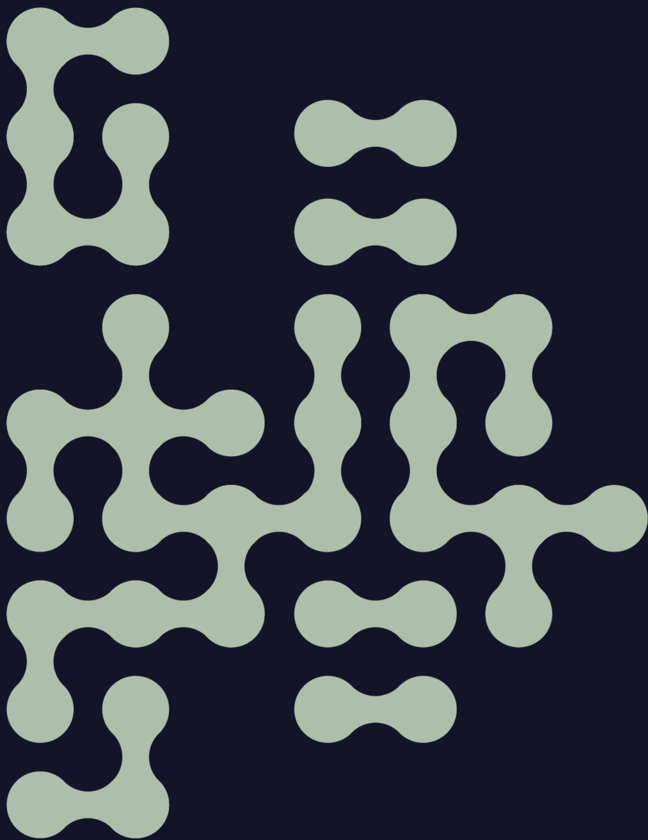
UNIVERSITY of GREENWICH

An Eye Opener and a Door Opener

A Process Evaluation of the ELEVATE CJS Leadership Programme (2023/24)

ELEVATE

Through our leaders' eyes



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Criminal Justice Alliance
For a fairer & more effective criminal justice system

Contents

Executive Summary (8)
Key Findings (8)
Recommendations (10)
Background (12)
Research Team (13)
Dr Ed Schreeche-Powell (13)
Dr Ella Simpson (13)
Acknowledgements (14)
The ELEVATE CJS Programme (14)

6 Research Context *(16)*

7 Evaluation Aims *(17)*
7.1 Aims of the Evaluation
7.2 Methodology
7.3 Data Collection
7.4 Analytical Approach and Framework (Qualitative)
7.5 Analytical Approach and Framework (Quantitative)
7.6 Ethics
7.7 Limitations
7.8 Reflections on Research

8 Findings *(20)*
8.1 Programme Approach
8.1.1 Lived experience led: To what extent is the programme designed and delivered 'by and for' people with lived experience and how could this approach be further embedded in year two?
8.1.1.1 Commitment to Lived Experience Research
8.1.1.2 Lived Experience Staffing
8.1.1.3 Lived Experience Delivery
8.1.1.4 Summary
8.1.2 Equitable and inclusive: How far has the programme met the aims of the EDI statement and what more could be done to improve EDI in year two?

8.1.2.1 Basic Demographic Data
8.1.2.2 Recruitment Processes for Participants
8.1.2.3 Preliminary Recruitment Events
8.1.2.4 Application and Interviewing
8.1.2.5 Summary
8.1.3 Broad definition of lived experience: What have been the advantages and disadvantages of having a broad definition of lived experience amongst the participants, and should the definition remain the samefor year two?
8.1.3.1 Participants' Experience of the Broad Lived Experience Definition
8.1.3.2 Victims and Perpetrator Concerns
8.1.3.3 Disclosure of Lived Experience
8.1.3.4 Lived Experience and Programme Attrition
8.1.3.5 Summary
8.1.4 Theoretical underpinning: To what extent has the theoretical framework from the Social Change Model been useful in framing and supporting the leadership development process and how could it be embedded further in year two?
8.1.4.1 The Social Change Leadership Model and ELEVATE
8.1.4.2 Application of the Social Change Leadership Model in Learning Materials
8.1.4.3 Potential Structures to Embed the Social Leadership Model
8.1.4.4 Pedagogic Approach (Constructive Alignment)
8.1.4.5 Programmatic Approach (Programme Theory)
8.1.4.7 The Pedagogy of the Social Change Model of Leadership
8.1.4.8 Summary
8.1.5 Systemic: To what extent did framing the leadership programme within a broader objective of systemic change support greater understanding and solidarity amongst participants?
8.1.5.1 Systemic Change as an Abstract Notion
8.1.5.2 Systemic Change as Separate
8.1.5.3 Summary
8.1.6 Collaboration: How successfully have our partnerships and collaborations worked in engaging participants and providing them with the skills and attributes for social change leadership? How could collaboration be strengthened in year two?
8.1.6.1 International Partnership
8.1.6.2 University Partnership
8.1.6.3 Summary
8.1.7 Dual-prong approach: How effective was our dual-prong approach, not just supporting lived experience leaders, but also working with employers and policy makers to dismantle the barriers to progress? How could we improve our work to change policy and workplace practices in year two?
8.2 Content
8.2.1 Which components of the programme have participants found most and least useful and why?
8.2.1.2 A Shared Language for Content – Components and Perceptions of Leadership
8.2.1.3 Individual Components of ELEVATE

8.2.1.3.1 First Residential (see also Section 8.2.4 for greater detail)
8.2.1.3.2 Module Content
8.2.1.3.3 Kick-Off Meeting and Residential 2
8.2.1.4 Summary
8.2.2 Was there any content they expected or would have liked to be included, but was missing?
8.2.2.1 Summary
8.2.3 What value did the senior-level work placements and group action research projects bring? How could their value be increased in year two?
8.2.4 How effective was coaching and clinical supervision in supporting development?
8.2.4.1 Importance of Background Information
8.2.4.2 Therapeutic Sessions and Scheduling
8.2.4.3 Coaching
8.2.4.4 Summary
8.2.5 To what extent did participants engage in the programme and achieve the learning outcomes? What were the enablers and barriers?
8.2.5.1 Session Attendance
8.2.5.2 Achieving Outcomes
8.2.5.4 Summary
8.2.6 How well was the content pitched for the cohort's level of prior experience/ expertise? Should any changes be made to the eligibility criteria/recruitment process for year two?
8.2.6.1 Sandhu's Experienced Leaders
8.2.6.2 Sandhu's (too) Early Leaders
8.2.6.3 Demographic Diversity
8.2.6.4 Summary
8.2.7 How useful were the 360 assessments and reflective journals as tools to monitor individual progress? What, if any, changes should be made to the tools in year two?
8.2.7.1 360 Degree Assessment
8.2.7.3 Reflective Journal
8.2.7.4 Alternative Modes of Reflection
8.2.7.5 Summary
8.3 Delivery
8.3.1 To what extent were learning styles and needs taken into account in the delivery of the programme? What could be done differently in year two to make delivery more inclusive?
8.3.1.1 Digital Learning and Communication
8.3.1.2 Creative Activities
8.3.1.3 Reflective Activities (see also Section 8.2.7)
8.3.1.4 Summary
8.3.2 To what extent were the number of learning hours and timetable schedules appropriate and do-able given they were also balancing work and other commitments? What, if any, changes should be made?

8.3.2.1 Less Can Be More

8.3.2.3 Summary

8.3.3 What were the advantages and disadvantages of online and in person delivery? What changes, if any, should be made to the balance on online/in-person for year two?

8.3.4 To what extent were the staff, facilitators, presenters, coaches, clinical supervisors, and others involved in the delivery of the programme perceived favourably by the emerging Leaders?

8.3.4.1 Summary

8.3.5 To what extent did the delivery of the programme encourage and enable peer support and connections? What more could be done to enable peer support?

8.3.5.1 Summary

8.3.6 What did the employers involved in the toolkit production and/or work placements value about being involved in the programme and what would they have changed? How can the CJA best embed positive changes in practice and inclusive workplace culture in the sector

9. Recommendations *(82)*

7.7 Methodological Recommendations

8.1.1 Lived Experience Led

8.1.2 Equitable and Inclusive

8.1.3 Broad Definition of Lived Experience

8.1.4 Theoretical Underpinning

8.1.5 Systemic Change

8.1.6 Collaboration

8.1.7 Dual-Prong Approach

Content *(86)*

8.2.1 Usefulness of Content
8.2.2 Missing Content
8.2.3 Senior Level Work Placements
8.2.4 Coaching and Clinical Supervision
8.2.5 Participant Engagement
8.2.6 Levels of experience/expertise
8.2.7 Reflective Materials
8.3.1 To what extent were learning styles and needs taken into account in the delivery of the programme? What could be done differently in year two to make delivery more inclusive?
8.3.2 Learning Hours and Time Commitment
8.3.3 What were the advantages and disadvantages of online and in person delivery? What changes if any, should be made to the balance on online/ in-person for year two?
8.3.4 To what extent were the staff, facilitators, presenters, coaches, clinical supervisors, and others involved in the delivery of the programme perceived favourably by the emerging Leaders?
8.3.5 To what extent did the delivery of the programme encourage and enable peer support and connections? What more could be done to enable peer support?

Reference List *(92)*

Appendices
Appendix 1
Content
Delivery

1

Executive summary

Introduction

Few things in the evaluation will come as a surprise to the CJA, their staff, and advisors. Indeed, many of the points, issues and ideas raised by the participants are closely aligned with those raised by the CJA. This is testament to the candid relationships formed between participants and practitioners, and to the willingness of the CJA to review and reflect on their own practice with sensitivity and insight. The focus of the evaluation is on the participants' views and their suggestions for developing the programme further.
In many ways, this evaluation has been a listening exercise, which we hope will serve to reflect back to the CJA much of what they know already, and to do so in a structured manner that provides frameworks for guiding improvements and sustaining the successes achieved by the programme so far.

1.1

Key Findings

Based on analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data, it is clear that the Criminal Justice Alliance (CJA) succeeded in designing and delivering a leadership programme that is well informed by a reasonable balance of people with lived and learned experience. Overall, 42% of CJA roles were occupied by people with declared lived experience during the first iteration of ELEVATE.

The process in place to recruit ELEVATE participants goes a long way to achieving inclusion and diversity among the first ELEVATE cohort. A lack of formalised data collection and documentation at the beginning of the programme means an entirely rigorous analysis has not been possible. However, demographic data collected during the delivery of the programme shows there is good inclusion of people of colour, and people who are older than 30. There is close to an equal balance of men and women. People with stated disabilities and with LGBTQI+ identities are less well represented at this stage.

The broad definition of lived experience was welcomed by 12 out of 13 of the first cohort. Common ground and deep human connections were established in the group based on their diverse lived experiences. Where difficulties did arise, it was more often ascribed to the diversity of social demographics or different personalities. The one type of lived experience that requires further attention concerns the inclusion of people who have been victims of crime. This group were significantly underrepresented in the first cohort, however, more positives than negatives were identified by participants, including victims, as a result of the inclusion of people with this type of lived experience. Interestingly though, the main issue with lived experience concerned the different stages or levels that participants were at in their lived experience leadership journeys rather than the breadth of the definition

of lived experience. It appears that these leadership levels may have been more significant in participants' engagement with the programme and each other.

The social change leadership model has good potential to provide a robust underpinning theory for ELEVATE, however this is not yet firmly embedded into the programme or communicated to participants. Doing so will give greater consistency and cohesion to the overall programme and enable participants to engage with the learning in a more structured manner.

Participants often did not recognise the connections between systemic change and their activities on the ELEVATE programme. It is suggested that this disconnect may be addressed by a better understanding of the social change leadership model.

Two main partnerships were formed by the CJA, one with a lived experience leadership organisation in the US and one, with an education partner based in London. Both partnerships offered valuable contributions to ELEVATE and can provide insights for improving the programme and strengthening partnerships as the programme moves forward.

Programme content received a mixed reception from participants, all of whom have different and highly individual expectations of what should constitute a leadership programme. There appears to be a general preference for practical activities intended to support professional development. However, currently, there is a lack of a shared language between participants and the CJA, or indeed the participants and evaluators, through which expectations about relevant programme content can be communicated and challenged.

Therapeutic support and coaching activities are welcomed by the majority of participants, although therapy is perhaps seen as more integral than coaching, which appears to be understood as specific to career development. The intensive nature of the first residential and early sessions emphasise the importance of therapy as a key part of the support package, and the therapeutic lead should be engaged with participants before formal sessions begin. Coaching was seen as a positive feature of the programme by just over half of the cohort.

Participants expressed some concern about 'information overload' as a result of balancing ELEVATE commitments with busy personal lives. This applied to both content and delivery and there is a general feeling that 'less is more'. Online sessions are accepted as expedient due to logistical considerations, although, in-person sessions were generally preferred. However, even when participants struggled to engage with content or online sessions, the majority did not give up. Overall attendance was approximately 60%, which matches best outcomes in the Higher Education sector. An unexpected finding is that ELEVATE participants bring their own sense of purpose and dedication to the content of the programme. This is a valuable resource the first ELEVATE cohort brings to the programme.

All CJA staff and facilitators are largely well received by participants, with their passion and commitment noted by many of the cohort.

One of the most successful aspects of the ELEVATE programme in its first iteration was its ability to support the creation of networks both within the cohort and beyond it, with one participant remarking that the programme had been 'an eye opener and a door opener'. This is testament to the CJA's own ability to create and nurture environments and collaborations able to foster growth and change.

1.2

Recommendations

The CJA should continue to recruit a good balance of lived and learned experience practitioners to design and deliver the programme, and in the longer term the CJA staff may also like to consider greater representation of lived experience at board level.

A clear EDI statement and more robust data collection methods will enable further improvement in the CJA's commitment to EDI, as may widening the recruitment campaign to include social justice and activism networks. More broadly, it is recommended that, in order to get maximum benefit from multiple data sources, a unified approach be taken to data collection, which enables standardisation of evaluation tools. In addition, a single repository of all data and programme materials, which is fully accessible to the evaluators, should be created.

For future cohorts, achieving a greater balance of perpetrators to victims should be considered. An alternative may be to exclude victims of crime from the cohort, or to create two groups divided by type of lived experience. It was also suggested that facilitators and the IAG should contain a better balance of types of lived experience.

A substantial review of the programme's design should be conducted with a view to firmly embedding the social change leadership model into the programme and signposting this to participants. Two approaches to the design are suggested, one pedagogic, one programmatic. Either of these will also ensure a more robust approach to assessment and/or evaluation of the ELEVATE programme. It is also vital that the approach, theory and intended outcomes are understood and communicated by all freelance facilitators, and systems should be put in place to support this aim.

Clearer communication of the social change model at programme and individual session level may address participant's inability to link individual ambitions for change to broader systemic change. It is also recommended that the group research project is introduced earlier and given a more central role, in order to give participants an opportunity to understand and actualise social change theory through an appropriate kinaesthetic learning activity.

Moving forward, a partnership either with University of the Arts London/Goldsmiths, or a different HE institution should be developed. Such a partnership, in addition to material and pedagogic resources, offers a potential source of advice and guidance with regard to a programme review. The partnership should be with the whole university department rather than relying on a single point of contact.

A heuristic tool was developed by the evaluators based on four central concerns of participants in relation to their expectations about a leadership programme; professional development and/or personal development and academic activities and/or practical activities. This tool enables the capture of participants' expectations and their perceptions of individual learning sessions, while also allowing facilitators to articulate challenges to participants' assumptions and unquestioned ideas. It is recommended that both staff and students attend sessions before the beginning of the new programme, aimed at creating and agreeing a satisfactory conceptualisation of leadership for the ELEVATE programme, using the heuristic tool to devise a shared language for discussion.

In order to better integrate therapeutic support into the programme, participants' background information should be collected during the recruitment phase of the programme and the therapeutic lead should begin engagement with participants. In addition, a clear line of communication between the project leader and therapeutic lead needs to be established and all relevant

information shared. The CJA should either consider making coaching optional or, if the CJA believe coaching to be an integral part of the ELEVATE programme, consideration could be given to offering a clearer introduction to the purposes of coaching, aimed at challenging assumptions about this type of personal development work.

For those whose experience of coaching was positive, a three to six month extension of coaching sessions beyond the end of the programme is suggested, as too, therapy sessions for any participant who would like to continue. This would allow participants to maintain momentum and continue to progress in the journeys begun on ELEVATE.

Sandhu's framing of the different stages of lived experience career development (early and aspiring leaders, emerging leaders, experienced leaders and senior leaders) offers a clear articulation of the diversity of experience levels in the first cohort and could perhaps be adopted as an organising and selection principle for the second cohort.

The CJA can be more strategic in their planning and delivery of contact hours, and it is suggested that online Wednesday sessions are reduced to two per month, with one face to face session during the same time period. A full schedule of dates and sessions should be provided by the CJA ahead of the programme's commencement, which will also enable a more transparent recruitment process for facilitators. To address the proliferation of communication channels, it is also recommended that a central digital platform/hub be created containing all of the programme information.

All freelance facilitators engaged in the delivery of ELEVATE should be subject to a standardised selection criterion. This should be based on a clear rationale and aligned with the aims and objectives of the programme.

The CJA should continue to nurture the informal networking spaces that have emerged, often organically, during the first iteration of ELEVATE. They should also continue to provide networking opportunities with CJA partners and policymakers and make these a more prominent and frequent part of the provision. Selection procedures for formal buddying pairs need to be stabilised and improved to better promote compatibility. The provision of buddy training would also allow clear parameters, boundaries and role depth to be established.

2

Background

The Criminal Justice Alliance (CJA) is an independent network of more than 200 non-profit organisations and academic members working and researching across the criminal justice system (CJS), all committed to 'collaborating for a fairer and more effective criminal justice system' (CJA, 2023a: 2). The network has tripled membership in the last ten years and includes staff associations, research institutions and charities (CJA, undated a). Currently led by Annette So, the CJA's Interim Director, the Alliance advocates for 'sensible changes to make the criminal justice system work better' (CJA, undated a). Their approach is two-pronged, addressing the small barriers to progress while simultaneously engaging in much needed work towards systemic change in the CJS (CJA, 2022a: 5). The vision of the Alliance is expansive and driven by a clear understanding of the ripple effects that can be created for communities nationally (and beyond) when a fairer and more effective justice system is achieved in a sustainable manner.

A central strand of the CJA's work involves the promotion of power sharing with people who have lived experience of the CJS. A key element of this commitment has been the creation and delivery of ELEVATE CJS, a comprehensive leadership programme for those with lived experience of the CJS (CJA, 2022b). ELEVATE CJS is one of five key approaches identified by the CJA in its current five-year strategy, 'Reimagine, Redesign, Rebuild: Driving Systemic Change Together (CJA, 2022a).

Researchers from the University of Greenwich, Dr Ed Schreeche-Powell, and Dr Ella Simpson, have been commissioned to conduct a two-year evaluation of the ELEVATE CJS programme. One of the researchers has lived experience and the other learned experience of the CJS. The evaluation includes the current process evaluation based on the experiences of the first leadership cohort of the programme (2023) and will be augmented with an outcome evaluation at the end of the second iteration of the programme in 2024. The evaluation takes a mixed methods approach in order to best capture effectiveness and success. However, the focus of the process evaluation will be on qualitative data, which enables an understanding of why and how something might work or how it can be improved. The evaluation will consider if and how the processes employed by ELEVATE CJS are successful, identify barriers to success and make recommendations that are evidence-informed on how the programme can be improved for its second iteration.

3

Research Team

Dr Ed Schreeche-Powell

Ed Schreeche-Powell is a Lecturer in Criminology at the University of Greenwich. Ed holds a BSc (1st Class Hons) in Criminology and Psychology and MA (with Distinction) in Criminology at the University of Kent with a dissertation that offered an impact evaluation of the effects of peer intervention as a power-sharing initiative on the mental health and wellbeing of adult male prisoners.

Ed completed his PhD under the supervision of Professor Caroline Chatwin and Dr Marisa Silvestri, with a further investigation of this intervention. Ed's research focuses on the concept of 'Intervention Iatrogenesis' in penal peer intervention - iatrogenesis is the unintended and paradoxical outcome of well-meaning and intended intervention. In doing so he considers deficiencies in programme theory and draws conceptually upon the pains of imprisonment from the perspectives of those imprisoned and prison staff, alongside managerialism and staff cultures, knowledge management and conversion and further structural and intervention impediments. Ed harnesses his lived experience and positionality to contribute to the Convict Criminology Group and to infuse the design and analysis of his research, with the aim of this research to inform design, best practice, and evaluation practice in penal intervention and to support policy change.

Dr Ella Simpson

Ella Simpson is a Senior Lecturer in Criminology at the University of Greenwich. Ella gained knowledge and experience of evaluation methods under the supervision of Professor Laura Caulfield, a respected expert in the evaluation of creative arts interventions in the CJS. Ella has been part of the research teams for two creative arts in the CJS evaluation projects; Making for Change (Caulfield et al., 2018), a Ministry of Justice funded evaluation of a fashion project in a women's closed prison and, 'It's not just music, it helps from the inside' (Caulfield et al., 2020), a Youth Music funded evaluation of a music programme delivered to young people in contact with a Youth Offending Team. More recently, Ella has worked as a principal investigator on an evaluation of the National Criminal Justice Arts Alliance's professional mentoring scheme (Simpson, 2021) and last year completed a research study on the rights, status and needs of hidden LGBTQI+ communities (Simpson, 2023), commissioned by UN Women. A central theme running through Ella's work is a commitment to developing and utilising robust narrative evaluation methods, which are able to articulate difficult-to-measure aspects of creative practice and lived experience, in order to speak convincingly to policymakers and commissioners in criminal and social justice sectors. Prior to returning to academia, Ella worked as a creative arts facilitator in the prison estate in England for over a decade.

4

Acknowledgements

We are very grateful to all of the emerging leaders, facilitators, coaches, employees who spoke to us about their experiences. Thank you to the CJA Lived Experience expert group who helped steer this programme and for their insights. We look forward to continuing to work with you in the outcome evaluation of the project.

We thank the University of Greenwich, the Faculty of Liberal Arts and Sciences and The School of Law and Criminology for supporting our involvement in evaluating this programme. We reserve special thanks for the Institute of Inclusive Communities and Environment and the Centre for Communities and Social Justice Research and their teams for their support and encouragement.

