

# **LEADERSHIP LIFE, AND LEARNING**

Formerly the Developing Manager

*Time to think*

*Freedom to develop*

*Opportunity to act*

## **PROSPECTUS**

A programme handbook is  
available from the office  
at the price of £25.00  
(refundable on application)

*transforming organisational life with*  
**The OASIS School of Human Relations**

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The development of this new national programme has grown out of our involvement with a number of diverse, committed and courageous organisations. Organisations that had invited a relatively small development organisation to design and facilitate a learning process for their leaders and managers as an integrated approach to wider organisational development. Our thanks go to those within these organisations who decided to offer an approach that was innovative and unique, and therefore risky in comparison to traditional provision of leader or manager development.

The subsequent co-design sessions, associated developments and programme facilitation has been central to our learning and we want to take the opportunity to thank the hundreds of key players who have been willing to allow us to accompany them in their development as organisational practitioners. The feedback from the work has been greatly encouraging. However, no matter how affirming of our approach, we know that the real developers were those who harnessed their energy, commitment and fear of the unknown to step across personal and organisational thresholds to discover what development can really involve and create.

At times, the work has been tremendously demanding for all involved (nothing new to most involved in leadership!), but together we have tapped a rich strata of learning and it is from these immensely worthwhile and often challenging experiences that we have forged this new programme in 'organisational human relations' aimed at developing leaders and those taking a different kind of managing role.

*Nick Ellerby*

## AN INTRODUCTION

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*Time to think*  
*Freedom to develop*  
*Opportunity to act*

Leadership, Life and Learning is designed to enable those involved with the running and leading of an organisation to take time to think and find the freedom to consider their own development needs. In the light of a changing world, leaders and managers are required to not only take into account a range of emerging expectations in their own workplace but also to achieve a healthy balance between life and work. The new programme brings an emphasis to the leadership role many organisational people are expected to take; both proactively leading themselves into unfamiliar territory as working life changes rapidly in current society, and taking a lead within the organisation as the role of manager itself is changing and requires greater flexibility and range of skill and understanding.

Leadership, Life and Learning provides opportunities, within a learning environment, to act in new ways as a testing ground for introducing more effective approaches in the participants' particular life and organisational contexts. The programme views the leader of the future as someone engaged in a continuous process of development in what they manage and how they lead.

Good questions, whether for organisational, leadership, managerial, team or individual change, form the basis of a more effective development process.

- What is leadership?
- What is management?
- What does it take to be an effective leader?
- What will be called for from managers in the future?
- To what extent will collaboration replace control, and influence subsume power?
- How will those involved in leadership and managers respond to the increasing demands on them to adapt and be flexible to the changing climate of organisations and organisational life?
- In a world where team development needs to mean more than a day paint-balling, what is the requirement on a manager to be a team facilitator, leader and staff coach, as well as everything else?
- As demands change, to what extent are key employees developing themselves to sustain their employability?

Interesting questions perhaps, but for many involved in leading and managing, other questions are more pressing and critical to the day-to-day role they are fulfilling. Therefore, the Leadership, Life and Learning programme isn't just about answering a set of pre-determined questions, such as the above, but about providing participants with time to identify the core questions facing them and their organisations. It's about sculpting time to step back from the pressure of the operational and strategic urgencies to review and reconsider what is the developing role of a leader or manager and to develop the skills to meet the challenges and requirements of the future.

The questions individuals highlight will depend upon a range of factors, among them will be:

- the context a person is working in and their ambitions for the future
- their particular role and their approach to fulfilling it
- their degree of interest in leadership, facilitation, maintenance
- their ability to develop and manage the human dimension of their work
- their individual ability to learn and contribute to organisational learning amidst increasing diversity.

