (4 virtual and 4 on the ground) and networking
- 2) Strategically grouped participants
- 3) Increasing use of online learning
 - a) To maximise opportunities
 - b) Participants are asked to review screencasts, write reflective pieces, and discuss essential or surprising elements.
 - c) Mandatory prequels to live elements will be assessed through online questions and discussion.
- 4) Virtual action learning sets
 - a) As a technique to drive learning
 - b) Participants will be trained to run action learning sets themselves
- 5) Zoom coaching
- 6) Evidence of educational project achievements will be demonstrated through screencasts, which will be available on the RCSEd website.

C) Faculty

When the cohort of the FLP has assembled, we will decide on the faculty required to support the programme based on their need. We will engage several RCSEd Council members and use our more comprehensive health service and leadership networks. As a priority, we will seek potential future programme directors and support their early professional development. Previous faculty included College Council Members, Past Presidents, JCIE & JCST leads, TPDs, Clinical Directors, leaders from the private sector, leaders from overseas and Heads of School of Surgery.



D) Programme Coaches

A distinctive feature of the FLP is its strong emphasis on coaching. Each participant is matched with an established leader in surgery who provides personalised guidance. These coaches help participants navigate their career paths, refine their leadership skills, and tackle specific challenges.

Networking opportunities abound throughout the programme, allowing participants to build valuable connections with peers, coaches, and surgical leaders. These relationships often extend beyond the duration of the programme, forming a supportive community of future surgical leaders.

You will be allocated one course lead as your personal coach: Humphrey Scott or Lisa Hadfield-Law. In addition, we will help you identify someone you will work alongside at your base hospital who can help you access opportunities to practice the skills you develop, e.g.

- 1) The participant's supervisor or appraiser
- 2) Appropriate specialist society members
- 3) Key senior colleagues within the base trust
- 4) Previous alumni

In some circumstances, participants are linked with an external coach.



E) Quality Assurance

The RCSEd is committed to maintaining the FLP's relevance and excellence through continuous improvement. Feedback from participants is actively sought and used to refine and enhance the programme. This responsiveness ensures that the FLP remains aligned with the dynamic needs of the surgical community and healthcare environment.

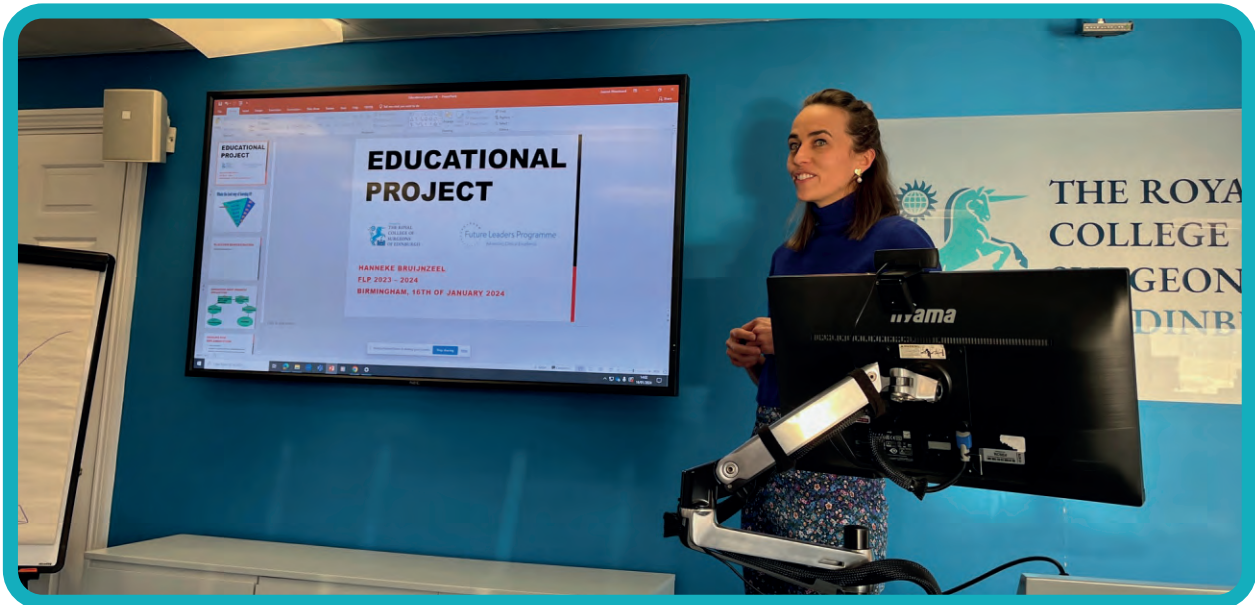
Participants in last year's FLP cohort:

- Submitted 4 semi-structured portfolio/learning logs - including reflections on their development as a leader
- Created a personal development plan (PDP) to cover 2024/5
- Designed an educational initiative
- Created a screencast demonstrating learning from the programme available on RCSEd website [here](#)
- Created a LinkedIn page
- Assumed mentorship role of next cohort



F) Value for Participants

- 1) Access to high-level & big scope educational projects that:
 - a) Have the capacity to create long-lasting service improvement/change or cost-saving
 - b) Trainees can talk favourably about at interview, demonstrating their abilities to achieve and improve patient care
 - c) Have had some of the groundwork already laid or in partnership with a group of trusts or specialist societies
- 2) Professional networks within and across specialties
- 3) Access to those in advanced leadership roles which will be immediately helpful in your current role and provide foundations for future leadership role



G) Cost

The 2025/6 programme costs £3,960 (including VAT), which includes all fees, learning materials and day delegate hospitality but does not cover travel, or accommodation or the £250 administration fee to the RCSEd. All participants must be RCSEd members by 1st October 2025 at the latest to be eligible to participate in the programme.

Please note that places on the FLP are limited and will be confirmed after your application is reviewed. Personal interviews may also be required.



H) Summary of Feedback 2023/2024

The feedback at the end of the programme highlighted several key elements:

1. Understanding Leadership Models:

- Participants appreciated the coverage of leadership theories, such as the law of diffusion of innovation and the five dysfunctions of a team. These models provided valuable frameworks that helped them interpret real-world situations.

2. Practical Skills Development:

- Many testimonials emphasised the importance of practical exercises, such as presentations, pitches, and stakeholder engagement. Participants found these skills particularly beneficial as they are often overlooked in conventional medical training.

3. Networking Opportunities:

- The programme facilitated the building of connections among surgeons from various disciplines globally. Participants valued the chance to engage with peers and form a supportive network that fosters collaborative learning.

4. Personal and Professional Growth:

- Participants noted the importance of reflection in understanding personal motivations and leadership styles. The programme provided a foundation for developing leadership skills and responsibilities within their careers.

5. Inspiring Faculty and Content:

- The enthusiasm and passion of the instructors, particularly Lisa and Humphrey, were highlighted as motivating factors. The engaging content and inspiring talks contributed to a positive learning atmosphere.

6. Community of Practice:

- Attendees appreciated the evolving community among fellow participants and faculty, which allowed for open discussions about leadership challenges and shared experiences, enhancing collective learning.

7. Recommendation for Peers:

- Several testimonials strongly recommended the course for surgeons nearing the end of their training or early in their consultant careers, underscoring its relevance and value as a resource for professional development.

These themes illustrate the multifaceted benefits of the leadership programme, emphasising both personal and professional growth opportunities for participants.





I) Timings

2025

March 1	Open for applications
May 30	Applications in and processed
June 30	Email participants and invoice
August/September	Pre-course preparation – 8 hours Small group virtual meeting with each participant
October 6 & 7	Module 1: Personal leadership- on line
December	Zoom Action Learning Set – Agree on leadership PDP and project plan

2026

January 15 & 16	(provisional) - Module 2: Technical leadership - Edinburgh
February	Zoom Action Learning Set
May 27 & 28	(provisional) - Module 3: Relational leadership – online
July/Aug	Zoom Action Learning Set
Sept 10 & 11	(provisional) - Module 4: Contextual leadership- Birmingham
Oct 1	Complete programme

Convenors

Lisa Hadfield-Law

Humphrey Scott