5

The ELEVATE CJS Programme

The ELEVATE CJS programme is one of five key approaches taken by the CJA in its current five-year strategy, 'Reimagine, Redesign, Rebuild: Driving Systemic Change Together (CJA, 2022a). ELEVATE is:

'...a comprehensive leadership programme, distributing power to people with lived experience and challenging the system to reimagine who can be a leader. The purpose is to provide inspiring, engaging, and restorative leadership development for people with lived experience of the criminal justice system (CJS) to elevate their capacity to influence change.' (CJA, 2023b: 1).

ELEVATE is inspired by international good practice, including the Just Leadership USA organisation, which takes as a guiding principle the idea that: 'those closest to the problem, are closest to the solution' (CJA, 2022c). The programme is underpinned by the social change model of leadership development (Komives and Wagner, 2017), which 'promotes the creation and development of social change agents and the value of socially responsible leadership' (Skendall et al., 2017: intn) The CJA also hold an unwavering commitment to working with, learning from and supporting people with lived experience of the CJS, which is reflected in the composition of the CJA staff, facilitators, independent advisors and researchers engaged with the programme. The programme was peer-researched and co-produced by the CJA's lived experience expert group (CJA, 2023c), much of the content is coordinated and facilitated by those with lived experience and it is evaluated by two academics, one of whom also has lived experience of the CJS.

In designing the ELEVATE programme the CJA heeded calls from Sandhu (2019) warning against the creation of ad hoc leadership and development training programmes for people with lived experience that are not linked to fundamental change at systemic, structural, and cultural levels. In a bid to promote individual and sector level change, the CJA have taken a dual approach, 'not just supporting lived experience leaders, but also working with employers and policy makers to dismantle the barriers to progress' (CJA, 2023b: 3), thereby removing 'the barriers of stigma and tokenism, which prevent emerging leaders who are working in the sector from progressing to positions of power' (CJA, 2023b: 2).

The CJA has taken a broad definition of lived experience which includes people who have a criminal record, have experienced the impact of criminalisation, victims, and survivors of a direct crime and also those who have indirect lived experience, for example family members of people in prison. Emerging leaders are also at different stages of their leadership journeys. The programme is designed to recognise and support this diversity, to capitalise on it and offer 'tailored approaches' (Sandhu, 2019: 9) to the needs of those with stigmatised or stigmatising identities. The core learning and training provision is delivered in four modules, running sequentially, between March and November, with a summer break in August. These modules are anchored by two weekend residential retreats in February and June, which offer emerging leaders opportunities to study and engage intensively with their cohort in a safe space. Aligning, again with Sandhu's (2019) research, ELEVATE CJS is centred on both the lived and learned experience of emerging leaders. In addition to skills training in, for example, communication and systems thinking, the programme offers wellbeing support via ongoing therapy sessions, along with leadership coaching and several opportunities to develop networks and engage in experiential learning through action research projects, a work placement at senior management level and a shadow board placement (CJA, 2023b, CJA, 2023c).

ELEVATE CJS received two years of funding for this pilot project from the Trust for London, Lloyds Bank Foundation, the Churchill Fellowship, QH and Network for Social Change (CJA, undated b). The programme recruited its first cohort of 16 emerging leaders in the winter of 2022, to begin the programme in early 2023. A second cohort will follow in 2024. For the pilot, programme participants are required to be resident in London, over 18, with lived experience of the CJS and a minimum of 2 years working in the CJS (CJA, 2023b: 2). If successful it is intended that the programme will be rolled out nationally.

6

Research Context

Lived experience has grown into something of a 'funding buzzword' (Goldstraw, 2021) in the UK in the last few years, yet it is not a new phenomenon in the social sector, and there is a long-established precedent for people directly impacted by social issues taking the lead in challenging those injustices (Sandhu, 2017: 16). Many social sector services and organisations have involved and/or employed people with lived experiences of, for instance, disability, mental health, and substance use (Sandhu, 2017), although 'the criminal justice sector has been behind the curve' (CJA, 2019: 6), perhaps due to the actuarial risk model that underpins the governance, structure, ethos, and operations of the CJS, specifically in England and Wales. There has been some level of involvement for people with lived experience (Buck, 2020), for example in prisons (O'Brien, 2019: 6) probation (Barr and Montgomery, 2016) and policing (O'Brien, 2019: 17). However, much of this has been viewed as 'tokenistic' (Sandhu, 2017: 32) with many social sector organisations paying 'lip service' (Sandhu, 2017; 32) to lived experience involvement. The lack of financial investment in, and career development opportunities for people with lived experience reinforces this view and, as Sandhu (2017: 37) writes:

"Despite the gains and progress made in parts of the social sector over the years... these approaches...(are)...far from 'tested out' or embedded across the wider social sector."

The lack of commitment to meaningful collaboration and co-production found by Sandhu (2017, 2019) in the social sector has perhaps contributed to the lack of research on user-engagement and lived experience leadership within the CJS (CJA, 2019: 7), though with some notable recent exceptions (e.g. Buck et al., 2023; CJA, 2019; O'Brien, 2019). This absence in the knowledge base is problematic both for the sector, where demonstration of the effectiveness of lived experience involvement could create a greater impetus for the sector to support the development of leaders with lived experience (Sandhu, 2017), and for the current evaluation, which cannot claim to be built on a robust evidence base. Nonetheless, Sandhu (2017, 2019) has begun exploratory work, which offers a logical rationale as to the perceived benefits of lived experience leaders and further research must aim to test these claims empirically. Exploratory research has also been conducted into the barriers specific to lived experience leaders (CJA, 2019) and entrepreneurs (O'Brien, 2019) working in the CJS, which offers valuable insights to steer both the design of the ELEVATE programme and to assess its successful implementation. The current evaluation of the CJA's ELEVATE programme will, therefore, contribute to developing this research further, not through assessment of the value that people with lived experience bring to the CJS, but rather by better understanding how people with lived experience of the CJS can be supported in their ambitions to be changemakers in the sector. There is good reason to believe there is:

"a pressing need for a programme specifically aimed at recognising and supporting the learning, leadership and development needs of Lex (i.e., lived experience) leaders working across the UK' (Sandhu, 2019: 48)."

And findings of the process evaluation outlined in the following pages offer the first insights into how to make such a programme into a reality within the UK.

7

Evaluation Aims

7.1
Aims of the Evaluation

The overarching aims of this evaluation are to establish the extent to which ELEVATE CJS:

- ***Delivers a comprehensive approach to leadership development for people with lived experience of the CJS***
- ***Enables the development of people with lived experience to become influential in creating systems change and progress in their careers***
- ***Dismantles the barriers that preclude those with lived experience from progressing into positions of power' (CJA, 2023: 3)***

This report offers a detailed process evaluation of the first year of the programme's delivery, with focus on the first aim, which concerns the delivery of 'a comprehensive approach to leadership development for people with lived experience of the CJS'. The CJA's Terms of Reference (ToR) for the evaluation stipulate three key areas that should be assessed for their integrity and success. These areas are:

- *Approach*
- *Delivery*
- *Content*

These three areas of the programme, are in turn broken down into 20 specific questions (see appendix 1), which form the structure of the evaluation design, data collection and organisation of the report. However, there is considerable overlap between the three areas and the findings section will highlight the places where one area impacts on others.

7.2

Methodology

7.3
Data Collection

Over the course of the first year of the ELEVATE programme various changes and challenges have required flexibility from CJA staff and the evaluators. The original evaluation design, which set out to collect data from all major stakeholders (ELEVATE participants, CJA staff and advisory group members, facilitators, employers and third sector organisations) has proved to be unfeasible and the process evaluation does not include input from employers or third sector organisations. These stakeholders will now be included in the final outcome report to be delivered in 2024/25. Data collection has also been scaled back, and now includes:

- ***Documentary sources provided by the CJA***
- ***13 in-depth qualitative interviews with ELEVATE participants***
- ***Interview with the former CEO of the CJA***
- ***3 focus groups with:***
    - o *Current CJA staff team x1*
    - o *Facilitators, therapeutic lead, and members of advisory board x2*

The two questionnaires, intended to be delivered to ELEVATE participants after the first and second, and third and fourth modules were not conducted. This followed agreement between the CJA and the evaluators. Concerns were raised by the CJA about overwhelming participants with too many data collection tools, particularly in the light of an impromptu focus group, delivered by Gifford Sutherland in July 2023. This group was in response to perceived participant dissatisfaction with internal staff changes and some of the course content. It was agreed that the evaluators would replace the intended questionnaires with one-to-one interviews that offered a conversation rather than the impersonal format of Likert scales and closed questions. Findings from Gifford's focus group capture key themes repeated in the one-to-one interviews, although in less detail, and containing a degree of social acceptability bias, which is not unusual in the format of a focus group. Informal end of session evaluations conducted by CJA staff are used where appropriate to supplement data from the one-to-one interviews (see Section 7.7 on limitations).

7.4 Analytical Approach and Framework (Qualitative)

The rationale for conducting a grounded theory analysis derives from the relative paucity of research and theory relating to the specific programme and the experiences of those with lived experience engaging in schemes that interact with work identities (see Section 6), and a lack of specificity from what does exist. There is, currently, limited ability to theorize about this phenomenon, and grounded theory allows this gap to be addressed.

Described as 'the most widely employed interpretive strategy in the social sciences today' (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994: 204), grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) is the analytical approach and methodology employed in the qualitative analysis of this study. The core tenet of grounded theory is to generate and develop theory from data (Punch, 2005) As such, the fundamental notion in developing a grounded theory is to unearth a core category that is both grounded in data and accounts for the core data that has been collected, which is the approach the researchers adopted.

For the purpose of this study, analysis drew upon the 'systematic approach to analysis' model of Huberman and Young (1994), examining relationships in the data and analysis, identifying trends, cross-examination of information, and developing a body of evidence able to accommodate the breadth of data collection methodologies and collected data. The researchers were able to focus on the most significant categories identified from the data in order to elaborate them and connect them to central categories (using the ToR for the evaluation project) to devise a broader theoretical framework informing the findings and conclusions of this report. In this vein, the relationship between the central category and other satellite categories is elaborated until overall theory is devised and refined. The analysis focussed on data 'reduction, elaboration and development into theory' (Gilbert, 2008; 107).

So, how did this methodological theorisation translate into practice? Whilst the study was exploratory, there were some pre-existing themes with which to guide coding and organise the data from earlier reports. Despite this, akin to Liebling's (1992) research, a number of new themes and subsequent conceptualisations emerged throughout the study and were integrated into the research as it developed. The researchers modified and added to these categories as progression was made through the interviews. It was then possible for the evaluators to synergize these categories thematically and draw out the various presenting similarities and differences between interviewees amongst the samples. This fed initially into the gradient of outputs prior to this point, comprising an infographic

of cohort feedback and the later interim process report in the form a traffic light system of core themes, analysis, and recommendations.

To develop this further a key aspect was then to select which quotations to invoke to illustrate these themes once identified. The evaluators highlighted the quotations deemed the best fit in terms of illustration and impact for this (Jones, 2007). The overarching rationale and aim was a level of analysis to explore the similarities, differences and patterns among interviewees and consider any relationships between them. The culmination of the phases of coding are represented in the thematic theoretical framework that follows in the forthcoming findings and conclusion. The findings and recommendations from the process evaluation are intended to inform the second year of the programme.

7.5 Analytical Approach and Framework (Quantitative)

Due to the withdrawal of the questionnaires, analysis using quantitative methods is minimal. Where possible, data has been supplemented with information collected by the CJA, however this did not use rigorous techniques and is, therefore, heuristic (see Section 7.7). The report contains a small number of descriptive statistics (Bryman, 2016) in the form of charts and graphs, intended to offer approximate baseline measures for EDI as well as feedback on programme content.

7.6 Ethics

The evaluation team for this study have considerable experience of conducting research in the CJS and as set out in Section 3, have their own lived and learned experience from the sector. The evaluation received ethical approval on 9th June 2023 by the University Ethics Board at the University of Greenwich.

7.7 Limitations

All data collected by the evaluators used recognised social scientific methods to ensure rigour. However, the decision to forgo survey data collection, combined with the inclusion of more ad hoc data collected by the CJA to supplement this has resulted in some gaps and inconsistencies in the findings reported. The CJA have done an impressive job of producing responsive and ongoing evaluations of the programme in, for example, their end of session evaluations, 360-degree assessments, additional focus groups. However, in order to get the maximum benefit from these multiple data sources, it is recommended that for future iterations of the programme, there is a unified approach taken to data collection, which enables standardisation of evaluation tools. In addition, a single repository of all data and programme materials, which is fully accessible to the evaluators, should be created.

7.8
Reflections on Research

The process of establishing and developing trust was key to providing an enabling environment for participants and, as such, giving them the confidence to share sensitive and personal information and reassuring them that the data provided would not be misused or abused. Disclosure can vary among researchers and self-disclosure can serve to enhance rapport and reciprocity, but it can also introduce demanding situations where researchers may become vulnerable and emotionally entangled (Schreeche-Powell, 2023; Dickson-Swift et al., 2007). The evaluators chose to openly disclose their positionality and also information about their identities, thoughts, and feelings. They discussed their views on a range of issues within the criminal justice system in England and Wales, whilst demonstrating a sympathetic demeanour to participants regarding the realities of day-to-day life as someone with lived experience and demonstrating an awareness of the complexities of their role. This disclosure enabled the participants to gauge the authenticity and support of the evaluators, overcoming the culture of fear and uncertainty that co-exists with the wariness, that has been observed among those with lived experience, supporting them in engaging with rich insights. (Schreeche-Powell, 2023)

The cohort also gave feedback on the evaluation and the methodologies used to produce this report. Ther were a range of positive comments that were received. Participant 8 touched on a few areas of the evaluation in stating;

"You've given me space to elaborate on things. You've probed and delved on things, and teased out answers that even I didn't know I was hinting at. Yeah, it's been really useful. And you've all been very accessible in terms of – we were hoping to do it in person, but if not there's online sessions, and you've been very clear in emails. So yeah, I think it's gone really well."

Participant 6 expressed a sentiment below, echoed by Participant 5 for the independent evaluation to be embedded earlier in the programme and evaluation is something discussed in other areas that touch upon this;

"Definitely, definitely. Maybe, um, if they could get you lot to step in earlier".

8
Findings

8.1
Programme Approach:

The ELEVATE CJS programme is underpinned by the social change model of leadership development (Komives et al., 2017), established at the University of California, Los Angeles, specifically for undergraduate college students (Wagner, 2006). It is further inspired by JustLeadershipUSA (CJA, 2023c: 6), a lived experience-led, national, non-profit organisation committed to mass decarceration through the elevation of people with direct experience of criminal justice into positions that enable them to effect significant policy change to this end (JLUSA, 2023). The CJA also states its own commitment to learning from and supporting people with lived experience of the CJS (e.g. CJA, 2019), asserting that their 'meaningful inclusion...across a wide variety of roles and organisations, is crucial'. (CJA, 2019: 4). The following sections address the

integrity and success of these commitments in relation to seven specific questions.

8.1.1 Lived experience led:

To what extent is the programme designed and delivered 'by and for' people with lived experience and how could this approach be further embedded in year two?

To address this question, two sources of information were used; documentary research, including public facing self-statements and short biographies generated by CJA staff, ELEVATE CJS Advisory Group (IAG) members and freelance facilitators, along with qualitative data taken from ELEVATE participants on their perceptions of the contribution of lived experience to the design and delivery of the programme[1].

8.1.1.1 Commitment to Lived Experience Research

Based on documentary evidence, the design and planning of ELEVATE demonstrates impressive commitment to promoting and learning from people with lived experience. More than four years of research and strategic planning lie behind the inception of ELEVATE, inspired by an independent research project, Turning 180 Degrees, on how international prison-university partnerships can foster leadership capabilities for participants, conducted by the CJA's former Director, Nina Champion (2018). Under Nina's tenure at the CJA, strategic focus groups with CJA members identified the importance of building the capacity of people with lived experience of criminal justice. This became a key area of development in the organisation's 2019-22 Strategy, Connecting for Change (CJA, 2018). This strategy generated an exploratory study (CJA, 2019, see also Section 6) focused on the experiences of people with lived experience of prison who were working in the criminal justice sector, along with the views of employers in the third, public and private sectors. Conducted by a researcher with lived experience and supported by a group of experts by experience, 'Change From Within' suggested some of the positive benefits of this work for both the individuals involved and the CJS more broadly; findings that echo research in the wider social sector (Sandhu, 2017, 2019). However, the study also noted the absence of 'support mechanisms' in place to aid people's entry or progression into work in the CJS and called for funders to support pilot leadership programmes aimed at offering lived experience leaders progression routes to managerial and influencing roles. Further research by the CJA on 'trail-blazing lived experience leaders' (CJA, 2023c: 6),

again, peer-led and coproduced with a group of experts by experience, identified barriers and enablers to leadership positions, which led to the co-design of, what has become, the ELEVATE CJS programme.

The emphasis in all the documentation charting the research and design of the ELEVATE programme is very much in collaboration with people with lived experience. Certainly, the composition of the ELEVATE CJS Advisory Group (formerly the expert group), indicates this (see figure 1.1). There are 11 members of the group in total and nine of these members reference their lived experience in public facing media statements. Meanwhile, the Board of Trustees, a level of governance identified as rarely representing the communities they serve (Sandhu, 2017: 45), includes two members, out of 12, with self-declared lived experience of the CJS. This finding concurs with an evaluation by Christie (2022), which found the 2019-2022 CJA strategy had

[1]Question 8.1.1 focuses attention on the lived experience of the designers and deliverers of the programme rather than the participants. Perception is often as important as 'fact', and with this in mind, it was decided to categorise CJA staff advisors and collaborators based on their own public facing statements of lived experience (e.g. social media, media interviews). It is important to stress that information was not taken from news reports or secondary sources of information.

created good progress in terms of lived experience influencing. Although, that evaluation did not specifically deal with board level appointments, and this may be an area for further inclusion of people with lived experience in future.

8.1.1.2 Lived Experience Staffing

The staffing of the ELEVATE programme was initially overseen by Nola Sterling, a project manager who has direct lived experience; an appointment that was viewed as 'instrumental' (Participant 8) to the early success of the programme by 12 out of 13 participants, who variously described Nola as a 'real driver' (Participant 10), 'the heartbeat of the programme' (Participant 4), and 'like the mum who knows all her kids' (Participant 7). This was due it no small part to the lived experience shared between Nola and the participants, which meant that:

"Nola gets us" (Participant 7).

"We as lived experience people felt connected to her" (Participant 8).

However, following the departure of Nola and Nina from the CJA, the permanent team appears to be entirely staffed by people without self-declared lived experience. This may be of less consequence in terms of staff who are not directly involved with the design of ELEVATE and is more pertinent for those taking a leading role in the development of the programme, in particular the new project manager.

However, the advantages of a lived-experience leader spearheading the programme are not clear cut. While all the first cohort experienced and/or recognised the negative impact of Nola's departure which effected everyone's morale (Participant 5), one participant (2) felt nonetheless, that the staff member who provided interim cover and did not have lived experience would be 'better than Nola' (Participant 2), and another three participants (numbers withheld), while recognising the impact of Nola's departure on the rest of the cohort, were themselves able to detach, presenting the

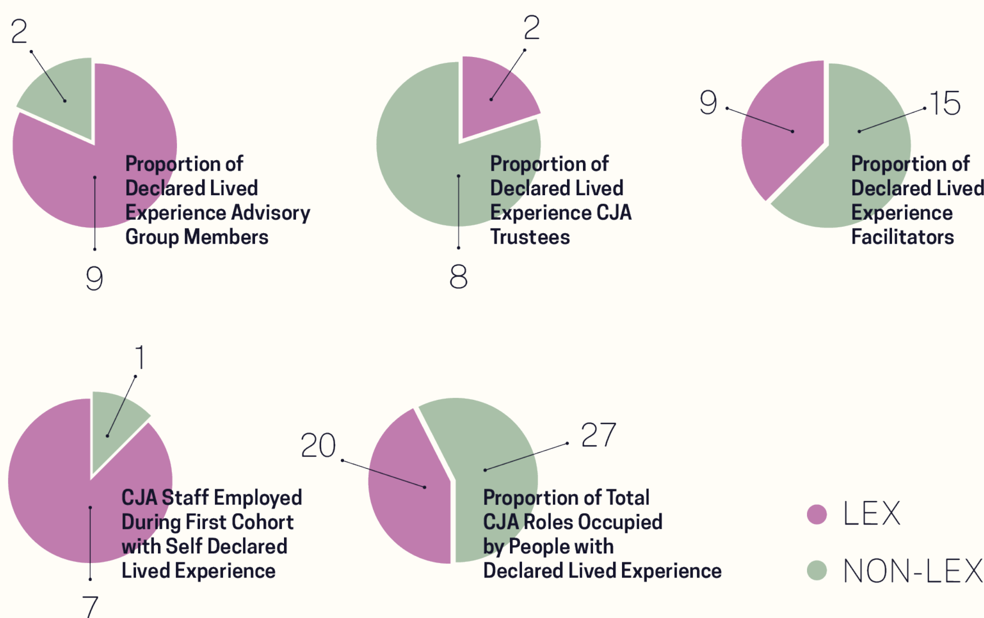


Figure 1.1 Overview of Lived Experience Ratios in CJA Roles for Design and Delivery of ELEVATE CJS – 2022-23

situation as a normal part of staff turnover in human resource management. The strong emotional bonds that Nola developed, however, attributed in part to shared lived experience, led to many of the participants experiencing a sense of loss, anger and mistrust of the CJA after her departure. Some participants (2, 4, 5 and 7) suggested her leaving contributed to programme attrition. Although, participants also suggested that the impersonal handling of the matter, was a large part of their disquiet:

"'Oh, no, no, we can't talk about it. Nola's gone and that's it. And there's her job vacancy, so you can just apply for if you want to'...they'e not understanding the impact she had on individuals in the beginning" (Participant 10).

Based on these participant insights, it is arguable that while strong emotional bonds, based on shared lived experience can prove powerful in motivating, supporting and nurturing programme participants, such bonds can also produce heighted vulnerabilities for staff and participants (Facilitator/IAG Focus Group). This requires careful consideration by the CJA to minimise risk while also maintaining their commitment to people with lived experience taking significance roles in the leadership of the ELEVATE programme. An amelioratory measure employed in the wake of Nola's leaving was to invite IAG members to offer support to small numbers of participants (Facilitator and IAG Group). This type of diffusion of pastoral responsibility for participants could be considered as a proactive strategy to address the issues arising from a concentration of responsibility at the project manager level. Although it also remains to be seen if the CJA's decision to recruit a new project manager, who does not have direct lived experience, will alter the group dynamics (although, this may be the result of factors other than lived experience).