The programme offers frameworks to consider these factors and to assess situations within the work place using a framework which takes into account the four areas of:

- **context** - *the dynamic and changing aspects of both the internal and external organisation environment including boundaries, roles and responsibilities.*
- **relationship** – *the challenges and choices of establishing, developing and managing relationships at all levels of organisational life.*
- **learning** – *harnessing individual, team and organisational learning, being able to differentiate what is important from what is not and knowing how to sustain learning and*
- **diversity** – *how to work with difference both within the workplace and the wider community, especially relevant to partnership working.*

Situational approaches to leadership and management (making decisions based on a range of factors rather than governed by a prescriptive ‘rulebook’) are increasingly called for as we are asked to take into account a number of dynamic elements including our role, particular targets or performance indicators, the needs of the customer, our organisational direction, the wider environment and the parameters within which we operate. Examining, clarifying and evaluating the situation and formulating the most effective response seems core to the skills of the flexible leader and manager.

The programme enables participants to acquire confidence and competence in the major elements of the human dimension of leadership. Based around the OASIS seven stage model of relationship in leadership, the programme is designed to link theory, experience and practice.

Outcomes for programme participants:

- to work out the questions that arise for themselves,
- to take responsibility for their own learning,
- to align their work with their organisational role and direction,
- to discover what is required to work effectively as a leader,
- to examine their work/life balance, and
- to develop the skills that are needed to create and manage:
  - relationships,
  - power and authority issues,
  - roles,
  - accountability,
  - systems and projects

## WHO IS IT FOR?

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The programme would be of interest to individuals who can identify within any or the following:

- You are in a managerial or leader role and want to deepen your understanding of the changing nature of leadership and management, and to develop strategies relevant to your own context .
- You are involved in managing and leading people, systems and/or projects and would like to equip yourself with the skills and perspectives of a human relations approach to organisational life.
- You are interested in considering what is meant by traditional and new paradigm approaches to management and leadership, and in developing the skills and understanding you perceive as representing a developmental step in your own practice.

## PROGRAMME APPROACH

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Focusing on the human element, the programme is highly participative and introduces managers to experiential forms of learning and development. It represents a peer-based and collaborative approach to education called 'Whole Person Learning'<sup>1</sup>.

Following a mutual interview with applicants, we offer a *start-up day* to give participants the chance to sample the methods involved, meet other participants and an opportunity to check out any final questions they have about the programme. Participants own line managers are encouraged to attend this day where possible.

Essentially, the course identifies and explores the type of issues and expectations that managers will be facing, and provides a framework within which managers are able to develop themselves to meet the challenges of the future.

The programme incorporates a self and peer assessment process designed to introduce managers to advanced feedback, continuous review and evaluative skills.

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<sup>1</sup> For more details on this approach see 'Whole Person Learning' – available on request from The OASIS School of Human Relations.

## **BENEFITS**

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Whilst there are many inherent benefits within this programme, the most important are those determined by the individual managers. It is our particular approach to learning that allows the individual manager to create a bespoke process to meet the specific context they are working within.

This is not a traditional educational programme, it challenges participants at many levels to develop in new ways. Previous participants have consistently highlighted the following as benefits for them:

- building on established strengths,
- unlearning unhelpful behaviours,
- bringing to the fore, underused or even unrecognised abilities.

Indeed, discovering how to embrace a methodology of group learning, that emphasises individual and mutual responsibility, is a key benefit of undertaking the programme.

For some, the true benefits only unfold when they apply their learning back in their work place and come face to face with the positive changes that then occur. And for others, the benefits reveal themselves through the feedback received from their colleagues and managers.

Benefits identified by past participants include;

- Developing responsibility for own learning
- Enhancing reflective management in action
- Becoming a leader in own life
- Improved team awareness and preparation for development
- Improved self management and the application of skills within the human dimension of organisational life
- Thinking rather than reacting as a way of enhancing strategic practice
- Discovering new ways of learning and how to apply the learning in context
- Increased confidence as a manager
- Improved capacity for effective decision making
- Develop transferable skills
- Appropriate delegation of task and authority
- Flexibility in aligning managerial response with organisational need
- Increase employability
- Shaping a healthy life/work balance

## **THEMES WITHIN THE PROGRAMME**

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- **ORGANISATIONAL OR CONTEXTUAL FOCUS**

This recognises the wider environmental changes over the past few years, including: shifts in purpose and direction of many organisations; greater call for aligning practice with organisational and team goals; changes in organisational and role expectations; and a growing emphasis on involvement, participation and use of initiative.

