

# LASTING LEADERSHIP



A four-session masterclass programme to support organisations develop sustainable leadership capacity.

## Masterclass One: Understanding Sustainable Leadership May 2020

### Learning from now...

We took time to explore how responses to the current situation could help support the development of sustainable leadership in the future. We discussed how CV-19 has crystallised and intensified some of the approaches to sustainable leadership outlined in the Lasting Leadership Guide.

### Organisations have:

- 👉 Rapidly developed new and innovative methods of communication across their teams and are catching up more regularly. Sometimes for work, sometimes for fun.
- 👉 Coalesced around a shared vision to redesign the way the organisation's services and work are delivered at pace.
- 👉 Developed connections and relationships with new partners.
- 👉 Found they can potentially reach *more* people using digital technology.
- 👉 Found it easier to take part in online workshops/sessions (which can be challenging if you are based outside the central belt).

### Organisational leaders:

- 👉 Are juggling timeframes in their heads – immediate crisis management *and* thinking about the longer term. This is challenging as change is still happening rapidly and timeframes are continually shifting.
- 👉 Have concerns about the volume of information they have in their head – and how to share this with others to support succession and risk management.
- 👉 Have found their teams have been more solution focussed – pulling together, listening and problem-solving – resulting in leadership emerging from different directions.
- 👉 Recognise the different impacts on team members depending on their home situation. And are aware of boundary issues for the team – and for themselves. It's not as easy to compartmentalise and sometimes tough situations feel like they remain with you.
- 👉 Are starting to plan the next steps and considering how this will impact on team morale. Teams have worked hard to positively plan and implement organisational responses to the immediate crisis. How can this clarity of focus and positive team spirit be maintained for the next stage/s?
- 👉 Recognise that dealing with a crisis can mean reverting to a 'default' leadership style. It can make our reactions more intensified: *we're all ourselves, but more so.*
- 👉 Have found capacity issues are intensifying, rather than reducing. The requirements to report to our boards, funders and commissioners remain the same. *We thought there would be more time for development and reading but have found this has been impossible!*
- 👉 Have been engaging with trustees more regularly. For many this has been positive with trustees helping to work through organisational responses, however, some trustees have become more anxious and risk averse as a result of the current climate.

## Learning we want to retain for the future:

- 👉 Making time with our teams to have solution-focussed discussions. Real innovations have happened during this time – we need to continue to tap into this creativity.
- 👉 Learning to 'let go' more and trust our teams to deliver.
- 👉 Taking time to reflect and review what is our priority of focus.
- 👉 Using online methods of communication to *supplement* our future work. e.g. we can potentially reach more people than just using face to face groups/meetings. Although we must be mindful of the impact of digital poverty.
- 👉 Using online communications with our team – but being mindful that everyone's situation is different, and some things are best dealt with face to face.
- 👉 Using video meetings where appropriate to reduce time inefficiencies e.g. travelling.
- 👉 Taking time to consider our management/leadership style so we don't revert to a 'default' when facing future challenges.
- 👉 Making time with peers – we are all facing similar challenges and it's good to hear others' ideas and approaches.
- 👉 ACOSVO has a board "buddy" scheme for new board members to learn from those who have been trustees for a while.

## Lasting Leadership paradoxes and principles: for organisations and their leaders

The paradoxes and challenges are interconnected. Again, we reflected that the CV-19 situation has intensified and crystallised some of these challenges.



### The time challenge:

Our diaries have been crisis-led in recent weeks. We've had to focus our time on redesigning our services and work and developing ways to connect and plan as a team.

But as we prepare for the next steps, juggling different timeframes is becoming an issue. The unknown nature of the current situation means it's challenging to work out what changes will be temporary, and what will be needed over the longer term. This makes understanding where to best to invest our time (and budgets) difficult. And some organisations have more time at the moment for strategy and planning but less contact with people in communities for 'on the ground' feedback, to influence these developments.

### Positives to retain:

Dealing with the current situation has made us re-evaluate our priorities and focus. To help us understand where best to invest our time, continuing to review, reflect and find innovative ways to connect with others (colleagues, peers, communities) will be crucial. We've also made more time to connect with our teams, and reduced time drains, such as travel – we want this to continue.



### The leadership myth:

CEOs always need to manage many different priorities, but this has intensified over the last few weeks. Many feel they are human octopuses, juggling redevelopment of services, support to the team and funding challenges.

But CV-19 has helped organisations focus and coalesce around their shared WHY. This has supported team members to see their contribution to the bigger whole. In some organisations this has shifted organisational culture, with teams being more solution-focussed and less resistant to change. And online networking has meant leaders have been able to connect and learn from peers they wouldn't normally come across.

### Positives to retain:

Staying focussed on our why – and regularly connecting with our team to ensure they feel part of, and help design, the next steps. Connecting with peers to share challenges, ideas and learning. *It's good to know we are not alone during this time with the challenges we are facing.*



## The care paradox

Taking care of our teams has been even more of a priority in recent weeks. Everyone's experience of home working is different and as leaders we've had to be mindful of stress and burn out in our teams. But do we do prioritise our own self-care in the same way?

Connecting with peers for support has become increasingly important. Some organisations have wellbeing as a standing discussion item on the board agenda to ensure it is given priority. And it's important that we are gentle and kind with each other, and with ourselves – it's ok for things not be 100% perfect!

### Positives to retain:

Keep connecting with our teams and making wellbeing a priority. But we also need to think about our own self-care - if we don't look after ourselves we can't do our best work. Connecting with our peers to share experiences and learning during this time is important. And be gentle and kind, with others and ourselves – it's ok if things/we are a little 'clunky'!



## Trust and control

Delegation can be difficult, particularly in smaller teams, as everyone is stretched at this time. Alongside this, team members can have quite different roles and specialist knowledge so deputising/delegating can be complex.




We identified that the current situation has brought the importance of sharing knowledge across the team into sharp focus. CEOs often have a lot of knowledge in their heads! Trust has been built across teams during this time – but letting go still presents challenges for those who have overall accountability. For managers to step back trust must be built - and if managers step in (or revert to default) and take over that can create a tension.

### Positives to retain:

Creating processes and systems to share knowledge and enable delegation across the organisation helps the team - and CEOs/managers! Having 'lead' people and 'seconds' can really help with delegation and knowledge sharing. Wren & Greyhound's new [succession planning](#) and [knowledge management](#) guides give more information and tips.

### Next steps:

This is the first of a four-session Masterclass Programme. The subsequent Masterclasses will focus on each of the sustainable leadership capabilities:

-  **Masterclass 2: Succession planning** (16 June) Online (and free!)
-  **Masterclass 3: Lateral leadership** (24 Sept) Face-to-face
-  **Masterclass 4: Attracting the next generation of leaders & supporting equality and diversity** (13 Oct) Face-to-face

There is a self-assessment for each of the capabilities in the [Lasting Leadership Guide](#). These can be helpful to have conversations with your team and to identify where you might want to focus attention – and which Masterclass/es to attend!

**Please note: if you are coming along to the next online Masterclass in June, please retain your username and password to log in.**

And if you have any questions in the meantime please contact Jen Curran at Wren & Greyhound on [Jennifer@wrenandgreyhound.co.uk](mailto:Jennifer@wrenandgreyhound.co.uk) or visit [www.TheLastingDifference.com](http://www.TheLastingDifference.com) where you'll find more information and resources.