8.1.1.3 Lived Experience Delivery

In terms of the delivery of the programme in the first year, this was divided between CJA staff members (Nina Champion, Nola Sterling, Eulina Clairmont and Mark Blake) and a group of freelance facilitators. Of these facilitators, nine have self-declared lived experience and 15 do not[2]. Overall, 42%, close to half, of all roles described here were filled by people with publicly stated, direct lived experience (see figure 1.1). This is similar to the ratio of lived to learned experience staff at St Giles' Trust, an organisation recognised as a leading lived experience employer (e.g. St Giles Trust, 2023)

Qualitative data from ELEVATE participants support the statistical findings, with the majority identifying a reasonably equal balance of lived and non-lived experience in the design and delivery of the programme. In two cases the perception was that the programme was heavily weighted towards facilitators with lived experience:

"I believe that it was purely delivered by people with lived experience from...the trustees, the people who run the organisation, the people who came to, you know, teach us...the people who were delivering the therapeutic approach...I believe it was completely from that angle" (Participant 3).

[2]Numbers of freelance facilitators based on data received from the CJA.

While Participant 13 estimated 90% of people they met had some type of lived experience. However, 10 out of the 13 participants recognised more of a balance between lived and learned experience:

"I'd say (lived experience experts contribute) as much as feasibly possible...there's a lived experience advisory group at the Criminal Justice Alliance that seems to have been massively involved at every stage and have popped up at very key times throughout our twelve-month course" (Participant 8).

Only one participant (5) thought there could have been more input from people with lived experience. Interestingly, however, the inclusion of experts by experience in the design and delivery of the programme was not always seen as wholly effective, or in one case desirable. For Participant 7:

"there was an obsession with lived experience, to the point where I'm tired of even hearing lived experience during this programme."

Overall, however, lived experience was viewed as an important contribution to the design and delivery of ELEVATE, providing examples of people who had turned their lives around (Participants 3 and 6) and even Participant 7, who complained about too many sessions being lived experience-led, argued for the inclusion of experts by experience in the design and delivery processes:

"I think the lived experience...works, because of the fact that you're in a unique group." (Participant 7)

Though, as Participant 6 notes:

"I don't think it's like the be all and end all."

8.1.1.4 Summary

Based on the evidence set out in this section, it appears that the ELEVATE programme was designed and delivered by a reasonable balance of people with lived and learned experience. According to the responses of the first cohort, the CJA should continue to recruit a relatively equal balance of lived and learned experience practitioners to design and deliver the programme, and in the longer term CJA staff may also like to consider greater representation of lived experience at board level.

There is a need to consider how risk of heightened vulnerabilities can be minimised in the relationship between participants and the project manager, as a result of the concentration of responsibility at project management level. Distributing pastoral responsibility for participants may be achieved through greater use of IAG members. However, close attention should also be paid to the effect a project manager without direct experience may have on group dynamics.

The extent that ELEVATE was designed for people with lived experience is more complicated and is bound up with differing levels of lived experience in the cohort. This will be addressed in section 8.2.6.

8.1.2 Equitable and inclusive: How far has the programme met the aims of the EDI statement and what more could be done to improve EDI in year two?

This question cannot currently be addressed directly by the evaluators. Although the CJA planned an EDI statement this has not yet been produced (CJA Focus Group).

8.1.2.1
Basic Demographic Data

Basic demographic data exists for 12 of the 16 participants, which shows good representation of non-white participants (10 out of the 12 surveyed), reflecting the overrepresentation of people of colour in the CJS, and there is a reasonably equal number of male and female identifying participants (n7 male, n5, female), although none of this cohort identify as transgender. There is a lack of diversity in terms of sexuality and disability. Meanwhile, the programme has been particularly inclusive of people aged between 36-55. There is less representation for younger and older people, with only one respondent younger than 36 and no participants older than 55. Arguably, this age demographic may be reflective of findings from life course criminology and desistance theories, which suggest, certainly in the case of men, offending behaviour peaks in the late teens and thereafter declines, with the age of 30 seen as a significant point in the attrition (Maruna, 1997).

The descriptive statistics outlined here (figure 1.2) are intended to serve as a baseline for further monitoring of participant demographics once targets have been formalised. It is recommended that the CJA create a comprehensive EDI statement for this purpose and in future gather relevant demographic data as a matter of course for all applicants during recruitment and selection processes. This will allow for more rigorous analysis of the data. It may also be useful for the CJA to collate demographic information for facilitators of ELEVATE.

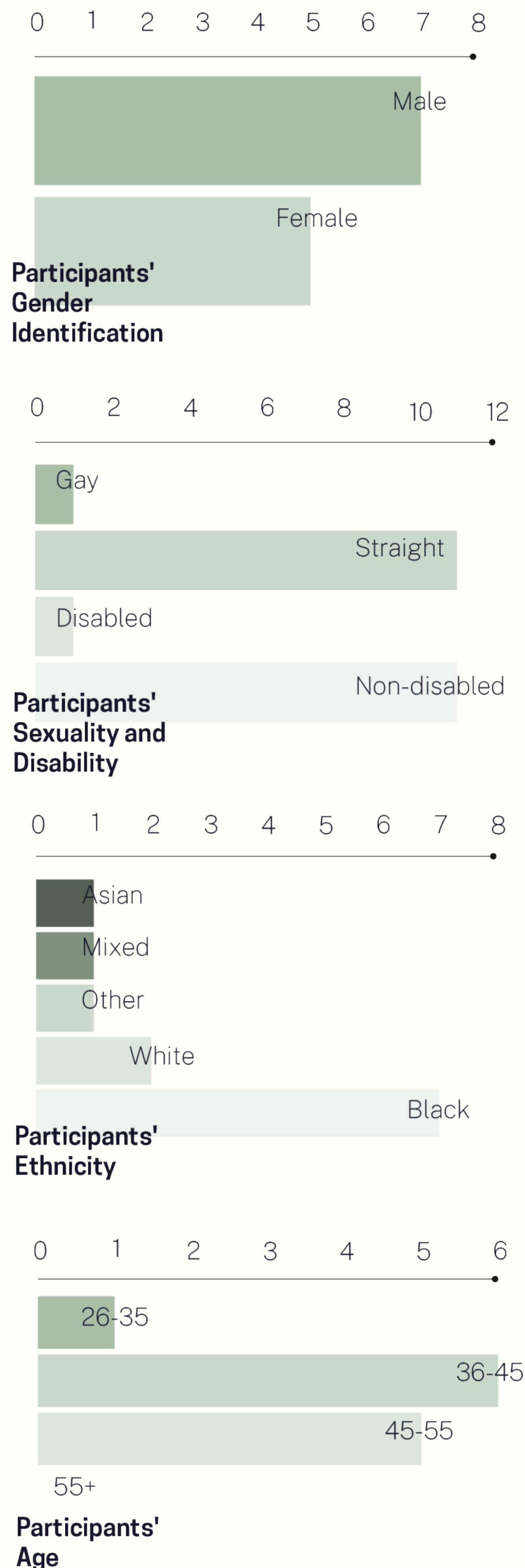


Figure 1.2 Gender, Age and Ethnicity Demographics for 12 ELEVATE CJS Participants

8.1.2.2
Recruitment Processes for Participants

Participants' experiences of the recruitment process, however, are as important, if not more so, than the quantitative data. The process appears to have consisted of five key elements:

- *Publicity and media campaign including a launch event*
- *Taster day*
- *Online information meetings (x2)*
- *Application process*
- *Interviews*

The majority of the participants who spoke about how they were made aware of ELEVATE, learned about the programme through their professional (n.6) or social media (n.2) networks. One other participant was given information by a friend. Participant 8 described the social media coverage as 'phenomenal', including multiple ways through which publicity was generated. For this participant, the ubiquitous nature of the campaign was particularly useful, as it motivated them to apply:

"If I'd only seen it once or twice, I'm busy…I may have kind of forgotten about it, but it just kept cropping up all the time, and I was just like, 'Oh my god, maybe I should apply, maybe I should apply.'" (Participant 8)

Recommendations by colleagues, who in at least four cases was a manager, also seemed to act as a motivating factor:

"When the opportunity came up, I was not aware of this, so my manager and the CEO approached me, and said…this will be a great [opportunity] for you because you are very passionate, and you really want to carry on in this". (Participant 9)

This suggests the campaign had good reach and take-up; however it was also the case that the CJA received less applications than initially expected (Facilitator/IAG Focus Group) and at least two of the freelance facilitators had been unaware of the programme and subsequently expressed interest in applying for the second cohort (Participant 12). It is beyond the parameters of the current evaluation to offer informed explanation for the lack of take-up among prospective participants who had received information about ELEVATE, as there is no data on people who chose not to apply. However, it would appear broader distribution to networks beyond the core criminal justice sector may be worth consideration, particularly focusing on social justice and activist networks, where there are less connections to formalised criminal justice systems but a potential audience of lived experience leaders.

8.1.2.3
Preliminary Recruitment Events

The preliminary events, consisting of a Taster Day and two online information sessions, received all positive feedback from the eight participants who attended and spoke about their experience. Five participants did not attend due to other commitments. Notably, all the positives emerging from the sessions concerned their emotional or inspirational tone:

'They (the speakers) were being vulnerable, being themselves, being just open and I really like that because that was the first time where I felt I have a community. I'm not the only one' (Participant 2)

For others the potential to create change was compelling:

"I saw Cassie, Paula, all the people, sharing what they were doing in the world right now and…I wanted to be a part of that" (Participant 3)

One participant also expressed their appreciation of the creative methods showcased:

"(It) took me out of my comfort zone a lot because there were some things I wasn't – just had no idea about. So, I remember clearly photo box…that was a highlight for me and just showed me that you can use creativity. It's not always black and white text…there are ways to do things, there are different ways of learning". (Participant 10)

While this is predominantly a positive finding, there is also a note of caution to be sounded. Several staff and facilitators commented on the need to manage participants' expectations around what leadership is and what the ELEVATE programme can realistically offer (Facilitator/IAG Focus Groups, Staff Interviews). However, what appears to have been communicated to participants at these introductory sessions were the aspirational and inspirational aspects of leadership. While this is fine, even desirable as a recruitment tool (Șupeala, 2018), it may be advisable to balance this emotional engagement with an emphasis on the substantive content of the programme, such as concrete learning outcomes. Participant 4 summarises the dangers of focusing too much on the inspirational:

"They did a fantastic job of wrapping this shiny package of ELEVATE and making you feel like you are joining this programme, that you are going to leave with [amazing things]. Although I benefitted massively in various ways it is not what – how I thought it would be, you know."

Only two participants spoke specifically about the online information sessions. For Participant 8, this session was an alternative to the Taster Day and worked well in presenting information and allowing the participant to present themselves to the CJA. Meanwhile, for Participant 2, the online session, which they found to be 'one-to-one and personal' was the decisive factor in their decision to apply for the programme.

8.1.2.4 Application and Interviewing

The application process itself appeared to be relatively unremarkable for most participants:

"The application…I actually have no memory of that. I think I probably just done it as subconsciously and just done quite a lot of cutting and pasting into it from what….I've done previously". (Participant 1)

Notable, however, were the three participants who chose to create video applications. It is not clear that all the participants were aware of this option, and based on positive feedback from Participants 4, 10 and 12, it would be worthwhile making sure the option is clearly set out for all future participants. For Participant 4, the video format fitted in better with their busy lifestyle, while Participant 10 and 12 identified a greater compatibility with their specific learning styles and needs.

The resulting interviews had a more mixed reception from participants, although there was a general sense in which they were somehow not what was expected, 'weird' (Participant 8), even 'weirdly good' (Participant 11), and the questions, while 'extremely uncomfortable because of their depth, were simultaneously 'spot on' (Participant 13). Only Participant 2 unequivocally disliked the format:

"(It was) really thorough…I felt it was a bit too much, personally, for an (uncertified) course".

They suggested a group interview would be better over the course of a day or an afternoon, with a possible interview afterwards if further screening was required. Other participants commented on the formality of the interview (Participants 1 and 4), but this was countered by six participants who felt the interview had been informal, to the extent that for some it was:

"One of those interviews where you're just laughing, your just talking, it's not uncomfortable".(Participant 7)

Authenticity was a theme of these more positive responses to the interview situation:

"I was really allowed to pull back the layers of the onion and be myself". (Participant 11)

One area of more general concern, however, was the interview panel, both in terms of size and consistency. 'Three on one' (Participant 1) appeared to some participants excessive, and both Participant 2 and 4 suggested a single interviewer. This conflicts with advice on best EDI practice (CIPD, 2022: 14), though it would be more sensitive to the issues people with lived experience may have around authority figures (Participant 2). Equally concerning in terms of EDI was the lack of consistency in the membership of the interview panels. Best practice suggests that the panel be composed of the same members for each interview (CIPD, 2022) but this was not the case and participants had clearly discussed and compared their experiences:

"We were all in a group and we were just discussing that application process, I only heard about some of the other interviews. And yeah, some of it was kind of abrasive to other people, like the style of the person who was asking the questions, a bit gritty...it didn't feel nice even realising that somebody had a different interview experience". (Participant 4)

8.1.2.5 Summary

Based on these findings, it would be provident to carefully consider the interview format before recruiting for the second cohort. The suggestion of a group workshopping session could be considered, as could trauma-informed interviewing approaches (e.g. Treisman, 2021). Nonetheless, and as set out in the earlier part of this section, the recruitment process already in place goes a long way to achieving inclusion and diversity among the first ELEVATE cohort. A clear EDI statement and more robust data collection methods will enable further improvement, as may widening the recruitment campaign to include social justice and activism networks. It is also recommended that the introductory events create a better balance between communicating aspirational and inspirational goals and more substantive content, such as concrete learning outcomes. The video application appears to have been a particular success for those who used it and this option should be clearly communicated to all potential applicants in future.

8.1.3 Broad definition of lived experience: What have been the advantages and disadvantages of having a broad definition of lived experience amongst the participants, and should the definition remain the same for year two?

The CJA have chosen to adopt a 'broad definition of lived experience' in their recruitment of the first cohort of participants. However, no actual definition is stipulated (CJA Focus Group), and a number of examples are offered in lieu of this. The examples are:

"Experience of being over-policed, in prison or on a community sentence, a victim of crime, family member(s) in prison' (CJA, 2023b: 1).

The lack of a stated definition was not referred to by any of the participants in the first cohort as problematic or otherwise, however, for future cohorts and to provide monitoring exercises and evaluations with a clear conceptualisation of 'lived experience', a definitional statement of what lived experience entails would be helpful (see Sandhu, 2019: 1—16)".

8.1.3.1 Participants' Experience of the Broad Lived Experience Definition

Participants' responses to working with people with a wide range of lived experience of the CJS were predominantly positive and described variously as the 'first time I felt like I have a community' (Participant 2), 'a wealthy and rich experience' (Participant 9)) and a 'deeply mind and heart opening experience' capable of producing 'beautiful connection' (Participant 3).

Participant 5 suggested that the 'diversity of the group added a lot of value' to the programme, 'and got you (to) start thinking about things differently' (Participant 6). Even Participant 7, who offered a harsh critique of broad lived experience as it related to freelance facilitators, arguing they should have direct lived experience, was more positive about the diversity of lived experience in the cohort:

"You might be the only person in your team (at work) that has lived experience, so to be able to talk about things freely and not feel like you're being judged...it was good". (Participant 7)

Only Participant 12 unequivocally felt that the broad definition of lived experience didn't work.

Participant 1 offered astute insight into the co-existence of diversity and similarity in the cohort:

"The lived experience of everyone was different. But it's common as well. Like, the lived experience of being a victim, or the lived experience of that...like everybody's got trauma".

And the ability of participants to listen carefully to each other's experience and develop understanding or empathy (Participant 8) appeared to be central to the process of finding common ground.

Nonetheless, some participants (1, 4, 5, 6, 8 and 10) made clear that the journey had not always been smooth. Participant 8 spoke about everyone being:

"thrown into the deep end, because a lot of people aren't used to mixing with different people...you've got a real mixed bag, which is harder to work...But it was great for me to kind of be part of and a massive privilege".

Meanwhile, 'raw and messy', were the words used by Participant 4 to describe some of the collective encounters in the group. However, overall, participants viewed this as less concerned with lived experience per se and more with the social demographics of group members. Race and ethnicity (mentioned by Participants 1, 4 and 5) and age (referred to by Participants 5 and 8) were identified as key factors relating to differences, that at times made some participants feel 'uncomfortable' (Participant 1). For example:

"You have strong black women in our group and they carry a very strong message... it's same with black men in our group, you know, and, [laughs] you know, you can't help but feel awkward for the white people that are in the meeting, in the group, you know, because they're talking about...their mobility within the criminal justice sector and how this affects...Like, you have the privilege...And it's fine because we built a love and rapport for ourselves, yeah, so we know like in the end nobody's attacking anyone but...you know, just by virtue of the group that you brought together, like it's fiery and it's awkward". (Participant 4)

This type of 'two-edged sword' (Participant 4) is also apparent in the generational spread of the cohort, the ages of whom seem not to be entirely captured by the demographic information available (section 8.1.2). This suggests a lower response rate among younger members of the cohort. Participant 5 suggests that tensions in the group may, in part, be due to:

"the wide scale of age range…So, some people are coming from a different place like culturally, and that's their generation, and then another person from another generation, but it's not necessarily – they're not seeing eye to eye because of their – yeah, just because of their kind of generational". (Participant 5).

Although this participant, along with others, personally enjoyed and gained from working in an age diverse cohort.

Another suggestion for why 'cracks appeared later' (Participant 5) was concerned more with personalities than social divisions or differences in lived experience:

"The only issue that I kind of sensed was… the different personalities and how ready each one of us was to open up, and how ready or skilled each one of us was to be willing to listen to the other ideas and other opinions". (Participant 3).

8.1.3.2 Victims and Perpetrator Concerns

The one specific area of lived experience that was identified as problematic concerned participants whose contact with the CJS was as a primary victim of crime or where a person had indirect lived experience through a relative's conviction. Participants occupying this latter position are particularly difficult to categorise. They are not victims of crimes, but arguably are indirect victims of the CJS. The 'victim of the CJS' status also applies to the participant imprisoned on a joint enterprise charge, who was later released with 'no-case-to-answer'. Concern was expressed both by victims and perpetrators and was also echoed in the Staff and Facilitator/IAG Focus groups, who spoke of a 'hierarchy of lived experience'.

Victims spoke about the potential triggering effects of working with perpetrators who may have committed crimes similar to the ones that had impacted them (2 participants numbers withheld), while perpetrators spoke about feelings of guilt or responsibility and regret for retriggering victims (3 participants numbers withheld). Participant 12 said they were not aware that the cohort contained victims of crime and concluded:

"If you keep it more structured in terms of work for leadership and moving on and progression, it doesn't dive into opinions of the past. I think too much opinion was given if that makes sense. Too much of ourselves was given".

Meanwhile, Participant 11, spoke about how the cohort unintentionally 'isolated' victims in the group:

"Because there I am talking about my crimes and how I may be sorry for the crimes, or I'm a victim of circumstance going to prison… (but)…this person is dealing with trauma from the victim perspective – so when we're talking from that, we've really isolated that person, do you know what I mean?".

The isolation is also relevant in terms of the ratio of victims to perpetrators in the cohort. Based on the 13 interviews conducted with ELEVATE participants out of a total cohort of 16, nine have experience of a custodial or community sentence, three have family members who had criminal sentences and one participant did not disclose their type of lived experience (see figure 1.3).

These statistics show that victims of crime were in a minority in this cohort, which may well have negative bearing on their experience in the group. However, this is a complex issue, and for another participant

whose circumstances positioned them as primarily a victim of the CJS, the inclusion of both victims and perpetrators was important:

“We need people that were victims. We need people that were perpetrators. We might even need family members that have lost loved ones to the justice system…Because we have to get along somehow in the world, right, so why not create a small cohort and allow us to all have different opinions, and let it come together in a safe environment. We’re all learning, and I’ve learnt from it…”.(Participant number withheld)

Equally, for a participant who initially questioned their inclusion in the group as a victim found that:

“Further into the programme, it shifted. And I think the relationship with my cohort members, you know, it wasn’t a them and us. It then became all of us together because some way along the line the journeys connected”. (Participant withheld)

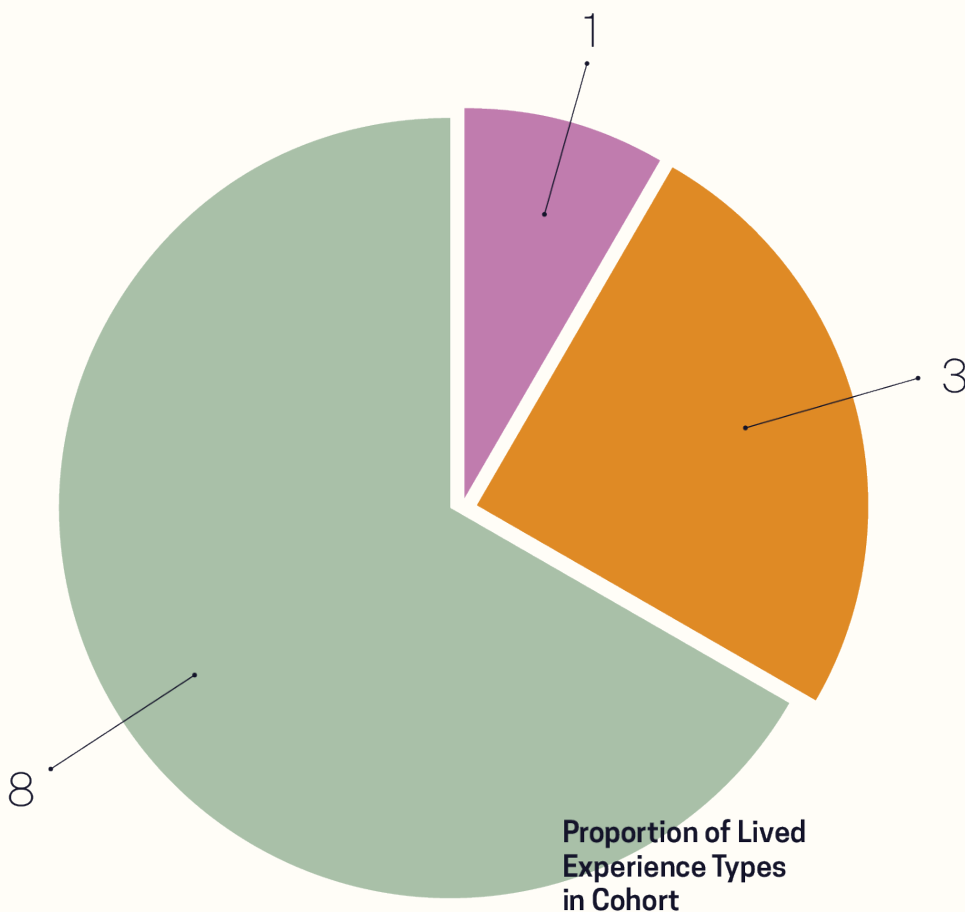


Figure 1.3 Lived Experience Types on Cohort

8.1.3.3
Disclosure of Lived Experience

Finally, the issue of non-disclosure of lived experience within the group was seen as problematic by Participant 4 and 5. For Participant 4 the issue concerned the impact of non-disclosure on group dynamics:

"Some of the people in the group, we still don't know what their lived experience is to this day…so you come in with this cloud of secrecy and again at the end of the day we respect it but hey, we're all pouring our shit out and talking about our stuff, like and you're over there…it does not leave a good taste in the group". (Participant 4).