- **HUMAN RELATIONS**

The central role of human relations is highlighted not only in specific aspects of the role (coaching, interviewing and selection, collaborative decision-making, conflict management, negotiation) but also as representing a significant shift in approach that is looked for by many managers and their organisations.

- **CHANGE PROCESSES**

A strong interest is demonstrated in how to assist individuals, teams, projects and systems through change and development. This includes how to determine it, lead it, sustain it, monitor it and evaluate it.

- **TEAM AND INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT**

The centrality of a development role for managers is acknowledged. The importance of motivation and gaining each individual's contribution to whatever project or initiative is paramount to the overall achievement of both organisation and team. Equipping a manager with the appropriate skills and attitudes to operate as leader, coach, developer, driver, facilitator is recognised as necessary, together with the need to develop the ability to decide what response is most appropriate to which situation.

- **SELF MANAGEMENT**

The need for leaders and others to be more self-motivating, self-monitoring and self-managing is emphasised, as is the requirement for managers to be able to take real initiative, whilst embracing accountability for any subsequent action within the overall organisational parameters. A criteria for development in this area could be summarised as *developing the leader within*.

## ELEMENTS OF THE PROGRAMME

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- The way the programme is facilitated ***models the process of effective relationship***, from contact to closure, whether in relation to a project, person or system, including how to increase both the individual and group capacity to ***manage ambiguity, uncertainty and complexity***.
- There will be a strong emphasis on developing the person in leadership, ***creating the ‘developing’ leader***, enabling the individual to increase the range of options available to them.
- The focus of ***assignments*** are determined by the individual participant and their manager to ensure they make an effective contribution to their learning outcomes – assignments include:
  - **Individual learning plan** – a device to enable the manager to create a contract outlining their development needs and goals for the programme
  - **Learning journal** – to track key events, behaviour change, insights, etc;
  - **Self assessment** - of manager approach and their management of change;
  - **Project** - reflecting an individual participant’s interest and offering both analysis and practice elements.
- The programme provides an opportunity to make a ***diagnosis*** of self, team and organisation and to determine ***‘right’ action, in collaboration with others***
- The programme sustains a ***balance*** of input, practice, dialogue, creativity and self-direction.
- The facilitators mirrors a ***developer / facilitator / manager / leadership*** approach.
- Individual ***competencies*** (either previously identified in their own work setting or shaped through the programme) offer a tool for assessment, with the self and peer assessment being based on ***Individual Learning Plans***.
- The programme’s frameworks include
  - ***The OASIS Seven Stage Model,***
  - ***A Polarity Model of Leadership and Management,***
  - ***Four Pillars of Managing - Context, Learning, Relationship and Diversity.***
  - ***Developmental model of team effectiveness***

Other frameworks and working models are introduced or developed depending on the needs of the learning group.

## **PROGRAMME FRAMEWORK**

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The framework for the programme is the Oasis Seven-Stage Model, within which a range of management topics will be addressed:

- **CONTACT**
  - Building relationships
  - Understanding context of manager; leader; team; organisation; community.
  - The changing world of managing - the call from the future
  - NLP as a managerial tool
  
- **COMMITMENT**
  - The role of commitment
  - Choosing your focus
  - Contracting and boundaries
  - Establishing outcomes
  - Motivation and life phases
  - Creating a developmental alliance
  
- **CLARIFICATION**
  - Advanced Communication
  - Operational and strategic perceptions
  - Support and emotional intelligence
  - Understanding the issues – people / projects / systems
  - Managerial Drivers
  
- **CHALLENGE**
  - Challenge and confrontation
  - Working with beliefs and thresholds
  - Managing difficult situations
  
- **CHOICE**
  - Decision making and delegation
  - Creativity
  
- **CHANGE**
  - Management of change
  - Action Planning
  - Goal Setting
  
- **CLOSURE**
  - Review and Evaluation
  - Assessment
  - Bringing work to an end
  - Bringing relationships to an end

## STRUCTURE

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Mutual interviews are arranged to allow individual managers to meet with facilitators to consider their specific needs and to discuss any necessary preparation for the programme.

