

The leadership journey – Things to think about.

Stage of the journey	Things to think about
<p><b>Step 1 - Taking stock</b></p>	<p>It's worth taking time out to take stock of the situation you find yourself in and what you bring to the task. Before you can begin to improve your leadership capacity you first need to look at your own individual context.</p> <p>Use these four headings to build a picture of your individual context.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Environment</b> - Look at your external environment work context, roles and networks, personal situation and relationships.</li> <li>• <b>Values</b> – What are your values? What motivates you? What are your traits – good and bad?</li> <li>• <b>Experience</b> – What is your personal and work experience?</li> <li>• <b>Skills</b> – What knowledge do you have? What skills have you developed? What levels of ability do you bring to this?</li> </ul> <p>This will help you start the process in an informed way, knowing your context, your strengths and weaknesses. You can do this alone or with your team, but remember be honest!</p>
<p><b>Stage 2 – Setting direction</b></p>	<p>Setting direction is an important stage in leading teams and organisations. You need to create the 'big picture' to bring your vision to life. To help you plan your course of action ask yourself the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there a shared purpose?</li> <li>• Do all stakeholders share my values?</li> <li>• Is there a common identity?</li> <li>• Can users understand where we are going?</li> <li>• Do all the relevant people know the direction?</li> </ul> <p>Refer back to these questions throughout the various stages – and keep checking you can still answer them with certainty.</p>
<p><b>Stage 3 – Getting started</b></p>	<p>Getting started is what everyone will want to do, and quickly. Nobody wants to spend endless months planning. But it is important that you are ready to start. Balance these two demands. Ensure before starting you can answer “yes” to all these questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have we identified key goals?</li> <li>• Have we based these on known needs?</li> <li>• Have we identified the actions to achieve them?</li> <li>• Have we selected the people to lead on each activity?</li> <li>• Have we got the resources to make it happen?</li> </ul> <p>You can use these key questions to reassess your situation whenever you are making new plans.</p>

<p><b>Stage 4 – Making it happen</b></p>	<p>Making it happen is the crucial part. How do you know whether you are achieving your aims? And do people recognise these achievements when they see them?</p> <p>The key questions to ask here are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>How do you ensure things will happen?</b> This is about how you manage your leadership. What team structure do you use? How often do you meet? How do you report?</li> <li>• <b>How do you measure progress?</b> This is about performance management. How do you check you've reached the key stages? Are you meeting the targets you've set? Are you ensuring that you can tell in advance if you are going to meet them?</li> <li>• <b>How do you measure impact – is it achieving what it aims to achieve?</b> This is about whether you are really making a difference to the things you want to change or achieve. What are the outcomes? Are your actions really delivering on these?</li> <li>• <b>How do we keep everyone informed?</b> Achieving your aims is one thing, but do people know you're achieving them? This is important for your teams, your partners, and most importantly for users and citizens.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Stage 5 – Keeping on track</b></p>	<p>You'll face constant pressures that will tempt you to change direction or refocus. This will include resistance to change, unexpected problems, the pace of change and resource issues. You need to give some thought to how you are tackling this. Keeping on track can be the most difficult part. Ask yourself:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do we maintain focus on what is important?</li> <li>• What if things go wrong?</li> <li>• Have we built in time to reassess where we are going?</li> <li>• Are we learning from our evaluation?</li> <li>• Are we keeping people on board?</li> <li>• Are we maintaining adequate staff and resource levels?</li> </ul> <p>You'll need to manage these risks in advance where possible. Proper planning will help your overall performance.</p>