Participant 5, meanwhile, was more concerned with the impact on individuals should a participant's offence prove to be triggering once disclosed. Relevant to both eventualities, Participants 4 and 5 suggest that future cohorts should be better informed prior to the beginning of the programme of the potential types of lived experience they may encounter on the programme and the types of information they will be asked to volunteer about their own lived experience. This should be augmented with group support in the form of learning sessions for individual lived experience journeys within the collective (as opposed to in one-to-one therapy or coaching):

''Cos in one part you want to open it up to people with different experiences, but I think actually really paying attention to those specific experiences or holding space for the reality of those differences is just as important as holding space for bringing those experiences together, if that makes sense. So, they (CJA) done a good job at holding space for the collective lived experience. I do not think they done as good a job at holding space for the individual lived experiences". (Participant 4)

This suggestion relates to the CJA's own awareness of the need to check in more regularly around EDI issues (CJA Staff Focus Group).

8.1.3.4
Lived Experience and Programme Attrition

It is indisputable that the only participant whose direct experience was as a victim was among the four participants who dropped out, two others had spent time in prison and the evaluators are unaware of the type of lived experience of the fourth participant. The imbalance of types of lived experience was felt to be problematic by CJA staff, facilitators and IAG members interviewed by the evaluators, although there is no consensus on what the solution might be; whether to narrow down selection criteria to a definition grounded in experience of the CJS as a perpetrator of crime or to split the second cohort into two different groups divided by type of experience. A more equal balance of types of lived experience was also suggested as appropriate for members of the IAG and facilitator groups (CJA Facilitator and IAG Focus Groups).

Many of the practitioners were conflicted in themselves as to how to resolve these issues around lived experience. However, as one of the CJA interviewees told us, it may be too early to decide, as the broad definition of lived experience has not yet been given a 'fair piloting' due, in part to the small number of victims recruited. Feedback from participants who left the programme early would have been valuable, however, although three of the participants were invited to interview, two did not respond and the third was not able to attend at a mutually agreeable time.

The fourth participant, whose lived experience is unknown to the evaluators, attended an interview in September 2023 and gave no indication that they intended to leave the programme at that point.

8.1.3.5 Summary

Overall, from the participants' perspective, the broad definition of lived experience was welcomed by 12 out of 13 of the first cohort, although the difficulties of individual journeys and the awkward group dynamics encountered by some participants should not be underestimated. Common ground and deep human connections were established in the group based on their diverse lived experiences, and where conflict did occur, it was ascribed more often to social demographics, in particular race and/or age, or different personalities than to the type of lived experience an individual brought to the group.

The one type of lived experience which posed difficulties in its own right, concerned participants who had been a primary victim of crime or had indirect lived experience of the CJS. Both perpetrators and victims expressed disquiet at triggering or being triggered by someone's offence type, or feeling they did not belong in the group. Victims were also found to be significantly underrepresented in the cohort, possibly adding to a sense of isolation. For future cohorts, achieving a greater balance of perpetrators to victims should be considered. An alternative may be to exclude victims of crime from the cohort, or to create two groups divided by type of lived experience. However, more positives than negatives are identified by participants as a result of the inclusion of people with this type of lived experience. It was also suggested that facilitators and the IAG should contain a better balance of types of lived experience.

Finally, non-disclosure of lived experience among the cohort had impacted on group dynamics and individual experience. Participants themselves suggested clearer and earlier information (i.e. prior to the beginning of the programme) for future cohorts concerning the types of lived experience they may encounter on the programme, along with the types of information participants will be asked to volunteer about their own lived experience within the group and better support for these individual journeys of lived experience. Interestingly, the main issue with lived experience concerned the different stages that participants were at in their lived experience leader journeys rather than the breadth of definition (see Section 8.2.6).

8.1.4 Theoretical underpinning: To what extent has the theoretical framework from the Social Change Model been useful in framing and supporting the leadership development process and how could it be embedded further in year two?

The social change leadership model (Komives et al., 2017) 'promotes the creation and development of social change agents and the value of socially responsible leadership' (Skendall, 2017: intn). Initially developed by a group of educationalists, leadership experts and student affairs professionals, the theoretical framework was specifically designed for application in higher education settings (Wagner, 2005). Nina (Champion, 2018) used the framework in her research on prison university partnerships as a way to articulate how these partnerships might develop leadership capabilities, subsequently carrying the same framework into the design of the ELEVATE programme (CJA Staff Interview).

8.1.4.1 The Social Change Leadership Model and ELEVATE

The social change leadership model is clearly described in the ELEVATE Course Handbook (2023c: 14-15), where it is given prominence as the pedagogic framework underpinning the programme, including details of a 'core' textbook for ELEVATE participants, produced by adherents of the original model (Komives and Wagner, 2017). The influence of the model is also apparent in the syllabus structure (CJA, 2023c: 17), where the sequence of the four modules appear to loosely reflect the direction of travel indicated by the model, from individual values (module 1 and residential 1), into community values/skills (module 2 and residential 2) and through to wider engagement with societal values (module 3), before returning in module 4 to an assessment of the change achieved over the course of the programme, which according to Komives and Wagner (2017) is essential. The trajectory is not exact, but the model does appear to inform the overall organisation of the syllabus. There are two key issues with this model, however, one concerned with its application, the second with its pedagogic focus.

8.1.4.2 Application of the Social Change Leadership Model in Learning Materials

In terms of application, the social change model lacks consistent signposting and adoption into the syllabus and individual session plans. This was also recognised by the CJA staff team (CJA Focus Group/ Interviews) and is reflected in participants' responses to questions around the social change model or 'Seven Cs':

"Social change model of leadership. That's a book, isn't it? No." (Participant 1)

"I definitely do remember it vaguely". (Participant 5)

"I remember that term, I don't remember much about the session". (Participant 11)

"I completely forgot about it" (Participant 7)

"I probably didn't go on that Wednesday". (Participant 12)

In fact, while a small number of participants did recollect some dimensions of the 'Seven Cs', and in one case, believed more focus should have been given to them (Participant 5), only one participant had a clear memory of applying the model in concrete terms:

"The Seven Cs? Absolutely amazing, I actually put them on my board (at work)...I just went, 'All right, guys, this is not a joke for you. You need to listen to me about this. Seven C's, you need to learn about them because they're amazing.'" (Participant 10).

These findings suggest a disjuncture between the use of the social change model in the early design stages of the syllabus and the communication of the framework to participants, and this was further corroborated by CJA staff, who suggested the model was certainly part of planning stages and possibly early sessions but 'it just kind of got dropped off' (CJA Focus Group). Documentary evidence, taken from

an analysis of the learning and teaching materials show that three individual sessions were scheduled to cover the social change model and a fourth that looked specifically at the concept of 'controversy in civility'.

However, the first one of these sessions was not delivered until Session 5 of the programme, almost a month after the first residential. In addition, only two of the sessions have materials attached to them in the relevant CJA archive, suggesting that the other two sessions were not delivered. The main vehicle for communicating the social change model to the first cohort, therefore, rested on the Course Handbook (CJA, 2023). The model is clearly set out in the Handbook[3], however, this document was not available to participants until 'a few weeks' (Participant 5) into the programme, which appears to have had a deleterious effect on participants' engagement with the information 'because by then you're kind of in the groove of it a bit more and you're all WhatsApping each other' (Participant 5). Some participants had no recollection of a handbook (Participant 5 and 6), while nine participants were aware of it, and in some cases recognised the considerable amount of work that had gone into its production (Participant 1, 8 and 12), but admitted to various levels of non-engagement, from total disengagement:

"Can I be honest with you? I haven't read it." (Participant 9)

Through to finding the material disappointing:

"So I had a look at it, and it wasn't something that was I like, oh yeah, this is sick, it's like, okay." (Participant 11)

One participant also pointed out perceived inconsistencies between the handbook and the actual delivery of the programme:

"It's like this was given to me crazy late...So, things had already passed. And it was so in depth but then I'd done so many of these sessions that don't – it doesn't match up in a way". (Participant 12)

Only one participant was entirely positive about the use of the handbook, suggesting that it should have been provided in hard copy for better accessibility:

"I liked it, but I know this is going to sound so cheeky, I think they should have printed it off... I did it myself because I've got a printer and ink, but you know, like a lot of – not everybody on the programme has money." (Participant 7).

Based on these insights from participants, earlier availability of the handbook, perhaps with consideration of alternative formats (print and electronic) may go some way to resolving issues around the communication of the theoretical underpinning of the programme. However, for the framework to be fully utilised and actualised as the grounding rationale for the programme (which it undoubtedly has the capacity to be), it requires clear embedding and communication throughout all the learning materials.

[3]The handbook contains some minor typos and unclear sentences.
It would benefit from a thorough proofread before distribution to the second cohort.

8.1.4.3 Potential Structures to Embed the Social Leadership Model

Two alternative ways are suggested in which the social change leadership model can be thoroughly embedded into the ELEVATE Programme. These entail either a pedagogical approach or an approach based in programme theory. Pedagogical approaches are built on understandings of how people learn and are intended first and foremost for application in educational environments. Alternatively, programme theories are more often related to the evaluation of interventions and entail 'the construction of a plausible and sensible model of how a program is supposed to work' (Bickman, 1987: 5). There is some crossover, see for example Pope et al.'s (2019) research on student affairs in US universities, which uses programme theory rather than a pedagogic approach.

Deciding which approach is best suited to the ELEVATE programme requires careful articulation of the aims and intentions of the programme and a consideration of whether a theory of learning or a theory of change is most suited to the programme's purpose. This is far from unproblematic (see section 8.2.1) and will require reflection and negotiation between the CJA staff, board and IAG.

8.1.4.4 Pedagogic Approach (Constructive Alignment)

The key question is whether the programme should be anchored in an educational or a programmatic approach; is ELEVATE more concerned with learned as opposed to lived experience? If the former, we recommend the use of 'constructive alignment' (Biggs et al., 2022) to fully tease out, embed and communicate the relationships between the social change model and the intended learning outcomes of ELEVATE. According to its initiator, constructive alignment is 'an outcomes-based approach to teaching in which the learning outcomes that students are intended to achieve are defined before teaching takes place' (Biggs, 2014). It, essentially, asks the tutor to start from the end of the educational process by deciding first on the intended learning outcomes (ILOs), which includes a demonstrable activity the student can achieve as a result of their learning (e.g. explain a concept, identify an example, apply a theory) and then design the learning activities and assessment methods best able to achieve and assess attainment of the stipulated ILOs. As a result, all dimensions of the learning experience align, therefore creating a cohesive pedagogic structure to support participants' learning. In addition, constructive alignment recognises the student as the fulcrum of the learning experience, with greater importance placed on what the student does, compared to what the teacher does. In the case of the ELEVATE programme, this would necessitate:

- *Identifying the relevant ILOs from the social change model, including defining a relevant activity to demonstrate learning*
- *Checking that current learning activities support those ILOs (and adjusting or changing content where necessary)*
- *Adding a more formal assessment task, able to ascertain participants' level of knowledge and/or understanding of each ILO*

8.1.4.5 Programmatic Approach (Programme Theory)

A second approach may be found in the application of programme theory to structuring and communicating the social change model as the theoretical underpinning for the ELEVATE programme.

There is no significant adherence to principles of effective practice in the ELEVATE programme as currently designed, nor 'a clear theoretical model of change, fully articulated in a Theory Manual, able to explain the principles by which the programme will achieve the intended outcome"'(Hollin & Palmer, 2006: 12) Programme Theory is a tool to help people 'better understand what works, for whom and under what circumstances' (Maden et al, 2017: 2). The initial stage of planning an effective programme involves a solid theoretical foundation on which to base it (Rossi et al., 2004). This involves the foundation of a theory of programme change, which is namely how will the programme elicit change in those subjected to it. It explains how a programme functions (or is intended to function) in terms of inputs, resources, activities, outputs, outcomes, and long-term impact (Mertens & Wilson, 2012). The benefits that extend from Programme Theory include a more efficient development period for programmes, optimal design, effectiveness, and awareness of context in order to identify the best conditions for success and to enhance learning from the intervention. (Davidoff, 2015; Zane et al., 2016).

Meaningful Programme Theory employs the combination of informal and formal theory to: recognise the issue; identify its cause ; say what the corrective/supporting programme is made up of ; specify the range of outcomes (desired or not); indicate why it is likely to deliver the desired results; namely the mechanisms to do so; and describe how it will be assessed.

Indeed, programme theory evaluation can play an important role in providing a scaffold for more rigorous evaluation. This is key because all programmes need to be designed in a manner that makes it possible and visible to ascertain whether the intervention has indeed resulted in the desired outcomes. There is little evidence of a coherent theoretical model in the ELEVATE programme able to identify and deliver the intended outcomes of the programme, and it is suggested that, moving forward, the programme be fully manualised and standardised. Hollin & Palmer (2006) describe an approach to manualisation that would offer a more comprehensive foundation and framework for the project;

Manual	Description
Theory Manual	Details the theory and its supporting research evidence that underpins the programmes model of change (e.g. social change leadership model)
Programme Manual	Details each programme session and links to the targets for change to the model of change presented in the theory manual
Assessment and Evaluation Manual	Provides full details, including administration, scoring and interpretation for all the measures used for assessment and evaluation within the programme
Management Manual	Details the procedures for staff selection, training, and appraisal; the criteria for the selection and assessment of the cohort for the programme; operating conditions, procedures for monitoring and evaluating the programme, and the roles and responsibilities of staff relating to the programme
Staff Training Manual	Provides details of all training for those staff involved in the programme, including both management and delivery personnel, alongside the procedures for assuring the competence of staff and regular reviews of staff performance.

Adapted from Hollin and Palmer (2006)

Both suggested approaches, pedagogic or programmatic, have implications for the programme, its design, and participants' expectations. For example, it is not clear if certification, enabled by more formal assessment, would act as a barrier to prospective participants, although four of the current cohort argued a qualification should be an outcome of ELEVATE (Participants 1, 2, 4, and 7). Nor, whether the connotations suggested by an intervention would act as a barrier to engagement based on participants' previous experiences of CJS interventions. Either way, there is currently a lack of clarity concerning the details of how participants are to be elevated into leadership roles within the criminal justice system and clearer articulation and embedding of the social change model through a pedagogic or programmatic approach would help participants to set and manage their expectations for the programme.

These, of course are suggestions only for ways to embed the social change model into the ELEVATE programme. The work entailed may be within the skills set of the CJA team or require outside consultation; either way, this will have resource implications. At a minimum, however, it is crucial that clear and consistent signposting of the social change model and its relevance to learning are visible at every stage of the programme, from the syllabus, through to individual session plans, with much earlier introduction of the social leadership model to students, preferably prior to or at the Taster Day.

In order to achieve this, all relevant documentation should be cascaded to the freelance facilitators as far ahead of the start of the programme as possible. A training session should, ideally be organised, in order that facilitators have an opportunity to discuss and ask questions about the theory and approach of the programme. This was something that facilitators in the Facilitator/IAG Focus groups appeared to welcome. A standardised individual session plan template could be provided for facilitators, whose learning activities should address the ILOs or stipulated outcomes for their specific session. The ILOs or outcomes should be written into the PowerPoint slides of each weeks' presentation in order that participants can see the relevance of the individual session to the wider programme. This could be reemphasised with the use of a summary slide at the end of the presentation, recapping on key learning points from the session. The session plan templates could be submitted to the CJA before commencement of the second iteration of ELEVATE, thereby allowing the Project Leader to check that session content maps onto the aims and objectives and intended learning outcomes.

8.1.4.6 The Pedagogy of the Social Change Model of Leadership

A second issue concerns the pedagogic appropriateness of the social change model of leadership for the ELEVATE cohorts. This model, as is made clear in the social change model literature (Komives and Wagner 2017), is designed primarily for undergraduate students. These students may differ considerably from ELEVATE participants in terms of age and life experience. However, until the social change model is more fully embedded into the ELEVATE programme, it is not possible to offer an informed analysis of the relevance of the model to the leadership development of ELEVATE participants.

8.1.4.7
Summary

In summary, it appears that while the social change model does, to some extent, shape the design of ELEVATE, this is not firmly embedded into the programme, nor communicated to participants. This is evidenced by the lack of recall participants have of the social change model. While an earlier introduction to the model via the programme handbook may partially address this, it is suggested that a more substantial re-evaluation of the programme design is conducted by relevant CJA personnel. Two approaches are suggested, one pedagogic, one programmatic. Each of these offers a possible means of articulating, embedding, and communicating the social change framework consistently and cogently throughout the programme, and offers a more robust approach to assessment and/or evaluation of the ELEVATE programme. It is also vital that the approach, theory and intended outcomes are understood and communicated by all freelance facilitators, and systems should be put in place to support this aim. It will only be possible to assess the usefulness of the social change model once these changes are in place.

8.1.5
Systemic: To what extent did framing the leadership programme within a broader objective of systemic change support greater understanding and solidarity amongst participants?

A commitment to systemic change within the CJS is integral to the CJA's overall mission (CJA, undated b) and is also central to the aims of the ELEVATE programme (CJA, 2023c: 5). Based on conversations with participants, however, there did not appear to be a common understanding of what systemic change might look like and there were a variety of views on the degree to which systemic change was framed as a broader objective of the programme.

8.1.5.1
Systemic Change as an Abstract Notion

"How do we drive systemic change…is really an abstract kind of like, you know, so how would you make that relevant to all of us all the time?" (Participant 4)

The majority of participants responded to the interview question on broader systemic change by relating it to the cohort's individual aims and practical endeavours:

"I feel like we spoke about it a lot amongst ourselves, like what we'd like to change, and the areas which we love, and we don't love". (Participant 12)

However, there was not a unified appreciation of what systemic change entailed:

"Yeah, without knowing what each one of us is doing (in their workplace) but we know the work is out there, it's getting done". (Participant 3)

"I think we're working towards something. But what that is, I don't know". (Participant 1)

"I don't even know if we're all on the same page of what change we want or the right change to make". (Participant 5)

It is likely that this disconnect is due, at least in part, to the unsuccessful communication of the social change leadership model (section 8.1.4) to participants. This model offers a cogent explanation of the connections between the micro, mezzo, and macro levels of social interaction (Barozet, 2022) and when embedded more clearly into the programme, may enable participants to recognise and articulate the interconnections between individual, group, and community levels of change. Relatedly, many participants appear to be unaware of the relevance of systemic change to their own smaller scale ambitions:

"Other people are... at a practitioner level and want to do things differently or have a charity...so when you're talking about driving systemic change, like these are overarching principles and ideas but what I see in my cohort, my teammates, are 'I want to know specifically how I can do this or that. Like, this broad idea of what you're talking about, broad-brush social model changes, yeah, okay, but I want..." (Participant 4)

Again, the relevance of smaller actions to broader change requires clearer communication and signposting at both programme and individual session levels. It appears the small group research project may have been designed into the programme for this purpose, and Participants 5 and 11 express some awareness of the usefulness of the research project as a way to integrate and actualise change over the three levels of leadership, arguing for work to begin earlier on this task. The decision to make the research project optional (CJA Staff Interview) further undermined the utility of this project as an appropriate kinaesthetic learning activity. For future a more central position should be considered for the research project, which should also be introduced earlier. This would support understanding of systemic change and how it is achieved.

8.1.5.2 Systemic Change as Separate

Perhaps most concerning was a sense expressed by some participants that systemic change was something not supported by the CJA:

"I don't feel like the programme gave us opportunity for that". (Participant 12)

Another participant spoke about their enthusiasm for challenging the lack of awareness in the CJS concerning mental health issues experienced by criminalised people of colour. This participant (number withheld) discussed their passion to change this situation at their interview, but then felt they were not supported in pursuing this ambition by the CJA.

Broad social change was often presented as something that was mainly spoken about away from the large group (Participant 7, 10 and 11). At an organisational level, Participant 10 suggests there was little interaction between participants' individual change supported by the ELEVATE programme and the wider systemic change promoted by the CJA[4]:

"No, it's always kept separate. So the work procedure and the work of ELEVATE is two different things. So CJA as an organisation have always – they're driving their system changes and what they're doing...(but)... during the ELEVEATE programme, CJA have had launches and stuff, and they haven't even invited the ELEVATE". (participants)

[4]It should be noted that one participant (number withheld) had a very different experience and was able to present at an APPG with a leading academic, as a result of attending a CJA event.

However, these responses are seemingly contradicted by participants' positive experience of the networking opportunities enabled by the ELEVATE programme (see Section 8.3.5). There appears to be something of a disconnect, which may relate to most participants' inability to link individual change to system change. Moving forward, the CJA may like to explore further opportunities for ELEVATE involvement in CJA projects, while also supporting participants to recognise the potential for systemic change to emerge from individual change. The research project may also be used as a conduit to connect participants' personal ambitions for broader change with a forum in which to discuss, research and design practical policy mechanisms to realise these changes. In the first iteration of ELEVATE, the research topics were selected randomly, according to Participant 13, and more engagement with systemic change may be achieved if participants are allowed to research issues that they feel personally motivated to change. In order to narrow down to a single topic per group, part of the research project task might require participants to present, debate and defend their chosen research topic, based on the issue they most want to change in the CJS.

In the main, the issues raised in this section are concerned more with participants' perceptions and limited ability to make broader connections across different levels of change. Interestingly, the three participants who were able to recognise where opportunities for systemic change existed in the programme were further along on their lived experience trajectories and more easily able to recognise, for example role modelling, support with establishing incorporated entities and learning about broader systems as relevant to effecting systemic change.