A start-up day follows, which is open to both participants and their respective managers. The day offers opportunities to discuss the programme framework, meet other participants, raise any questions, initiate preparatory work and to consider manager support mechanisms.

The initial day session is followed by 6 x 2 day modules over a six month period, totalling thirteen days in all. Continuity and application of learning are enhanced through interim learning groups and individual mentoring. Each non-residential day begins at 9.30 a.m. and ends at 5.00 p.m. All non-residential modules are based at The OASIS School of Human Relations at Boston Spa. The OASIS office holds information regarding local accommodation for those wishing to stay overnight on the non-residential modules.

## FEES

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### Application Fee – Interview

£ 50.00

### Programme Fee

see web for details [www.oasishumanrelations.org.uk](http://www.oasishumanrelations.org.uk)

### Residential Fee

See website for details

## DATES

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Due to the level of interest expressed, we are offering two programmes in the Autumn and Spring of each year. Each programme has places for 12 participants. Dates for 2007:

See website for details

## FACILITATOR TEAM

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- |                        |   |
|------------------------|---|
| • <b>Zena Bernacca</b> | <a href="mailto:zena@oasishumanrelations.org.uk"><u>zena@oasishumanrelations.org.uk</u></a>     |
| • Claire Maxwell       | <a href="mailto:claire@oasishumanrelations.org.uk"><u>claire@oasishumanrelations.org.uk</u></a> |
| • Marion Ragaliauskas  | <a href="mailto:marion@oasishumanrelations.org.uk"><u>marion@oasishumanrelations.org.uk</u></a> |
| • <b>Nick Ellerby</b>  | <a href="mailto:nick@oasishumanrelations.org.uk"><u>nick@oasishumanrelations.org.uk</u></a>     |

For each programme there will be a core team of two facilitators – highlighted in bold. Further details are available on request regarding the background and experience of each facilitator.

## THE OASIS SCHOOL OF HUMAN RELATIONS

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Founded in the early eighties The Oasis School is well established as a centre for human relations and peer based working. The School has an international reputation for developing a distinctive method of working which places 'relationship' and the 'whole person' at the core of its working practice. We are frequently invited to enter situations where problems and difficulties exist to which there are no ready or obvious answers. Our approach is to work collaboratively alongside those involved, in ways which enable them to begin the process of creating the answers they need to meet the future that faces them.

The five core activities of service we are involved in are:

- **Development Programmes – human relations practice, leadership, manager development, mentoring, developing people, changing organisations, facilitation styles.**
- **Organisational Development Services – consultancy, team facilitation, conflict resolution and bespoke developmental training**
- **Live Research – human and peer inquiry, dialogue and reflective practice.**
- **Oasis Peoplecare - a range of support services for employees and work colleagues including mentoring, counselling, occupational health, alternative approaches.**
- **Oasis Publications and books – and Oasis Press**

The focus of our activity is upon helping those with whom we work, whether as individuals, members of a group, or an organisation to clarify the reality of their situation and begin to identify the stages of their future development that make most sense of: where they are; what they are trying to accomplish and the circumstance in which they find themselves.

The Oasis School is a significant provider and facilitator of bespoke development and organisational consultancy for a range of sectors that are interested in their own development questions and are seeking participative and collaborative approaches to equip them for the future.

We are committed to processes where the learner is at the heart of their learning and are proud of our approach to development and the quality of the learning experience offered. We hope you will want to join the community of practitioners who have participated in our programmes.

## **PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK**

What participants have said about **this programme**.