8.1.5.3 Summary

In summary, the question is less, to what extent was framing broader systemic change supportive of participant's understanding and solidarity and more, to what extent was the programme framed in terms of broader systemic change? Participants further along their lived experience trajectories were able to recognise the connections between networking opportunities and broader change (Section 8.3.5), however, most participants struggled to make the links between individual ambitions to change parts of the criminal justice system and broader systemic change. Even where participants demonstrated interest in broader systemic change, they often felt this was not supported by the CJA. It is suggested that clearer communication of the social change model at programme and individual session level may address this, along with an earlier and more central role for the group research project. Presented in this way, the research project may act as an opportunity for students to understand and actualise social change theory through an appropriate kinaesthetic learning activity, which also taps into their own interests around change in the CJS. In addition, the CJA might consider allowing greater involvement for ELEVATE participants in the campaign work already conducted by the CJA.

8.1.6
Collaboration: How successfully have our partnerships and collaborations worked in engaging participants and providing them with the skills and attributes for social change leadership? How could collaboration be strengthened in year two?

The lifeblood of the CJA appears to be collaboration and partnership working. As a representative of over 200 CJS focused organisations and individuals, the network is highly skilled in developing cooperative and constructive relationships, and as such, it is unsurprising that the ELEVATE programme also built collaboration into its early planning. This section will focus specifically on partnerships, while Sections 8.1.4.6, 8.2.4 and 8.3.4, offer more detailed consideration of the collaborations with freelance facilitators.

8.1.6.1
International Partnership

The ELEVATE programme handbook lists two main partners, Romarilyn Ralston, CEO of Project Rebound and Dr Morwenna Bennallick from the University of Westminster. From the participants' perspectives the partnership with Project Rebound and in particular, their CEO had considerable impact. Some eight months after her livestreamed presentation at the Taster Day, one of the participants still recalled:

"They showed the video of Marilyn who, you know, went to prison for like murdering for... yeah and then came out and done all these amazing things". (Participant 7)

Meanwhile a facilitator attending the first residential commented on Romarilyn's 'awesomeness' when delivering a workshop there (Facilitator/IAG Focus Group):

"She arrived to tell her story and she started to dance individually with people before she even began...Proper American way, bold, bold...let's dance this guys". (Facilitator/IAG Group)

The international nature of the collaboration is to be welcomed, offering potential for expanding networks and offering different perspectives on lived experience leadership. However, there was also a sense in which participants, at times, were uncomfortable with the 'more in your face' US style (Participant 4):

"British people are...a bit more reserved and just – just – it's not their way, not a – not the way to kind of speak openly...how they engage is very different". (Participant 4)

It may be that some of the participants' discomfort with the personal development dimensions of ELEVATE (Section 8.2.1) can be traced back to the influence of the JustLeadershipUSA programme, the Brene Brown work (Participant 12) and even the Social Leadership model for change, which was first developed in the US. While Romarilyn's input at the beginning of the programme was clearly positive, it may be that more consideration could be given to adapting American influences on the programme to better align with British cultural contexts.

8.1.6.2
University Partnership

The second partnership, with the University of Westminster, and led by Dr Morwenna Bennallick, was intended to deliver a considerable amount of the academic content of the programme, in particular, the action research project. A partnership with a university was seen as an important part of the ELEVATE design, intended to demonstrate that:

"part of lived experience leadership...and influencing things could be through academia and through research". (CJA Staff Meeting)

The partnership also had several practical benefits including the securing of extra funding by Dr Bennallick that enabled free hire of university spaces for in-person sessions (CJA Staff Interview). However, the partnership was not sustained due to changes in staffing at Westminster, and retrospectively, it seems that this may have had considerable impact on the pedagogic dimensions of the programme. The CJA subsequently partnered with the University of the Arts London and Goldsmith's University, but this was later than ideal, and facilitators were underprepared for the required tasks (Facilitator/IAG Focus Groups). For the second iteration of ELEVATE it was suggested by CJA staff that a relationship with a whole university department be developed rather than focusing on specific contact points, who, even when fully committed to ELEVATE may be unable to fulfil the role due to unavoidable life events (CJA Staff Interview).

Connected with recommendations in section 8.1.4, a university collaboration would be optimal if the CJA chose a pedagogic approach to the delivery of ELEVATE. At best this would involve a chosen university taking responsibility for realising a programme structure and design, based on the underpinning theory and ELEVATE's wider aims and objectives.

8.1.6.3
Summary

This section has focused on ELEVATE partnerships. Discussion of collaborative relationships with freelance facilitators can be found in Sections 8.1.4.6, 8.2.4 and 8.3.4. Two main partnerships were formed by the CJA, one with a lived experience leadership organisation in the US and one, with an education partner based in London. Both partnerships offered valuable contributions to ELEVATE and both offer insights for improving the programme more generally, as well as strengthening partnerships in year two.

The partnership with JustLeadershipUSA was clearly inspirational for participants and other facilitators, and also allowed international perspectives and the possibility of extending networks. However, it will also be instructive for the CJA to consider how US influences on the ELEVATE programme may be adapted to better align with British cultural contexts.

A university partnership offers a rich mix of pedagogic, practical and transformative dimensions. Not only can it offer resources, in terms of space and staffing, but it may also enable specialist advice on the structure and design of the programme, particularly if a pedagogic approach is taken moving forward. Finally, and equally importantly, an educational partner can allow participants to make important connections between research and systemic change, and offer them a seat at the academic table. Moving forward, a partnership either with University of the Arts London/Goldsmiths, or a different HE institution should be developed. The partnership should be with the whole university department rather than relying on a single point of contact.

8.1.7
Dual-prong approach: How effective was our dual-prong approach, not just supporting lived experience leaders, but also working with employers and policy makers to dismantle the barriers to progress? How could we improve our work to change policy and workplace practices in year two?

It is not possible for the process evaluation to address these questions, as work with employers was still at an early stage when focus groups took place (CJA Focus Group). However, there is a firm commitment to addressing this work during the second iteration of the programme with focus on building buy-in and allyship (CJA Interview) These areas will now be considered as part of the outcome evaluation in 2024.

8.2
Content

8.2.1
Which components of the programme have participants found most and least useful and why?

This question will be addressed using qualitative data collected during the one-to-one interviews between the evaluators and ELEVATE participants. The decision not to conduct questionnaires after modules 1 and 2, and again after modules 3 and 4 means more basic quantitative data is not available. It had been hoped that the end of session feedback sheets delivered by the CJA could be used, however, only two out of the 18 contain questions relating to the 'usefulness' of sessions and there is a lack of consistency in the questions more generally, which makes comparison impossible. In addition, only six of the sessions have a response rate of 50% or above, leading to the risk of self-selection bias in the findings (Bethlehem, 2010). For future, it is recommended that the CJA and/ or their evaluators, design a standardised feedback sheet that is used consistently across all sessions. Thought needs to be given to what should be measured, and the best concepts to operationalise these measurements.

8.2.1.2
A Shared Language for Content – Components and Perceptions of Leadership

While a qualitative approach cannot offer rigorous numerical indicators of the 'usefulness' of a given component of the programme, it does allow for better understanding of the participants' perception of the programme's components, which, as will become clear, is not always aligned with the design of the programme. Indeed, there appears to be a lack of shared vocabulary, which is essential to clear communication and to collaboration (Thomas, 2013).

The key components of ELEVATE are broken down in the programme calendar (CJA, 2023) as follows:

- *Kick-off session*
- *Residential 1 and 2*
- *Module 1 – Awakening the Leader Within*
- *Module 2 – Learning New Concepts*
- *Module 3 – Preparing for Leadership*
- *Module 4 – Reflection and Aspiration*

However, apart from the kick-off session and the residential weekends, participants used this vocabulary infrequently as a point of reference to inform their discussions. Instead, different components of the programme were most often referred to in terms of their relevance to two, seemingly, oppositional pairs; professional versus personal development and academic versus practical activities. Figure 1.4 offers a spatial representation of this spectrum of participant's experience of programme content. This is a heuristic rather than a quantitative tool, its intention to capture the scope of participants' expectations and their perceptions of individual learning sessions. It can be used to gauge where participants might place specific learning sessions in relation to their expectations, and three examples have been used to populate the chart. In general, the upper left quartile of the chart, combining professional development with practical activities was the place where most participants' expectations gravitated (see Section 8.2.2).

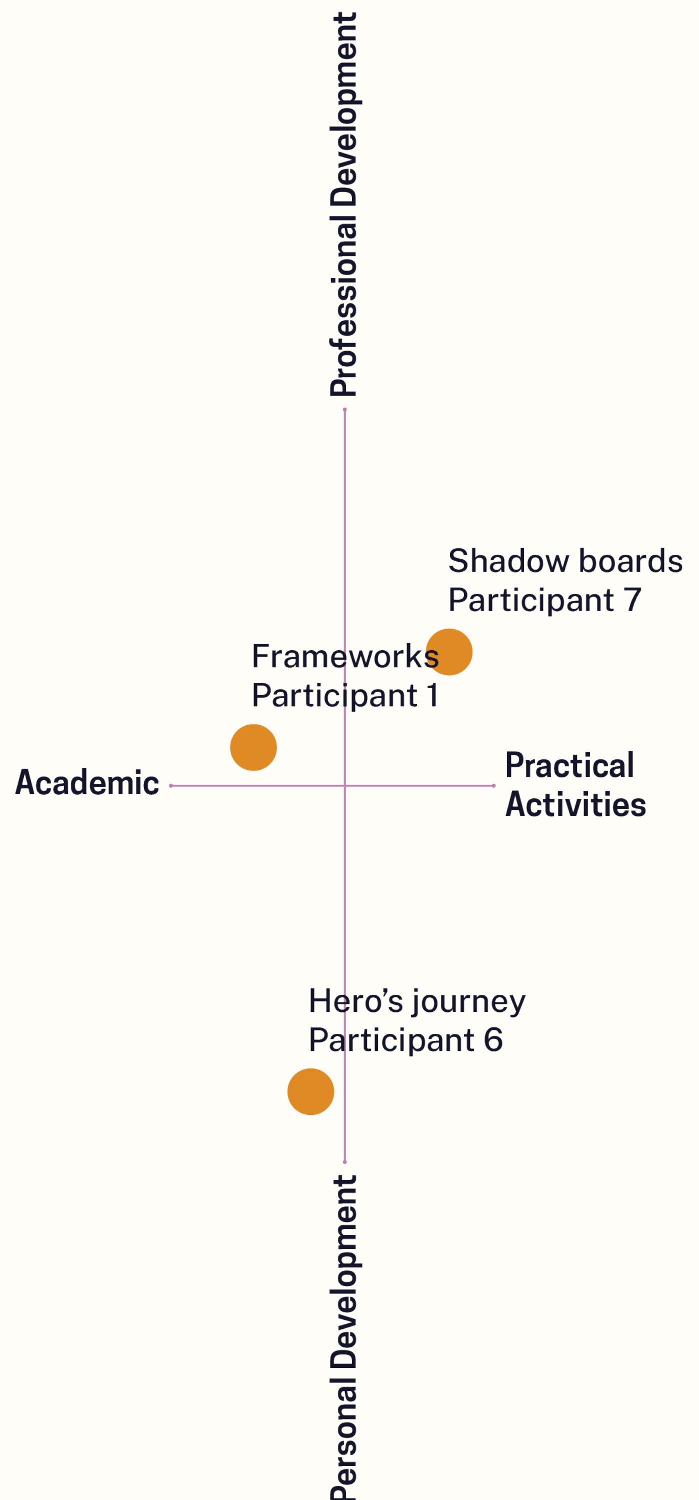


Figure 1.4: Spectrum of Participants' Experience of Programme Content

However, not all participants viewed the space between professional and personal development as a binary, and at least three participants spoke of the integration of personal and professional development:

"I definitely feel like it has benefited my journey and my leadership, not just leadership in a professional capacity, leadership in leading my own life the way that I want to live it". (Participant 5)

"If you can tie in your professional ambitions with your personal ambitions, and…what you need personally anyway just to heal. I mean, that's kind of a dream situation, I think". (Participant 8)

This analysis uncovers a tension between different perceptions and understandings of the role of leadership more broadly in both participant and staffing cohorts, with at least one facilitator identifying their own confusion around the constitutive elements of good leadership (Facilitator/ IAG Focus Groups). Definitions of leadership in the literature are problematic. Kleefstra (2019) found 658 different types of leadership style mentioned in their systematic review of the literature between 2013 and 2018, and even where authors have proposed theories of leadership (e.g. Bass, 1995; Lewin et al., 1939; Ha-Vikström, 2019) there is little agreement on terminology. The adoption of the social change model of leadership, at best can offer a model of shared leadership (Pearce and Conger, 2003) around which to develop a shared vocabulary. However, even with clearer signposting and explanation of this model, it is the case that at least some participants come to ELEVATE with more fixed notions of the boundaries between the 'professional' and the 'personal', which appear to appeal to more conventional notions of leadership as a vertical structure (Participants 7, 10, 12). This was framed by the Facilitator/IAG Focus Groups as 'an expectation gap'. In order to address this gap and to offer a clearer set of expectations about what the ELEVATE leadership programme can offer participants, it is suggested that sessions are developed and delivered, both for staff/ IAG/Facilitators and new participants to explore their assumptions and perceptions of leadership and to map out the kind of leadership model to be used by the ELEVATE programme. This approach may both be informed by and challenge participants' expectations of leadership.

8.2.1.3 Individual Components of ELEVATE

8.2.1.3.1 First Residential (see also Section 8.2.4 for greater detail)

Participants able to integrate professional and personal development often identified the first residential as the component that introduced or catalysed the necessary personal development work. However, for participants who viewed professional and personal development as a binary the experience was far less satisfactory:

"I thought I'd be learning the things that were going to elevate me to be able to be in senior roles. I didn't know it was just going to be some discovery of self". (Participant 7)

"We learnt to do our testimony in a drawing type of way, and I was just like, "Oh my gosh, again, testimony,"…It was like, "I don't want to talk about my testimony," Like what am I learning for me that is valuable to my work?". (Participant 12)

Even for Participant 1, who engaged with the relationship between self and professional development, their personal preference meant they were not particularly enthusiastic about 'hippy business', though they had a level of maturity that fostered tolerance for these exercises. These participants demonstrate an attitude to leadership training that connects leadership with practical management skills. This was summed up in an observation by Participant 4:

"What everybody wants really...(is)...know-how of to be able to come away from this programme and know how to do something rather than inspiration to go and do it".

There wasn't a consensus on what the development of such 'know-how' entailed, which can be summarised as a second spectrum or binary between practical and academic activities (see figure 1.4). While some participants identified practical activities as key, others made a clearer association between professional development and academic understanding, with two participants connecting their professional development with academic progress. Conversely, Participant 3 made a plea that their experience was not 'ruined' by having to do academic work, 'I've done enough essays'. The place where the practical and the educational met was in a desire for vocational learning recognised through accreditation. Three participants spoke about the possibility of a qualification as part of the ELEVATE programme:

"We're not going to have a qualification, but you know like something substantial to say that I've done ELEVATE and I can take it somewhere else and being a part of this is going to enhance my job prospects. Because I'm just going to be honest with you, as a black woman working in criminal justice that's what would be helpful to me". (Participant number withheld)

Figure 1.4: Spectrum of Participants' Experience of Programme Content

Overall, the first residential elicited complex and often strong emotions (see also Section 8.2.4):

"Our first residential was essentially a deep dive into our personal lives...You're asking a bunch of people who...have lived experience in one way or another to come together and go straight to the source of topics like shame...And that was intense. People pulled out, like took a break...it is good that they had Tanya...But that ripple effects for quite a while because people were on a... serious emotional comedown for a while... people were complaining about that from the beginning, like, I didn't fucking sign up for this...and who designed a programme like this to be back-to-back to back with no extended breaks...but I was explaining to the group... had it not been that shock to the system, I do not think that we would have gelled and bonded as a group as well as we did". (Participant 4)

The majority of participants (n. 9) concurred with Participant 4's view on the first residential:

"Even though it was intense, I think that was something that helped me, even in my personal life, you know, yeah, yeah, yeah. Yeah, because it was really about looking within yourself, where are you at the moment, and, because of that, I changed something drastically in my life". (Participant 9)

However, Participants 10, 11 and 13 each sounded notes of caution, and while they felt the first residential should go ahead, they suggested different strategies to make the weekend less intense. Participant 13 suggested the first residential should not happen until 'maybe three and a half months in', allowing participants to get to know each other first. Although they also thought there should not be any warning of the intensity of the weekend because the lack of preparation meant participants were open to the experience. Conversely, Participant 10 felt a clearer communication of what participants should expect should be offered along with a

preparatory meeting with Tanya:

"You need that early intervention. So you need to get to know Tanya a little bit more because Tanya maybe needs to assess where you're at". (Participant 10)

Participant 10 also highlighted specific workshops that they felt were not trauma informed, including work on forgiveness and shame. Although, counter to this, Participant 9 commented positively on the trauma-informed approach of the whole programme. This feedback highlights the ways in which such judgements are subjective and require sensitivity in designing programme content and the recruiting of participants. With this in mind, and while acknowledging the generally positive participant feedback on the first residential, the views of Participant 12 should be taken seriously:

"The first weekend for me at the time was amazing, but looking back was horrendous... We just was opening up one can of worms, then it shut, then another thing. Opening up another can of worms, then it shut. And then I see other people just like, 'It was amazing though 'cos of how raw it was,' and I'm just like, 'Woah, I'm okay with not being so raw'".

Participant 12 concluded that the residential weekend should not be continued in its current form:

"I think the first residential was retraumatising, so retraumatising, and I think that's big thing that we as a whole, people who work within this sector should try and avoid.".

8.2.1.3.2 Module Content

The three sequential modules[5] that lead on from the first residential are not consistently referred to by the module name or specific content, however, two key extremes emerge among participants, again based on the professional/personal, practical/academic distinctions. At one end of the spectrum a small group of participants felt the first three modules helped them to progress in their leadership journeys, whether framing that in terms of professional or personal development or a synthesis of the two. In some cases their learning had clear application to their professional lives:

"There was one part of it which I really liked... which was the frameworks. And how you frame people with criminal convictions and the bridge between prison and the community which...I've brought into my work as much as I possibly could". (Participant 1 also Participant 8)

For other participants, the stories of lived experience felt meaningful and contributed to their progress, whether that be listening to the stories of others (e.g. Participant 3) or exploring the power of self-story:

"The hero's journey in Westminster University was a highlight for me ...coz the stuff that came out I'm using now even". (Participant 6)

"However, at the other extreme, a small number of participants felt the continuing exploration of lived experience in weekday or weekend sessions by both participants and facilitators was unwelcome and unproductive". (Participant 7).

"Every meeting on a Wednesday evening, another person with lived experience talking their horrible story of their horrible life and how they overcame it, it gets tiresome". (Participant 7)

[5]Module 4, Reflect and Aspire, had not been delivered at the time of the face-to-face interviews conducted by the evaluations and is, therefore not covered in this section of the report.

"Like for the last six months in CJA, I just feel like I've been living in my past – not on Wednesdays, but getting together, a lot is about your past, the past, the past, and I feel like...I'm tired of talking about me. I'm a leader, you know, I want to move on. I want to be bigger in this. It doesn't define me, you know...Joining ELEVATE made me know that I'm really sick and tired of talking about my past." (Participant 12)

For Participant 7 lived experience content was appropriate to the first residential:

"It was good to like to learn and know when we...did the first residential...yeah and then probably just like, okay, now move on". (Participant 7).

Even participants who felt less negativity about the inclusion of lived experience materials in later modules were not necessarily impressed by the module content. Participant 1 noted the repetition of speakers whose focus was on lived experience and Participant 6, more generally felt that:

"some of the content...was a bit samey and I just felt that we was just going over the same things again, over and over again."

It is difficult, however, to generalise about participants' experience of the first three modules. Beyond the two extreme positions, which pose personal development against professional development, lived experience against learned experience, individual views contained nuance and the same materials often provoked contrary responses (see figure 1.5 for a general indicator of negative and positive feedback on individual sessions. This graph is based on participants' spontaneous references to various learning sessions).

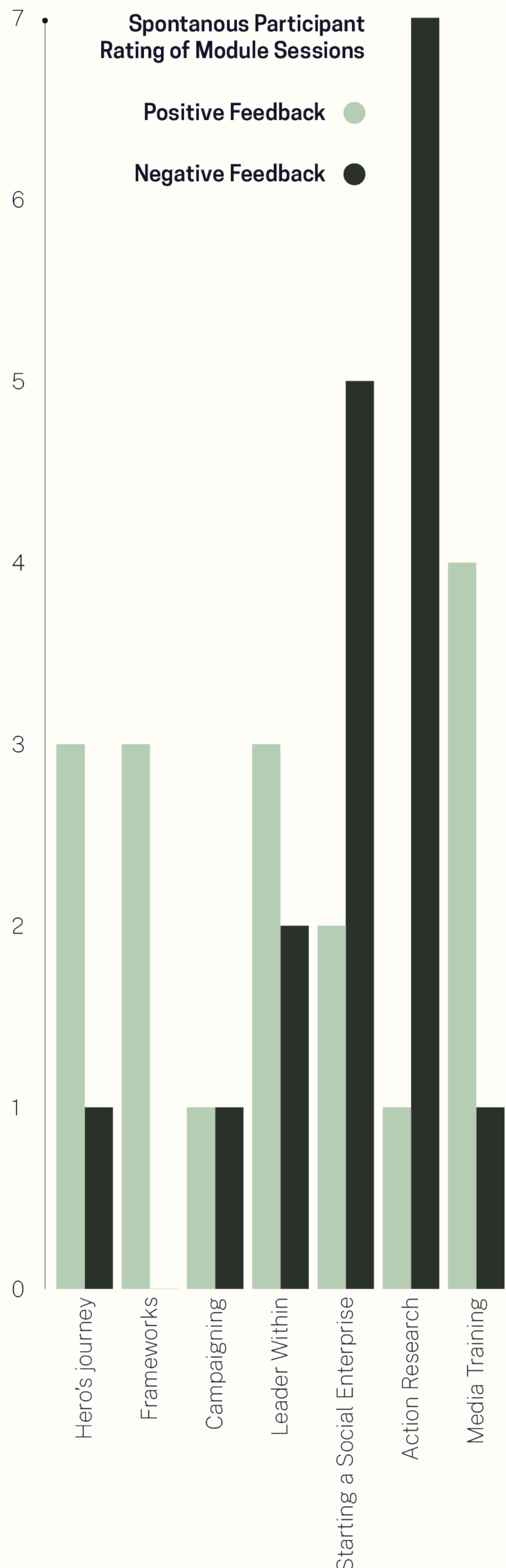


Figure 1.5 : Spontaneous Ratings of Individual Content by ELEVATE Participants

Participants in general were hopeful about the fourth and final module, which they had not yet embarked upon when evaluation interviews were conducted. The fourth module included the kinds of 'hands on' experience (Participant 5) many participants had raised in their feedback, and which are represented on the left-hand, upper quartile of figure 1.4:

"Now we've got…work experience, to be the board, the trustees, all these things…you know, which is good". (Participant 9)

8.2.1.3.3
Kick-Off Meeting and Residential 2

The final two components of the programme, the Kick-Off Meeting and Residential 2 were easier to categorise as either generally negative or positive experiences for the majority of the cohort, and both components had a commonality in terms of the recognition of environment as an important factor in a component's success. The Kick-Off Meeting was viewed as unproblematically 'Good', 'Amazing', 'Wonderful' by eight of the 11 participants who attended. The 'gentrified', 'up market' or 'poshy-washy' environment was seen as a positive by most of the participants:

"the whole experience of coming there and you've got little drinks like waiting for you. And that – it moulds something. It's a feeling of like, wow, the worth". (Participant 10)

Although this same high-end environment was seen as a disadvantage by three participants. This was not necessarily concerned with the privileged nature of the environment so much as its spatial dimensions which made it difficult or unnerving to speak freely and/or to a range of people. The fixed seating and open kitchen meant it was difficult to speak to everyone, which led Participant 5 to be concerned about participants forming inaccurate conceptions about others in the cohort based on superficial contact.

Meanwhile, it was also noted that some people felt unable to speak freely about themselves and their lived experience in such an open public space (Participant 12)

Environment was also a key factor in participants' experience of the second residential, although in this instance the response was primarily negative. Seven out of 11 participants who spoke about the second residential did so disfavourably and much of the criticism centred on the environment, both in terms of physical venue and location, which Participant 8 felt was too far away from London. Participant 2 summarised the differences between the two residential venues as like 'going from Hilton to, I don't know, a hostel?'. In addition, three participants offered strong critique of the content of the residential, with particular unhappiness expressed about the number of creative sessions:

"One of the ladies that was leading the sessions had people barefoot, walking around, dancing, drawing pictures of each other. I mean, it just started to become ridiculous". (Participant 7)

No participants ruled out creative activities per se, however, the most robust critics felt that a better balance was required (Participant 12 and 4). Participant 12 voiced specific resentment at having , 'wasted so much time drawing in the morning', which reduced the allocation of time for the research project, which they saw as more important (see Section 8.3.1.2 for further discussion of creative activities).

8.2.1.4
Summary

In summary, participants' feedback on the key components of the programme are difficult to generalise. This is partly a methodological issue, as internal CJA feedback forms did not use a consistent set of questions. It is recommended that a standardised end of session feedback sheet is developed for this purpose if the CJA want to continue their own data collection. Additionally, there was a lack of shared vocabulary on what the key components of the programme were between staff and participants (see further down this summary for recommendation).

The kick off meeting and second residential fall most easily into a negative (residential) and positive (kick off meeting) experience, this is not the case for the first residential nor the individual modules on the programme. In an attempt to more clearly articulate participants' responses, a heuristic tool is offered, which is able to map participants' experience and expectations of ELEVATE. The tool sets out the extremes of personal and professional development, practical and academic activity desired by participants. Based on this conceptualisation, two clear perspectives emerge. At one extreme, a small number of participants value professional development over personal development and are seeking practical over academic knowledge. At the other extreme another small group of participants highly value the ongoing lived experience content of the programme associated with personal development outcomes. Meanwhile, a third small group have been able to integrate personal and professional development, which appears to be the optimum position, and one that the social change leadership model constructs as desirable. Overall, based on the heuristic tool, most participants gravitate towards content that combines professional development with practical activities. It is suggested that this tool can also be used to develop a shared vocabulary of leadership and learning, which both includes and challenges participants' leadership expectations in future cohorts.

It is recommended that both staff and students attend sessions before the beginning of the new programme, aimed at creating and agreeing a satisfactory conceptualisation of leadership for the ELEVATE programme, founded on ideas taken from the social leadership model of change and shared leadership theory.

While most participants agree that, all things considered, the first residential was beneficial to the group and an important catalyst to its strong bonding, a note of caution should be heeded due to some participants' experience of the event as re-traumatising. Clearer preparation and/or a later timeslot for the first residential should be considered before the second cohort begins.

8.2.2
Was there any content they expected or would have liked to be included, but was missing?

This may be a difficult question for participants to address based on the philosophical proposition of Meno's Paradox. In a nutshell, that one cannot ask about what one doesn't know because one doesn't know what to ask about (Calvert, 1974). In the current context this is a form of epistemic injustice that at least one participant encountered in trying to describe a need for greater knowledge about employment laws for people with a criminal conviction:

"I don't even know how to say this properly because – there's a lot of stuff that we don't know, that is open to us, that we believe is closed to us, of those with like criminal convictions". (Participant 11)

Participant 6, when asked, was even less able to formulate what additional content they would like to see on the programme. Nonetheless, nine participants offered suggestions for improvements to the programme's content. These again were predominantly concerned with the practical elements of professional development (see Figure 1.4 in Section 8.2.1.2) and were based on individual understandings of the requirements of employment in the penal voluntary sector. These are set out in figure 1.6

Content Area	Specific Content	No. of times Requested
Vocational Learning	Qualification	4
	How to start a business guide	1
	Support with setting up own PVS project/intervention	1
	Promotion of own PVS project/intervention	1
	Work experience shadowing day	1
	Visits to leaders in large organisations	1
	How to write a disclosure letter	1
	Project management skills	1
	Funding applications	1
	Coaching sessions to extend beyond programme (3-6 months)	1
	Job applications (especially for senior leadership roles)	1
	Session with a recruitment person (not a recruitment agent)	1
	One-to-one tutorials with freelance tutors	1
	Information about employment laws	1
Academic Learning	How to conduct research	2
Active Learning	(Physical Team building exercises	1
Therapeutic Learning	More reflection (especially after first residential)	1
Co-production of Content	More opportunities for ELEVATE participants to co-create content with CIA	2
Social Activities	Dinner in middle of programme	1
	Dinner at end of programme	1

Figure 1.6: Participants' Recommendations for Additional Programme Content

Unsurprisingly, perhaps, given participants' emphasis on the importance of professional development, specific vocational learning content is requested most frequently; 12 out of 18 suggestions are concerned with practical content supporting career progression, social enterprise creation and promotion and the necessary skills for success. It is, no doubt, frustrating for the CJA to see requests for content that has been provided, for example a request for a work experience shadowing day, which is covered in the fourth module. However, this serves to illustrate the ways in which clear signposting of learning activities can be as important as offering those activities.

Most of the specific content requested is self-explanatory, however, the one-to-one tutoring sessions may be less clear. Participant 10 explained these sessions as an opportunity to get individual guidance from a specific freelance tutor.

There is little unity in the content requested, reflecting the differing needs and experience levels of programme participants in the first cohort, and this will be considered fully in Section 8.2.6. An educational qualification is the most requested addition to the programme. However, this appears to be less concerned with academic progression and more with career progression (see Section 8.2.1.3.1). Indeed, one participant felt strongly there should be:

"More of the practical side, less of the academic influence". (Participant 3)

Though again, there was a lack of agreement, with two participants arguing for more attention to be given to learning about research methods for the academic project (Participant 7 and 12). Again, this content had been covered on the programme, however, these participants felt the content was inadequate to prepare them for the task.

The loss of the Westminster partnership midway through the year clearly had some bearing on this (CJA Staff Meeting) and may be resolved through changes to delivery rather than content.

The other content that two participants (5 and 12) agreed was an important addition concerned greater co-created content generated between the CJA and ELEVATE participants (see also Section 8.1.5.2.;8.2.1.2; 8.3.5). This proposal for co-creation does not necessarily mean that every participant will have all of their requests met, but rather, it offers a means to allow participants to gain a better understanding of their goals, encourage buy-in to the programme and manage expectations about what the programme will and will not offer. Perhaps with signposting to external resources to address specific, individual needs.

8.2.2.1 Summary

In summary, this section confirms findings from Section 8.2.1 in terms of a strong preference towards professional development outcomes achieved through practical, how-to, content. There are a number of specific content ideas proposed. Most striking is the diversity of the specific content suggested. Only in three cases do participant suggestions concur, and in two cases there appears to be tension between a vocational qualification as opposed to academic research knowledge. At times participants request content that is already provided, which emphasises the importance of clearly signposting content as well as delivering it. The provision of learning around the research project is flagged as potentially inadequate, however the solution to this may lie more with the delivery than the content and may be addressed via a new academic partner. Some of the diversity of requests may, again, be addressed by including participants in an early group discussion on their expectations, understanding of leadership and ELEVATE's ability to address

these requirements (see also Section 8.2.1). As noted at the beginning of this section, it is not always easy to ascertain what we need to know, and group collaboration and dialogue can support participants to develop their abilities to negotiate their learning agendas as active learners.

8.2.3 What value did the senior-level work placements and group action research projects bring? How could their value be increased in year two?

Senior-level work placements and completion of the action research project had not been achieved at the point in time when one-to-one interviews were conducted with the ELEVATE cohort. It was agreed that the results of this work will be included in the outcome evaluation at the end of Year 2 of ELEVATE.

8.2.4 How effective was coaching and clinical supervision[6] in supporting development?

One of the notions raised exists around the 'heaviness' of early stages of the programme and also the cohort 'readiness' for this (see also Section 8.2.1.3.1). As documented in this report there is a variability in the lived experience of the cohort due to, firstly the broad definition of lived experience that is used (Section 8.1.3);

"Emotionally, those participants may be burdened with things in life but they won't encounter some of the issues faced by those who have been convicted and/or spent time in prison...opportunities in life looked very different for some because they didn't have direct lived experience of prison/probation/ secure settings. I don't believe it created a divide but instead I noticed the discomfort". (Therapeutic Lead)

Secondly there is variability in the emotional journey people are on and their stage of navigating this (Section 8.2.6) and the resulting trauma experienced.

Illustrating this is the recognition from the therapeutic lead that the initial sessions at the first residential were delivered prematurely:

"First Session; Yeah, yeah, and I think maybe that was a bit too premature, like it was a bit too soon to engage with that maybe, on reflection". (Therapeutic Lead)

"If you've never done that work, it's quite heavy to just be thrown into one weekend and then you're just left on the Sunday to just go home". (Therapeutic Lead)

Participant 12 likened the later observation to;

"Opening a can of worms and suddenly shutting them".

A more profound assertion concerning the first residential by Participant 12 in light of the emotional intensity was;

"So, when we had our first residential – and this is why I say that first residential to me should – personally, like if I had a say in the project, it shouldn't go ahead again, because everyone was emotional. Everyone poured out".

This suggests that there was a lack of preparation and readiness for the cohort but also a lack of space for reflection after such an intense and early juncture. The relationship between therapeutic lead and cohort member is a relationship that has to be developed over time:

"It requires a building of trust to be able to disclose, which was done very quickly, and I wonder how safe people felt with that. And I

[6]Clinical supervision was the phrase used by the CJA from early in the programme. However, the therapeutic lead expressed discomfort with this description and the term 'therapeutic lead' is used in the findings. Changes have not been made to wording of the CJA questions, which are taken directly from the ToR.

think that's why a lot of the participants felt challenged by it, you know". (Therapeutic Lead)

Early intervention is something also recognised in Section 8.2.1.3.1

8.2.4.1 Importance of Background Information

A point, therefore, raised by both participants and the therapeutic lead was the lack of background information. Knowing a supervisee's background allows for the therapeutic lead to work with them effectively. Continuity in the process of communication and chain of command between therapeutic lead and CJA staff to support the sharing of information of the cohort with consent was lacking. This would increase awareness of information that may impact on the cohort, both programmatic and personal. Ascertaining and knowing relevant factors in a participant's history and also their present, allows for optimal support to be provided – support, which is tailored, and needs-driven. This background was missing:

"Anything that I knew about them (the cohort) was mainly because of what they had shared in the residential. I didn't necessarily know about their backgrounds, their mental health, unless they shared it with me, which some people on occasion did" (Therapeutic Lead)

Having this background also allows for the supervisee-supervisor relationship to have a level of connection and depth. It is key to consider best practice when supporting such a cohort, and that therapeutic relationships are based on openness, honesty, and respect, and will to some degree be influenced by the ability of the therapeutic lead to work effectively with emotions. This includes their capacity to engage with participants in exploring the meaning of feelings engendered by their work rather than simply facilitating them to 'offload'. This requires the therapeutic lead to have several of the features of emotional intelligence. Morrison (2007) has identified five significant interrelated elements relevant to social care practice:

- *self-awareness*
- *self-management*
- *other awareness*
- *interpersonal skills*
- *values*

Those with lived experience can often associate those in the therapeutic alliance as representative of agents of power that have contributed to their oppression or trauma and the intersection of race, gender and class are pertinent dynamics in this sense (Glorney, 2017). When tackling inequalities, services often place emphasis on how people's behaviours and backgrounds shape their experiences and access to support and care. Shifting the focus from people's behaviours to systems processes and practices enable interventions to challenge models of support and care that perceive individuals background as 'victims' with no agency. As such, gaining trust through sharing, reciprocity and continuity are key considerations - all of which require time to cohere.

8.2.4.2 Therapeutic Sessions and Scheduling

The awareness of time factors in scheduling appointments was an important point raised by the therapeutic lead, as was flexibility in the provision of therapeutic sessions;

"Some time was wasted because participants did not turn up but as I had arranged the slot for them, I would wait for at least 20 minutes in case they arrived. That was a lot of time wasted. On reflection, if their participation in

the support I offered was voluntary, maybe this could have worked better. Working flexibly and offering ad hoc sessions might have meant less time wasted." (Therapeutic Lead)

The scheduling of appointments needs to be a more holistic and organic process and, therefore, trying to give a rigid structure to engagement is not conducive to the therapeutic relationship being effective, practically or therapeutically. People engage, dip in and out, and reflect in manners and timeframes unique to themselves -contextually dependent. A one size fits all approach is something that constrains this and can underpin migration away and attrition from the process. The relationship has to be supportive - in the operational conditions of therapeutic support, as well as the actual therapeutic session.

Nonetheless, the therapeutic lead commented on the positive engagement of the cohort with therapeutic support:

"They engaged with me, you know, incredibly well". (Therapeutic Lead)

Participant 10 and Participant 5 shared the perspective of supervision being a welcomed and good addition to the programme:

"There was Tanya, so that was another good thing because Tanya was on. "I'm here if guys need a space" and she was there, and it was great". (Participant 10)

I think Tanya has been – she's been very good. And I like the fact that it's not necessarily – it's not all about ELEVATE. Like Tanya kind of helping me through my own difficulties in my personal life, managing that kind of stuff. And yeah, I think she's really good at what she does. And it's great that she actually came to the – I think she came to both the residentials. Yeah, she's been around, which is nice, and it's not just like a face behind the screen. Yeah, very supportive. Yeah, I think they're really useful. (Participant 5)

Variability in experience and mindset are also key to consider. Participant 6 recognised their lack of engagement with the therapeutic support:

"Yeah, so Tanya's the clinical one and I only met her once...And that's my fault, I can hold my hands up and go that's my fault".

They had no concrete reason for not engaging, they situated this amongst the notion that it wasn't really their thing to talk in this construct and context. Some broader suggestions for lack of engagement and attrition in a therapeutic relationship/ service could be related to a person's own positioning of need, where they are positioned on their journey and cultural context. This was clear in the case of Participant 9:

"all my life I was put in the mechanism of trying to solve everything myself. When nothing goes well, I'd just be on my own... and my guess is it's a bit challenging for me. Especially for my culture, we – I'm coming from a background where women don't even talk about what they are going through. So that is...Strong, put a strong face, silent, and just, you know, carry on".

Also, the notion of power imbalances and 'authority figures' being representative of systems of oppression alongside the intersectionality of factors such as culture, class, gender, race, and ethnicity amongst those with lived experience can impact engagement with such a provision. (Crenshaw, 1998). As such it is pivotal to recognise external factors outside of the programme and its influence on engagement.

8.2.4.3 Coaching

Coaching for some participants was 'as important as therapy' (Participant 3), and in the case of Participant 3, was used instead of therapy:

"With the counselling…I attended once and I asked to stop that because I didn't feel like there was a need 'cos I have my coach…so I have my space to reflect, to kind of empty, to learn and hear"

All 13 participants commented on working with a Spark Inside life coach, and seven were extremely positive about the experience, although in most cases they combined therapy with coaching:

"It's a wonderful counterbalance, and I know how expensive all of this is for a cohort and I'm very grateful for it". (Participant 8)

A further six participants didn't engage with the process or didn't enjoy it. This was for various reasons, for Participant 13 it:

"Just didn't suit me…I don't want my own business".

While Participant 9 found it clashed with other commitments and Participant 10 was entirely closed to the idea:

"Oh, my God, no, I don't do coaches and life coaching, none of that".

These responses suggest that participants may hold assumptions about coaching based on corporate representations of this type of developmental learning. While all participants could recognise the benefits of therapy, whether they attended sessions or not, in the case of coaching, some participants felt able to reject the provision outright as not relevant to their interests. Depending on how integral the CJA believe coaching sessions are, consideration could be given to either making the sessions optional, or alternatively, offering a clearer introduction to coaching, aimed at challenging assumptions about this type of personal development work.

Two other participants suggested negative experiences of their specific coach, of not liking their style or being unable to resonate with them, and this was also observed in the group sessions conducted by Spark Inside, where:

"That Saturday when we initially had the coaching, the coaching was split into two sessions. So you had two coaches in one room and two coaches in the other. And of course, they come with their own style, they come with their own experience. You know, I'm grateful for the coaching that we had and the coaches that we had but…the other group was not happy. And even afterwards in the one-on-one coaching, the group that was in the other session, they were all pissed off". (Participant 4)

Relational dynamics are by no means an exact science and it is not possible to engineer successful coaching relationships with precision. However, two points emerge, which may be instructive in preparing for the next cohort. Of the seven participants who spoke positively about coaching five expressly named Michael as their coach and spoke of how impressed they were by him. There was a feeling that he was able to connect with a number of the group members, which was not the case for some of the other coaches. It may or may not be that lived experience or demographic factors have a part to play in this but may be worth exploring for future iterations of ELEVATE. Secondly, Participant 4 makes an important point about the issues with splitting the group into two when delivering the same content with different facilitators. If there are already disparities in facilitation styles, these will be highlighted and possibly exacerbated in such a circumstance. Moving forward, it may be better to find ways to deliver sessions with the same content to the whole group, so that everyone's experience is equal.

A final suggestion, which was raised by two participants (5 and 8) concerned the possibility of extending coaching and/or therapeutic sessions after the end of programme:

"I would probably say that there should be some coaching sessions afterwards...'cos it kind of means...you're keeping some stabilisers in place for people maybe for three to six months afterwards, to still have a monthly check-in with someone who wants to keep you positively moving forward to utilising your lived experience, rather than kind of falling back and just getting on with the mundaneness of life, and not dealing with". (Participant 8)

8.2.4.4 Summary

What is overwhelmingly clear in these findings is the positive perception of therapeutic support amongst the cohort. That said there are several areas where the provision could be improved. Background information is a core foundation to inform the therapeutic aspect of the programme, as such, collating cohort background information at the selection phase will support a needs-driven offering. Early engagement between the therapeutic lead and the cohort will allow for participants to transition into the programme and develop a relationship with the therapeutic lead to a point where they are comfortable to share in group settings. This would also assist in participants overcoming some of the impact of re-traumatization. There needs to be recognition of how decision making at programme level impacts the cohort and their engagement -as such there should be a clear line of communication between the programme leader and therapeutic lead at regular intervals, detailing all information/changes/decisions that impact the cohort. Alongside this, the therapeutic lead should be present at, or party to, any programme related meetings in order to have input into, and awareness of, cohort impacting decisions.. Whilst there is therapeutic support for the cohort, the same provision should be afforded to the staff/therapeutic lead to allow them to also unpack thoughts, feelings, and emotions.

Coaching was also seen as a positive resource by over half of the participants interviewed, although some participants had a sense that coaching was not relevant to their ambitions. Depending on how integral the CJA believes coaching is within the overall programme, two alternatives are suggested. Firstly, coaching could be made optional for those who see its relevance to their career journeys. Secondly, a clearer introduction to the purposes of coaching could be offered to all participants, aimed at challenging assumptions about this type of personal development work. A small minority of participants had negative experiences of specific coaches, and in a group setting too, it was acknowledged that some facilitators were better able to make connections with participants. It is not possible to legislate for good relational dynamics between practitioner and participant, however the CJA might like to consider any particular factors that could lead to greater connection between coach and participant; lived experience and social demographics may have a role to play in this. Secondly, part of this issue may be pre-empted by delivering group coaching sessions to the whole group, thereby minimising the contrasts created when the same content is delivered by different facilitators to different groups. For those whose experience of coaching was positive, a three to six month extension of coaching sessions beyond the end of the programme is suggested, as too, therapy sessions for any participant who would like to continue. This would allow participants to maintain momentum and continue to progress in the journeys begun on ELEVATE.

8.2.5
To what extent did participants engage in the programme and achieve the learning outcomes? What were the enablers and barriers?

This section will deal with quantitative measures of engagement, based on the attendance registers produced by the CJA (see Section 8.3.3 for a qualitative analysis of engagement and Secton 8.3.2.2 for a discussion of enablers to engagement.) before going on to consider the achievement of learning outcomes by participants. Leading on from this, a clearer understanding of the barriers and enablers to engagement will be outlined.