*I cannot rate it highly enough! It was challenging yet not confrontational, it was inspiring and made me think and have the courage to tackle things that needed tackling. I have a toolkit of developed skills from the seven stage model and am confident that I have the will to continue to grow and develop.*

Senior Manager

*Difficult to summarise in a few words what I've gained from a process which has changed my whole way of thinking over the last six months.... I have applied my learning in all aspects of my work and am more confident and feel I am more effective as a manager.*

Finance Manager

*I am more organised, planned and prepared. Monitoring and review are built into most things. I have embraced and developed systems and processes with my team and my line manager and these are open to scrutiny and we are therefore more accountable.*

Scheme Manager

*Nearly everyone felt they were stepping into the unknown .. the whole experience has re-awoken a desire in me to manage more strategically and live my organisation's values.*

Director

*It introduces managers to methods which are useable and beneficial – some small, some large. It allows time away from the workplace to study and reflect; aid the learning process. It improved my self awareness, perception and attitude towards others and the business. The latter has been a major shift in wanting to understand the business needs and influencing others to be more effective in change.*

Head of Service

*The skills learnt and developed have enriched my relationships not only in the workplace, but at home and socially. I feel I am addressing more issues at work, reflecting regularly upon what I do, have done and need to do, and am a better manager.*

Area Manager

*It has helped me often pause and consider what would be the better approach. It has also helped my understanding of what has gone wrong when it does and my belief in my ability to learn from it and put it right.*

Regional Director

*Everyone can gain something from the programme, new managers or those with experience. I saw the process as a gift from my employer allowing me some time to stand back from life/work and take stock. I found the experience liberating; there have been a number of positive changes in the workplace, more challenge, more co-operation, more willingness to change long established stances.*

Senior Manager

*The most significant learning experience of my career to date. One year on I have not forgotten my new skills. It is not a traditional college based management programme and has proven invaluable to me as it is about behaviour and my interaction with people.*

Head of Service

*The programme has offered me a higher level of confidence in dealing with difficult situations. It has acted as a guide in approaching a problem/issue ... I have developed more skills and knowledge as a manager over the last six months than over the last five years.* Maintenance Manager

*Exhilarating, challenging, invigorating. The programme has made me take a critical look at my approach to life – not just my role – and I strive to apply what I have learned in the workplace, I believe both my team and my organisation reap the benefit.* IT Manager

(Whilst we have not given names to the quotes, if you wish to speak to any of the individual managers who have participated in our programmes or a sponsoring organisation, please ask us for further details.)

## **INDEPENDENT EVALUATION**

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Two extracts from independent reviews of our manager development work.

### **SUMMARY of a series of focus group meetings with a pilot programme.**

The consensus is undoubtedly positive. The Developing Manager may not have been a panacea for all organisational woes but it was never intended as such. What is apparent however is that the pilot Developing Manager equipped participants with a range of practical skills, it taught them through an experiential approach to deal openly and honestly with a range of situations and it has, by many accounts, changed individuals. Some believe it has rekindled old values that had become dormant; others assert that it has equipped them with the skills to establish a new open and participative culture.

***Dr. Martin Wood***

### **SUMMARY of 35 responses from a potential group of 50 managers**

**100%** of respondents would recommend The Developing Manager Programme to other managers.

**100%** of respondents found their performance had improved in terms of decision-making and achieving objectives.

**99%** of respondents found the programme extremely relevant to them as individuals, as managers and in the context of their team or wider group.

**94%** of respondents found their confidence had increased in their own work practice; in fulfilling their manager role; and in their skills competence.

**99%** of respondents reported improved personal performance as a result of undertaking the programme (67% 'a lot' and 32% 'some').

**74.3%** of respondents gave the programme a high or very high rating in terms of usefulness.

**82%** of respondents reported having substantially or fully achieved their individual programme-related objectives.

**87.4%** of respondents rated the way in which the programme itself was designed and delivered as very helpful to their learning. ***Amanda Dale***