8.2.5.1
Session Attendance

A superficial way to monitor engagement is through measuring participants' attendance in learning sessions (see Section 8.3.3 for a richer consideration of intellectual, cognitive, and emotional engagement). Figure 1.7 offers a summary of attendance over the course of the programme[7]. Unsurprisingly there is some reduction in numbers between the beginning and the end of the programme, although the pattern is more one of fluctuation than steady attrition. Some of this is accounted for by four of the cohort leaving the programme. However, this does not account for all absences, and these may correlate with levels of interest in particular topics or may be related to phases and stages in group dynamics and individual motivation. The second campaigning session and an action research session fare particularly badly, and this, to some degree correlates with figure 1.5, where negative feedback on action research was particularly high (6 negative comments compared to one positive). However, the campaigning sessions had a single vote for and against, which tells us little. In any case, these suggestions are speculative and without a consistent dataset it is not possible to produce robust inferences. What can be said with some degree of certainty is that the attrition rate for the programme was 25% and average attendance rate overall was 60%. By way of comparison, this equates favourably with the best current attendance rates for in-person Higher Education (HE) lectures (Williams, 2022)[8], but is somewhat higher than average HE Sector dropout rates, which stand at 5.3% (HESA, 2022)

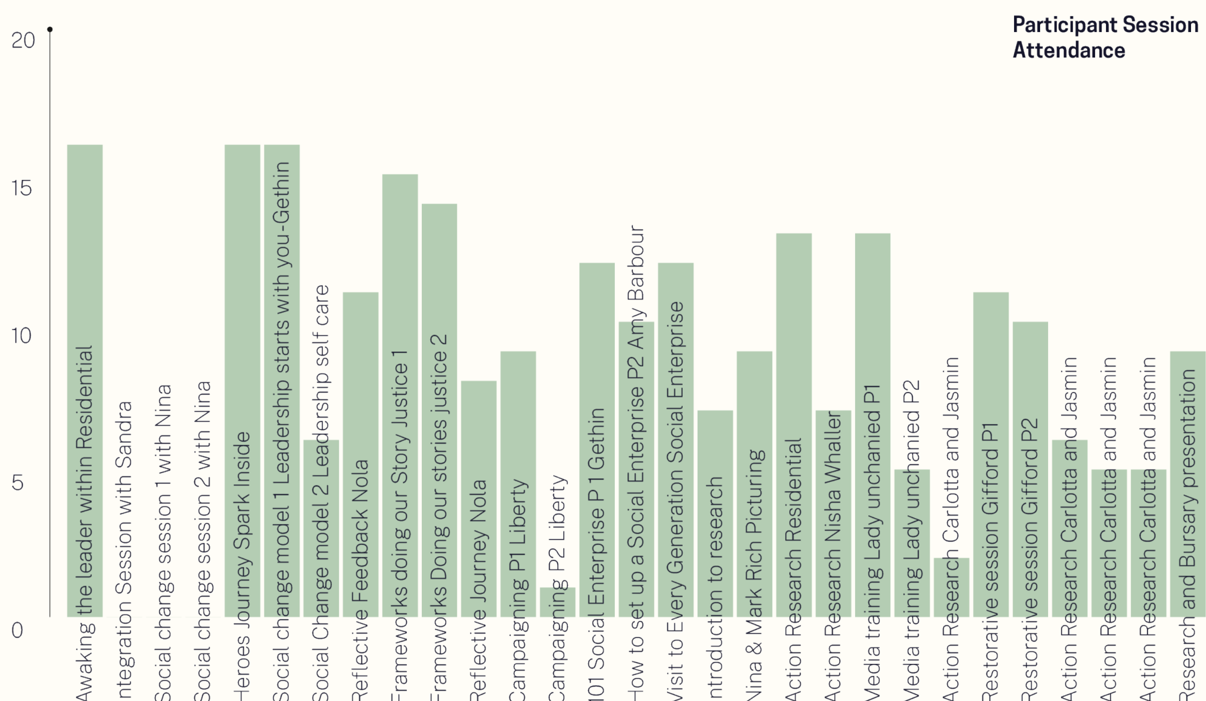


Figure 1.7 Participant Session Attendance

[7] There are some discrepancies between the sessions detailed on the CJA registers and sessions the evaluators have access for in a Learning Materials folder.

8.2.5.2 Achieving Outcomes

In terms of achieving learning outcomes, participants were often unaware of what these were. Again, the lack of signposting to the underpinning theory of the programme (Section 8.1.4) had a knock-on effect for the signposting of individual learning outcomes for each session. Of the 10 participants who commented on their understanding of ILOs for individual sessions, only two participants unequivocally stated they were aware of the ILOs, and it is not always clear that the concept of the ILO has been understood:

"Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. So on a Wednesday the facilitator will come on – oh, you'd even get email that would break down, before the Wednesday, what the session's going to be, who's delivering it, what they're going to be talking about". (Participant 11)

The remaining eight participants either felt ILOs were given for some sessions but not others:

"Nina took some sessions and, when she did her sessions, they were a bit structured, so a bit more academic. So when we did – when she took some of those, there were learning outcomes". (Participant 2)

For other participants, the ILOs simply were not clear:

"Yeah, they kind of could be a bit vague in terms of like saying what we would actually be doing". (Participant 6)

"I think it was left more to us…you kind of were left sometimes feeling around to kind of like work out whether it was what they kind of wanted you to do". (Participant 8)

The lack of definitive ILOs is also supported by the documentary evidence, and only two of 22 session folders seen by the evaluators include a slide that that sets out the ILOs for the session. The Course Handbook does contain a broad set of ILOs for each module, however, there are some technical issues with these as follows:

- Many of the ILOs are not constructed using action verbs that would allow the participant to demonstrate they have achieved a particular ILO. For example, the first ILO listed under Module 1 refers to 'Overcoming challenges within' (CJA, 2023: 16), but it is not clear how achieving this learning outcome can be demonstrated by the participant.

- Many of the ILOs are vague in terms of the intended outcome. For example, the first ILO in Module 2 suggests participants will 'Learn skills which will enhance the participant's knowledge and leadership capacity' (CJAs, 2023: 16), however it does not specify which skills. In this case, a separate ILO should be used for each specific skill.

- The handbook does not stipulate any ILOs for the two residential weekends.

Based on these findings, it is not possible to offer a meaningful evaluation of whether participants achieved intended learning outcomes. The outcomes were not communicated consistently or clearly in programme literature or session materials and participants often did not understand what was required of them. The overarching issues raised here can be addressed through recommendations set out in Section 8.1.4, which will allow the underpinning theory for the programme to inform and clarify ILOs for each module, and in turn for each session. For more specific guidance on constructing effective ILOS, Atkinson (2022) is recommended as a helpful text.

[8]This calculation excluded the three sessions that recorded zero attendance, working from the assumption that these sessions either had not been delivered or their attendance had not been recorded.

8.2.5.4
Summary

Based on these findings, the main barrier to engagement and the achieving of learning outcomes appears to confirm and extend the findings discussed in section 8.1.4 concerning poor communication of constructively aligned/theoretically underpinned ILOs. This lack of clarity contributes to poor engagement with content by some participants, particularly in the online sessions. However, the delivery of sessions online also contributed to the sense, for some participants, of 'logging on just to be logged on' (see section 8.3.3) Nontheless, participant engagement is currently equivalent to best outcomes in the HE sector, with an average of 60% attendance across the programme although a higher dropout rate of 25% compared to 5.3% in the HE Sector. Enablers to engagement will be discussed in Section 8.3.2.2..

8.2.6
How well was the content pitched for the cohort's level of prior experience / expertise? Should any changes be made to the eligibility criteria / recruitment process for year two?

This question appears to be as important, if not more so, than the broad definition of lived experience (see section 8.1.3) when it comes to the overall success of the first iteration of the ELEVATE programme. When speaking to the participants there was often less significance attached to working with people with different types of contact with the CJS than there was the diversity in 'levels' of lived experience:

"A point that's come up for a few people is people's different levels – where they are in their journey, basically". (Participant 5)

This was also recognised by some facilitators and IAG members (Facilitator/IAG Focus Group), and for some participants, the diversity in levels of experience was decisive in the success or otherwise of the programme:

"Personally, I don't think it worked because I feel like everyone is on different levels… some people are a lot further in their journey than others. So…say we have a session on, I don't know, shame or something, some people, it really was groundbreaking for them but the rest of us, so we've already done the work in our life, this stuff doesn't really have such an impact". (Participant 7).

8.2.6.1
Sandhu's Experienced Leaders

Sandhu (2019: 23-26) articulates four different stages of lived experience career development, which are helpful in this context. She suggests four stages, which span from early and aspiring leaders, emerging leaders, experienced leaders and on to senior leaders. Based on comments from participants, it appears the first ELEVATE cohort included individuals from the first three of the four stages. There were no senior leaders, however, at least three participants were considered by different participants to be experienced leaders, though this was not always seen in a positive light:

"The person is a high achiever, you know… there are people that are already on shadow boards. They're already trustees. What's the point of somebody who is already a trustee, is already on a shadow board (participating in ELEVATE)? There's no point. There are people that need these (places). You know, people like me' (Participant number withheld)".

Although other participants responded more positively to the inclusion of experienced leaders in the group:

"Yeah, so for example, (participant's name) is somebody that I love so much, and he is somebody like if there is information, funding

opportunities, if he thinks of something that might be of benefit, he emails me straightaway and I'm so grateful for that'". (Participant 3).

Interestingly, the participants identified as experienced leaders by other participants, do not always see themselves at such an advanced career stage.

8.2.6.2 Sandhu's (too) Early Leaders

At the other end of the scale, there was more than one participant who saw themselves as the 'baby' of the group, more in line with Sandhu's notion of an early or aspiring leader:

"I did not know what to expect because people on the programme were within the criminal justice system for so long, five, six, seven, eight years. And I was kind of the baby within the industry at that time". (Participant number withheld)

Further to this, a small number of participants were perceived by some others as not yet having arrived at the 'jumping off point' that Sandhu (2019: 13) describes as distinguishing people with lived experience from lived experience leaders, i.e. those who were actively 'creating and leading change in their communities' (Sandhu, 2019: 13). These participants:

"were very near actually their date of the offence and their release. I think you've even got some people still on license. And actually the issues they're dealing with are completely different to the issues that I'm dealing with... It just isn't remotely comparable". (Participant 8)

For Participant 1, this led to questions about others' readiness for the programme:

"If they don't have the potential...to be leaders...there are certain individuals within it (ELEVATE) where I don't know why they were there, honest...because they...don't have a route to leadership...But in the majority... they've got long term goals...they have a vision". (Participant 1)

Participant 8 saw this lack of leadership focus as a contributing factor to programme attrition:

"Some of the people that have maybe kind of like gone off tangent on the programme and left the programme I think are just at different parts of their journey, and maybe aren't as experienced and things as other people, and therefore aren't as calm at kind of like reading situations". (Participant 8)

8.2.6.3 Demographic Diversity

While the stages of lived experience career development, and the distinction between people with lived experience and lived experience leaders (Sandhu, 2019) are helpful ways to understand participants' differing levels of experience, physical age was also raised as an important factor in people's preparedness for ELEVATE (Participant 8), so it wasn't simply length of time since CJS contact, but also the maturity that is assumed to come with age that was viewed as important.

The main impact of the perceived diversity of age and level of leadership experience on the content of ELEVATE rested, unsurprisingly, in the participants' varying levels of engagement:

"I've done a lot of work and I'd be at the end of a session where I just thought it was absolute shit and a waste of time. You've got this next person and it's like, that's the first time...that was so helpful". (Participant 4).

Those at more advanced stages of development were often able to continue their engagement with content, even when it lacked relevance to their particular needs:

"So they (the sessions) work for me, yes, to a degree. There was a few which I found entertaining. There was a few that I've – I turned up to. Because if it wasn't good for me, it was good for someone else". (Participant 1)

Though this may not always have been the case for all advanced participants, sometimes leading to partial disengagement (Participant 1).

Participants' feedback suggests that a considerable amount of the content was pitched at early and aspiring leaders. This view was articulated by Participant 7:

"You know what this programme, to me would have – is perfect for? Someone who's maybe just coming out of prison, hasn't really worked a lot, like maybe got their first job in some voluntary role that's now slowly starting to pay them. You know, early stage of it".

Arguably, this sentiment also manifests in criticisms expressed in Section 8.2.1 concerning the emphasis on personal as opposed to professional development. Nonetheless, other participants were more positive, feeling that conversations were enriched by the wide levels of experience (Participant 11) and Participant 8 suggested that the diversity of experience was reflected in the diversity of content:

"What you end up doing, which is completely acceptable and fine, is that some sessions resonate perfectly with some people, and actually other sessions resonate with others because they're just pitched at different levels, and that's actually a great way to handle it. It's far better than just picking a very similar cohort"

However, two participants with more advanced leadership experience still felt a more tailored package of content was required:

"I think it probably needs to (have) a little bit more direction on it if I'm honest". (Participant 1)

More specifically, Participant 7 suggested having:

"a group that's a bit more technical, for people who are a bit more further along and a group for more novices or the people earlier on in the stage"

And Participant 5 focused on a narrowing of social demographics to help with issues where level of experience seemed to overlap with ethnicity, race, or type of lived experience:

"Maybe having a bit of a tighter net on – not necessarily race, but like age ranges maybe might even be one place to start, or tightening the blanket of what is the definition of lived experience, or just tightening something in the eligibility and the cohort, so then you can make more specific kind of relatable content"

Meanwhile Participant 8 felt the necessary calibration of level of experience to content might be improved by an adapted form of the buddying scheme:

"What would have been really helpful to me is maybe if I'd paired up with two or three who are at kind of similar stages or maybe a bit further ahead in their journey."

8.2.6.4
Summary

To summarise this section, the levels of lived and leadership experience in the first ELEVATE cohort were possibly more diverse than the breadth of participants' lived experience. Levels of experience ranged from people with lived experience who have not yet reached the 'jumping off point' (Sandhu, 2019: 13) to become a lived experience leader, through to experienced leaders with several years of leadership development on their CVs. Sandhu's framing of the different stages of lived experience career development offers a clear articulation of this diversity and could perhaps be adopted into the shared vocabulary of the ELEVATE programme for use by both staff and participants.

Some participants also recognised the significance of age and attendant maturation as an influence on different levels of lived and leadership experience. The diversity led to some negative comments by participants, and the inclusion of both 'high achievers' and those with recent CJS contact were questioned. There were also indications that engagement in the programme content was negatively impacted by the diverse levels of experience, and perhaps a general feeling that content was most relevant for new and aspiring leaders, although there wasn't complete consensus on this. Positive benefits of diversity were also identified, it was felt discussions were enriched and one participant believed content was pitched to cater for different levels of experience. However, more broadly, opinion seemed to be that the programme's content was mainly focused on early and aspiring leaders, leading to some recommendations for a more tailored approach by limiting the level of lived experience leadership, social demographic factors such as age or ethnicity, or by offering smaller, selected buddying groups. The options suggested would result either in a more exclusive cohort limited by level of experience or other factors, or, alternatively, a programme that operates at two levels, offering different programme content for different groups relevant to their level of leadership development, and possibly augmented by opportunities for more inclusive large group meetings involving the full cohort. The suggestion of a buddying scheme aimed at bringing participants at similar leadership stages together, while continuing to participate in the broader programme, represents a middle ground between the two.

8.2.7
How useful were the 360 assessments and reflective journals as tools to monitor individual progress? What, if any, changes should be made to the tools in year two?

The evaluators understand that the 360 assessments and reflective journals were separate pieces of work, the former delivered at the first residential (and again, close to the conclusion of the programme), the latter intended as a record to be written throughout the programme. However, participants sometimes confused the two, referring to a '360 journal' (Participant 5) or simply expressing their uncertainty about the different tasks:

"I don't know whether it's called 360. It's called – I don't – is it 360?". (Participant 1)

8.2.7.1
360 Degree Assessment

In terms of the 360 assessment, eight out of 10 participants who made comment on it did not remember it (Participants 7, 8, 10, 11 and 13), appeared to be referring to the reflective journal (Participant 2) or had some recollection of the 360 assessments but suggested that it 'never materialised' (Participant 5). Meanwhile, Participant 1, as discussed (above) expressed uncertainty about what constituted the 360 assessments.

Only participant 6 had a memory of doing the assessment as part of the first residential:

"Yeah, I think they did, I think this was early, early, early". (Participant 6)

While Participant 9 remembered doing it but didn't complete the task and may have been speaking about the reflective journal. These findings reiterate the importance of consistent signposting in order to reinforce for participants the learning task and its specific purpose (see section 8.1.4).

8.2.7.3
Reflective Journal

Participants had better recollection of the reflective journal, with seven out of 10 participants who commented on it remembering the task, although Participant 6 appeared to be referring to the 360 assessments. However, none of the seven had engaged with the task. For some participants this was due to the materials offered or a lack of support in completing the journal. Participant 4 suggested that the reflective journal was 'very much a notion' rather than a realisable activity, while Participants 7 and 10 had issues with the delivery method, though these were contradictory. Participant 7 remembered the journal being something to complete on their phone, while Participant 10 had issues with the form of a hardcopy journal:

"I think is about fifty – it's about thirty-four pages long of writing a journal prompt or something like that...it didn't connect with me". (Participant 10)

Three participants (1, 4 and 6) also suggested that there was a lack of support from CJA staff in completing the journal. Participant 1 felt the journal had been 'alluded' to early in the programme, but that there were no attempts to embed journal keeping as a regular activity:

"Had I got into the routine of doing it from the beginning...then I probably would've followed through and done it" (Participant 1)

There was a sense from these three participants that they were left to get on with the task, without oversight from staff. Participant 4 suggested automated computer prompts at regular intervals as a way to embed the activity without adding to staff workload. For a fuller consideration of operationalising this, refer to section 8.3.3 (below).

8.2.7.5
Summary:

A second obstacle to completing the reflective journal, raised by Participants 8 and 12, concerned diversity in the ways people feel comfortable to reflect. For Participant 8, reflection is an ongoing cognitive process rather than a written task, which had been supported by the programme:

"So I haven't really got time to do the journal, but that doesn't mean that I don't reflect all the time. The programme really has awoken that ability to do that from weekend one...So yeah, you do reflect on it, and particularly the bits that really powerfully resonate with you"

Meanwhile, Participant 12 discussed how they reflected through talking about their experiences rather than recording them in writing.

Despite the lack of engagement with the 360 assessment and the reflective journal, five participants expressed enthusiasm for having tasks enabling reflective practice, and two described other ways they tried to use their previous writing as a measure of progress:

"I didn't do the 360 journals. I wish I'd done that. Yeah, so the only thing I'm able to use when I look back is my supporting statement...So that helped me to look back and say, gosh, I've even superseded. You know, things have been getting better". (Participant 2)

Meanwhile, Participant 11 had used their own notes from the learning sessions to reflect on changes achieved:

"You might look at yourself and say, when I started this, look how my language was compared to six months...I've really understood some stuff...like you could really look back and reflect to see how you've progressed"

However, Participant 11 also acknowledges they were sometimes inconsistent in maintaining a written record as a result of shifting levels of motivation, which again suggests a more clearly embedded and supported ongoing task would be preferable. There is also another instance of, what appears to be, confusion due to unclear signposting when Participant 5 claims that the journal offers exactly what was missing from the programme, but then goes on to describe the end of session assessment sheets, which participants were required to fill in at the end of each learning session:

"that sounds like exactly what I'm saying that I would have liked, so like a weekly – even like three points, or one or two or three little questions each week for you to write down and summarise what you've taken away...but I feel it's like a disservice to ELEVATE, the fact that I can't necessarily home in on and say, 'This is what I've learnt, this is what it's done for me'". (Participant 5)

8.2.7.4 Alternative Modes of Reflection

In summary, at least half of the participants were enthusiastic about reflective tasks, such as 360 assessments or journals, and in some cases saw them as an opportunity to monitor their own progress. However, as discussed in Sections 8.1.4 and 8.2.5, a lack of signposting or clear communication of the purpose of the tasks meant that participants often didn't engage. Three participants suggested that reflective tasks should be more firmly embedded in the programme from the beginning and should be more actively supported by CJA staff. At its most resource intensive, this would see staff offering feedback to participants on their journal entries. A less demanding option would entail the creation of computer-automated reminders and prompts for participants to complete the reflective task on a regular basis. Diversity of needs should also be considered here. Not all the participants had the time or inclination to process their learning experience in written form and engagement may be improved if alternative options were given for the recording format, for example, video or audio have been suggested (CJA Interview) or incorporating the task into therapy or coaching sessions. It is heartening, however, to find that at least two participants were self-motivated enough to find their own ways to record their progress, and that, more broadly, according to Participant 8, the programme awakens the ability to reflect (Participant 8).

8.3

Delivery

8.3.1
To what extent were learning styles and needs taken into account in the delivery of the programme? What could be done differently in year two to make delivery more inclusive?

8.3.1.1
Digital Learning and Communication

One area of note was the variability of communication methodologies. Emails, Signal and WhatsApp Groups, Text messages alongside virtual delivery platforms. Whilst seemingly designed to meet a diverse demographic with the best of intent -it was found that less is more. In relation to communication Participant 5 stated;

"Yeah, that was definitely kind of all over the place" "There's no kind of coherence in the communication".

The volume of methods used was perceived as slightly overwhelming by some. A more streamlined process is arguably more conducive with engagement. As Participant 4 states:

"Simplicity is key, right? So, in whatever format we use – again it is a challenge of understanding that different people with different levels of computer knowledge and literacy is there. So, in whatever way, keep it as simple as possible."

Participant 4 suggested a digital online platform for communication;

"I know it may be an initial investment, right? But let's say you hired a team to create an app, right? I know at [redacted] we had a Moodle, like, our Moodle was attached to our kind of app or whatever. But in that app every time you got a message or you – something to your inbox – or – you know, just like every other – you get – you see a little one or two in the – on the app. So all of the information that you need is in there, every level of communication, all of the email, all of the message boards. Or you can also have an online portal, right? Like, well, basically it's the information is synchronised. But I think that that would be the best way to it rather than – because it happens all the time. I – in our Signal group, I didn't get that email, I didn't – I didn't do this, or I didn't – I didn't see it, or I didn't – you know what I mean? And it's like, no, like, if you had this portal or this app or whatever where all the – every time, it's there, it's contained, it's no saying I didn't see it or I didn't get it".

The notion of implementing an online digital platform for the programme is to the evaluators an optimum packaging of the product. This would comprise a central hub, with information packaged, presented, and labelled in manageable and digestible chunks, which could greatly assist in demarcating and demonstrating structure amongst the cohort. It would contain the programme content and interactive features of the IT in this central location with greater accessibility for the cohort. In terms, firstly, of communication, a central message board could be embedded into this hub, with announcements linked to emails/texts. Messages on the board would include content titles, which would allow the cohort to be aware when announcements relating to the programme are made yet also give them autonomy to check in with them (and the ones relevant to them) at a time and place that is convenient for them as opposed to multiple methods that can be perceived as quite intrusive. The CJA themselves in the focus group interview recognised the benefits of using such an approach through a 'digital side'. The digital aspect should, however, be more than just a 'side' and rather the central platform or spine of engagement.

8.3.1.2
Creative Activities

One area requiring attention is the potential 'infantilising' effect of some of the creative activities, as articulated by Participant 4;

"when you keep asking me to draw out my fucking feelings or do this type of – I disconnect. I go into another world"

"No, it just makes me feel stupid. Like, I just feel like, oh, for fuck's sake. You know, I can't draw, I don't feel like – I just don't want to do this. And I'm, yeah, I'm very verbal, very black, and white and blah, blah"

This was re-enforced by Participant 12 who stated;

"Sometimes I felt a lot of it was very childlike. A lot of drawing, a lot of things, and I was just like,'Oh my gosh.' Like it wasn't what it said. Like leader, when I think of leader, I think of someone who is, you know… Someone who is inspirational, someone who is leading a pack, someone who is going places and taking people with them. Someone who probably will push people in front of them as opposed to behind. Someone who doesn't, you know, judge. Someone who's strong. Someone who is a leader, you know, to say on the tin. And some of the things we did, I just didn't see how it fitted with leadership".

That said a number of participants enjoyed the creative methodologies and the variability of activities and speakers and even Participant 4 did enjoy and embrace the methodologies once they had got through an initial period of reluctance, however being mindful of potentially infantising those with lived experience is key to avoid potential exacerbation of stigmatisation and reduced self-efficacy.

8.3.1.3
Reflective Activities (see also Section 8.2.7)

Overall, a wealth of academic literature shows that learning can be reinforced through reflective activities for students (e.g. Harvey, Coulson, and McMaugh, 2016; Moon, 2004; Schön, 1983). One of the most common tools to promote reflection in education are reflection journals, also referred to as reflective diaries or learning logs (Moon, 2004). Students are asked to write down events they have experienced, what it meant or means for them, and what they might have learned from it. The journals act as vessels for writing that provide students with a framework to structure and remember their thoughts and reflections. The level of structure can vary, and journals can be either prompted, where students are provided with specific themes or questions to reflect upon, or unprompted, where students reflect on topics, they consider important (Wallin and Adawi, 2018a, 2018b). Whilst there was the option to engage in reflective exercises there was a belief that a more formalised reflective offering that was documented and given feedback, was required to help support engagement with this task;

"The one thing that was missing for me, like I said, was like task based – like self-reflective tasks or like – do you know what I mean, where you kind of summarise what you've learnt or answer like questions on – and I'm not saying every single time, but yeah, for me, I feel like that would have helped things kind of digest a bit better". (Participant 5)

"Give me something for the month, and then I've got to do a reflective – I'm very reflective, so I've got to do something – maybe if I write about what I've learnt or if I do a task to show my understanding of it, you know" (Participant 12)

It is therefore important to support students and carefully introduce reflection journals into their learning strategies through clear guidance and activities integrated into the course, as well as to ensure constructive alignment between reflection activities, assessment practices, and learning outcomes . One way to do so is to build this into a digital offering each week, that requires completion with feedback from the course facilitator for that week or project manager. This will foster engagement and compliance, but also produce buy-in from the cohort who clearly are looking for a more prominent offering. This will assist in overcoming issues surrounding the reflective journal documented earlier in this report (Section 8.2.7). It also supports the ongoing evaluation of the programme and its content and delivery, allowing for the CJA to be able to react quicker in making required changes.

Also, some of the cohort were receptive to receive feedback on their engagement with the programme and the material covered. There was the perspective that embedding tasks to 'test' and 'check' learning would be welcomed by them. Options such as quizzes and multiple-choice tests and short answer questions are options that would all achieve this and also support ensuring that the learning is conducive with delivering the aims of the sessions/weeks of the programme. The notion of checking is central to the learning process. It also supports the notion of accountability amongst the cohort and also will assist in bridging the commitment gaps that have arisen.

One of the themes of this report is that less is more and when considering the variability of learning styles this if felt acutely;

"One of the things that I said in terms of the whole programme was sometimes I feel like it's been a bit of information overload, and a lot of like talking at – every Wednesday, people kind of talking at you, and that's not the kind of best way for me to learn". (Participant 5)

"I'm a kinaesthetic learner. I do like playful things, I do. But not information overload. I felt Wednesdays was information overload at its finest, like a lot of information, then next week was something else". (Participant 12)

Information Overload is mentioned commonly amongst the cohort in differing guises. In relation to learning styles, again a central digital online platform with information packaged, presented, and labelled in manageable and digestible chunks would greatly assist in demarcating and demonstrating structure amongst the cohort.

Also, some learners were quite self-sufficient as was participant 8;

"I don't really need loads of support to be honest when it comes to like learning and stuff. As long as I know what the task is, as long as I've got – like I said, let's say you're lecturing me, I'm in front of you and I'm actually, yeah, cool, dah, dah, dah, I'm pretty much on that".

A digital platform allows such learners who have adopted a 'self-sufficient' independent learning style to engage in a more fluid self-directed manner. As such, the hub idea, reaches across the variability of the cohort and reconciles it. Underpinning this would be a specific learning style assessment that could be completed on admission to the programme by cohort members allowing the opportunity for content and their sessions to be designed in a manner that is cohort informed. This also supports 'co-production' and can be fed back to the cohort as such. Here they are taking a stake in their learning and the programme is being responsive to it in the creation of a more accessible offering.

8.3.1.4 Summary

The volume of the information firstly leads to the recommendation of creating a central digital platform/hub with all of the programme information. A suggested format could see an offering that contains a message/announcements board, a section for each week with a clear synopsis of the learning for that week and the activities, with a clear set of aims and objectives, reading materials, resources, reflective tasks and knowledge checking tasks alongside any presentation slides and recordings for that week. This supports the idea of not just checking in but reducing the possibility of the cohort checking out.

8.3.2 To what extent were the number of learning hours and timetable schedules appropriate and do-able given they were also balancing work and other commitments? What, if any, changes should be made?

It is difficult to separate, entirely, perceptions of the demands of the hours required from the ELEVATE programme, from participants' experience of programme content. Only three participants found the timetable unproblematic either because they made it fit into their schedules (Participant 1), because the positives outweighed the negatives:

"It didn't feel like a pressure. It was beautiful". (Participant 3)

Or because they genuinely found the commitment easy:

"It's worked for me and, right from the beginning...It's not heavy. It's very light". (Participant number withheld)

Although this latter participant also recognised that their freelance employment status made the time pressure more manageable.

The other 10 participants had issues with scheduling to varying degrees. Three participants (5, 6 and 8) spoke of the lack of specific dates or detail given at the start of the programme, though this was partially addressed within the first month of the programme, according to Participant 5. However, for future it was recommended that for the next cohort the CJA provide all of the scheduled dates for the duration of the programme before the programme begins. Even where participants did not raise concerns about the absence of exact dates, there was a sense in which participants felt they had not fully understood the necessary commitment before they embarked on ELEVATE. This was not viewed as a lack of communication on the part of the CJA, but rather that it was not possible to understand what the programme entailed before beginning it:

"I think they did mention it, but I don't think we really understood the extent of it". (Participant 6)

"Even if you give a programme, the excitement makes people not realise how deep the commitment is". (Participant 9)

This was a common sentiment explicitly stated by five participants and it was suggested that for the next cohort:

"In the interview...like really drilling home like, 'Look, this can get exhausting.'". (Participant 11)

A potential option would be to recruit alumni of the programme to offer a 'real deal' briefing on what prospective participants should expect in terms of time commitment.

8.3.2.1
Less Can Be More

However, it is also necessary to consider why many participants found the programme so exhausting. It is indisputable that several participants were balancing family and/or caring responsibilities with employment demands and the added requirements of ELEVATE. The Wednesday online sessions in particular were seen as problematic by participants with young children (see Section 8.3.3). However, these participants' dissatisfaction with some of the programme content also had an impact on perceptions of the time commitment:

"Timescales I think dragged". (Participant 7)

This observation stemmed from dissatisfaction with, what this participant viewed as too little attention to practical skills and too much to therapeutic content (see Section 8.2.1). However, more widely, 10 participants were less satisfied with the Wednesday sessions. Some saw the online delivery as a virtue in terms of providing an expedient means to bring people together on a regular basis, however, almost without exception, Saturdays were preferred due to the in-person dynamic, although Participant 4 felt that these sessions could also be 'hit and miss' in terms of content. This, view was countered by an amount of high praise for Saturdays, which, according to Participant 12 'are amazing'.

Wednesdays, however, were the least favourite sessions of almost all participants. They were seen as 'kind of boring' (Participant 11) due to the lack of task-based learning[9], and an emphasis on didactic pedagogy where 'it was a bit too much talking (Participant 7). For some this was seen as 'a lot of information overload' (Participant 12), while others suggested that the content of these sessions was 'samey (Participant 6) or that they were hurriedly planned 'fillers' (Participant 4).

"Some of them I just feel like we were there for the sake of it". (Participant 5)

This had a negative impact on participants' general experience of the sessions, and arguably their perception of the required time commitment, which became a struggle. Participant 6 captures this negative relationship between content and time commitment as being like;

"When you feel like you put more time into it but you're just not getting anything out of it"

The main suggestion, made by 10 out of the 12 participants was a reduction in the number of Wednesday sessions:

"I wouldn't include (more), I'd reduce". (Participant 4)

Most participants recommended a maximum of two online Wednesday sessions per month, complemented by a Saturday in-person once a month. As summarised by Participant 12:

"Sometimes less is more, you know?"

8.3.2.2
Intrinsic Commitment

A somewhat unexpected finding, however, was that despite the heaviness of the perceived and actual time commitment, participants continued to show up. Out of 12 participants, 10 described their motivation to complete ELEVATE as concerned with an intrinsic determination:

"I started it... I finish it". (Participant 1)

"I feel like, when you start something, you should see it through to the end". (Participant 5)

"It was a force within myself". (Participant 9)

[9] An exception to this was a task-based learning exercise used by Nina to illustrate participants learning about campaigning. Two participants commented favourably on this exercise and more of these activities were requested.

While Participant 8 and 10 offered more positive reasons for their ongoing commitment. This finding suggests that participants are proactive in their interaction with the programme rather than waiting to be motivated by the learning materials or other external factors, particularly in the online sessions:

"I switch off. But I knew I had to take part". (Participant 1)

"I was...trying to make the best out of the situation, which I did. So I was involved and made sure that I was heard and that I engaged with the programme...If I didn't have that mindset, it could have been different". (Participant 4)

This finding offers a challenge to traditional pedagogies, which suggest students are motivated to learn by extrinsic factors, such as learning outcomes (Biggs et al., 2022). Instead, the ELEVATE participants are driven by intrinsic motivations and in most cases continue to engage with the programme despite demands on time, or at times a lack of intellectual, cognitive, or emotional engagement (see Section 8.3.2).

8.3.2.3 Summary

Based on these findings it appears the CJA can be more strategic in their planning and delivery of contact hours. In much the same way that Participant 9 speaks of excitement at the start of the programme masking the true extent of the commitment, it appears that the CJA's enthusiasm to impart as much knowledge as possible may have led to an over-estimation of the optimum number of sessions required. It is also the case that changes and disruptions to programme planning led to time pressured recruitment of guest facilitators (CJA Focus Group). For the next iteration of the programme, as much as possible, a full schedule of facilitators should be confirmed in advance of the start of the programme and content predicated on the syllabus, based in turn on constructive alignment of learning outcomes (see section 8.1.4). This will also allow the CJA to provide a full schedule of dates and details to participants ahead of the programme's commencement, as suggested by three current participants and enable a more transparent recruitment process for facilitators, seen as desirable by CJA staff (CJA Focus Group). In addition, the CJA should consider recruiting ELEVATE alumni to offer a real deal briefing session to prospective participants before they join the programme.

Participants perceptions of the content of sessions also had some bearing on how heavily the time commitment weighed on them. The majority of participants felt a maximum of two Wednesday evening online sessions, complemented by a Saturday session each month would achieve a better balance in terms of time commitment and effective learning. More task-based learning, in or outside of the sessions, may also lead to greater engagement and, although not suggested by the participants, less formal sessions would also create more space for peer-learning, which is already seen by participants as one of the strengths of the programme (see section 8.3.5).

A more unexpected finding concerned participants' intrinsic commitment to completing the programme. Conventional pedagogy considers that, the majority of students are not predisposed to engage in a programme of study for its own sake and extrinsic motivations in the form of ILOs must be contrived in order to encourage students to complete their studies (Biggs et al., 2022). This is not the case for the ELEVATE participants, who bring their own sense of purpose to the content of the programme, even when the purpose of an individual session is unclear to them. This is a valuable resource the first ELEVATE cohort brings to the programme, and it may or may not be replicated in future years. However, either way, participants' motivation will be best

rewarded when the learning outcomes are clearly defined, consistently signposted and apparent to the participants, who can then unify their own sense of purpose with the individual outcomes offered by ELEVATE.

8.3.3 What were the advantages and disadvantages of online and in person delivery? What changes, if any, should be made to the balance on online/in-person for year two?

Participants shared that there was a welcome level of flexibility that the online delivery afforded. Many of the cohort were in employment and the online delivery component of the programme, which was on Wednesdays during the standard working week, meant that it was less time intensive on the cohort in terms of travelling to face-to-face delivery, but also allowed them to engage in their own environment in a manner that helped them to feel comfortable and relaxed to support engagement.

Mobility is also a benefit of the online delivery. The ability to access the online events anywhere that had a data or internet connection built upon the flexibility, aforementioned; Participant 1 shares their experience of this mobility;

"I've done them in some strange places actually 'cos I've been on the way home from work, I done one after an awards, where I was at....Tottenham Court Road during a break and so – and then there was a few that I – and I done it on the bus because I was – because I just did, you know, I'm at work."

This allows 'dead time' to be used to engage with the course. There is also a level of cost-effectiveness. The cohort and the CJA can save money on travel, accommodation, and other expenses associated with traditional training. In addition, in terms of communication, the cohort can interact with the trainer and other learners through online platforms.

That said, as previously discussed (Section 8.3.2) there was a level of fatigue associated with the Wednesday sessions. Arguably, this could be underpinned by the multiplicity of the life commitments that the cohort had.

"You know, every Wednesday we've got to meet up online, so that was a bit much sometimes, you know, because you – let's say you finish work or whatever, what not and then you just remember, oh yes 7 o'clock I've got to do this now for two hours as well. So that kind of was a lot as well and obviously I had my child as well, um and partner... Sometimes I get tired and, um, so I found myself taking a little step back because I felt it was a bit much for me. And then I've also got my stress with work for me, I'm not going to lie, I was starting to get a bit stressed out."

The notion of less is more and a move away from overload would be the optimal underlying and guiding theme (Section 8.3.2). Whilst there is appreciation of the programme's intent to impart a vast amount of information and knowledge, It is important to consider the way in which material can be delivered. Attention spans in an online environment are reduced. As Participant 8 shares;

"Online, whilst convenient, you know, you're tired, the hour goes on, you're maybe not concentrating as much as you would do in person because it's an online session and instinctively people switch off a bit on online sessions, you know, camera off, what have you".

Therefore, providing less and/or shorter content which assists with attention spans and encourages engagement, as well as reducing the demand on time that students might require for listening to material. Making it clear what the key objectives of study tasks or assessments are. Identifying lesson objectives helps to keep students focused. Enabling short and focused learning is a good guide in such sessions - a longer

session can be broken down into multiple shorter sessions. Participant 10 shared their perspective of the delivery of online sessions as one that felt passive in nature;

"The Wednesday session online Zoom is not great. Having a PowerPoint presentation and going, "Yeah, doo, doo, doo, doo." So by maybe slide four or five, you're like...[switching off]".

It is optimal for online learning to give space to watch, read and listen actively rather than passively. This involves considering what activities can be used to get the cohort to engage with materials, e.g. posing questions before a teaching session or a video and then getting students to look out for those ideas so that they are ready to engage and watch. These sorts of prompts are helpful to promote engagement.

Arguably some of the cohort felt a deficiency in experience from the remoteness of online delivery, which fostered disconnection. They may feel that they miss out on some of the everyday support that they get from walking out of a an in-person event together and the sense of support that they get from this. Participant 8's perspective captured some of this position:

"Whether it's as impactful is a completely different situation, and the in-person ones were more impactful".

It is important to structure the online environment so that students can engage with each other. Online environments can be unfamiliar, overloaded, and overwhelming for those engaging with them and this is particularly the case if a lot of content is included. Make it clear to students that each week or section of learning is part of the module as a whole. Asynchronous content should be available ahead of synchronous teaching that relies on it. Incorporating spontaneous activities in the online delivery, such as debates or discussions is also an effective tool as in an online environment it can be hard to create the sort of reactions that happen in a face-to-face setting.

Considering ways in which interactions and discussions can be created in an online class is key. This type of learning is important as the cohort gain from the touch points of asking questions and seeking clarifications. It is important to consider how informal as well as formal learning opportunities can be established in an online environment (see 8.3.5).

8.3.3.1 Summary

The intensity of the online delivery is a theme that has been discussed in the previous section and as such is not dwelt upon here as the recommendation is transferable. The amount of information is something that should be reduced to avoid information overload. However, it is not just the amount of information but the structure of using the material, thus the use of shorter materials to focus attention and avert fatigue would be an optimum approach. Due to the remote nature of online delivery the structuring of sessions to encourage cohort engagement to overcome issues of remoteness such as disconnect is a key consideration moving forward alongside the creation of opportunities for formal and informal learning in sessions

8.3.4
To what extent were the staff, facilitators, presenters, coaches, clinical supervisors, and others involved in the delivery of the programme perceived favourably by the emerging Leaders?

The cohort were keen to express that there were a number of characteristics that they associated favourably with agents that they engaged with as part of the programme.

Some of the core characteristics, specifically surrounding personable nature and commensurate interaction, were articulated by Participant 1:

"I think buying it. I think being personable. Introducing themselves in a way that even if they were of a senior stature, they still introduced themselves as a human being, and treating the people that were on the course as human beings and speaking to them in that way".

Treating people with respect, dignity and decency are core values and are especially important when engaging with those with lived experience. Creating an approach that respects diversity among the cohort by adhering to such principles mitigates/negates the power imbalances that could be experienced or perceived. The essence of these areas is captured in Participant 2's assessment of the course facilitators;

"What you're talking about, accessibility, responsiveness, being able to listen, gives you agency, passion. I think that's kind of what you're looking for in what you've said as a facilitator, and I think that's important".

Meanwhile, Participant 3 spoke about the powerful connection they felt drawn into with some of the facilitators:

"In that story I find something that I link and I feel that person or that story and then – and in the examples given, that's why out of most of the other people, Gethin, Gavin, Lady Unchained, Paula, like, these people, they were – about their stories. So I get captured by that and then I'm open to learn"

"We had some facilitators much, much better than others. And I don't know, like, the ones who stayed in my mind are the ones where I felt really touched. But I can't – I kind of can't remember every single one, so I guess means I didn't benefit, or I didn't relate as much as the other ones. It's different learning models, it's different people will relate to different ones".

However, there were some negative perceptions, for example: Participant 11 who described a facilitator as;

"[coming] across very ignorant and even got into like a little spat with one of the people that was on the course, and I believe, to my knowledge, that person didn't have lived experience. But so I don't know, I can't – yeah, it's a hard one".

The notion of lived experience again was raised in Participant 5's assertion that;

"Some of the facilitators maybe were a bit flat. I think passions very important. I guess as well, like diversity of background, ethnicity, I think there definitely could have been more of that".

There was a level of variability in facilitators that was reported across the cohort;

Yeah, the quality of some – some speakers are very good and better than others, that's just an inevitable kind of thing. (Participant 8)

What is clear is that hose who identified programme variability, were reflective and measured recognising differences can be an occurrence across a programme for a number of reasons.

"There have been a few that weren't as powerful as others, that's par for the course on any programme, but some people – I mean, how anyone couldn't be sort of like inspired

or motivated or at least have their thoughts provoked by some of the speakers, I would find very strange to believe, and I'm sure all of them did. 'Cos look, they've genuinely dealt with what happened to them in life positively and constructively, and it's such a wonderful thing to teach". (Participant 8)

An area requiring focus is the rationale underpinning the identification and selection of those involved in facilitating sessions There appears to be no standardised procedure or rationale for this - nor overarching process (See also Section 8.3.2. This is something that was picked up on by some of the cohort, with the perception that:

"My view is that, bless her, Nina, who was just trying to give these people opportunities in the same way, right? So "Oh, I came across this person at this wonderful session, and they do this wonderful programme and I want to bring them in and help them as well." You know, that's – so – but what that makes it feel like for me is like, okay, fine, 'cos that's a part of what we've learned as well, building relationships and however capitalise on this really. But from the outside looking in it's like, well, who's the focus here? Me as the person that's doing the programme or you trying to put on somebody to do this project". (Participant 4)

"I say this in the nicest way possible, because I think it was amazing, I think a lot of people who taught us were given opportunities, which are beautiful, right, but a lot of the time you came away – and those people were like, "I want to join next year, I want to join next year," and I just ask, is that right? In a sense where everyone deserves the chance, but if you're meant to be teaching – how can I explain it...? [Pause] I don't know how to explain it fully. Someone explained it better on our last residential. I don't know, yeah. It just felt like some people were given chances and then I wonder, was there quality assurance in what they were delivering?" (Participant 12)

Despite these criticisms, there was a recognition of the passion and commitment of the CJA staff that shone through to the participants;

"I think you have to be personable, and we've always had remarkably personable people, you know. Nola is wonderful to talk to and always engaging, and puts you at ease, the same with Eulina, and definitely the case with Nina as well at the top. But they're very good people who genuinely want to kind of do-good things, you know. In my opinion, it's very obviously not just a job to any of these people. They genuinely care and that's a great thing". (Participant 8)

"been great, can't complain, very supportive, understanding as well, like obviously if you can't make it, you can't make it. So the ELEVATE, the CJS staff have been good" (Participant 6)

"I think they did, I think they've been all right with the people that they've got, like the people that they've got in to come and facilitate, I think they've done all right to be fair, I think they've done good, yeah, I think they've done well". (Participant 6)

However, moving forward some more standardisation and structure to what is being delivered with a clear rationale, structure and indicative content would support a more consistent approach in delivery. As aforenoted in the report, it is prudent to be mindful of maintaining a demeanour and engagement that is not deemed as infantsising any of the cohort. It is important to ensure that there is consistency in the level that the material and programme overall is pitched at.

8.3.4.1 Summary

What is clear is that the agents involved in the programme are largely well received, with their passion and commitment noted by many of the cohort. They demonstrated the qualities that the cohort identified as looking for from those in the cohort facing roles. There are areas to improve - implementing a selection criterion for those involved in facilitation and delivery of components of the programme, based on a clear rationale and need, aligned with the aims and objectives of the programme. Also, a standardised template of sessional structure and content, aims and objectives would also support more consistency in the delivery to the cohort. (see Section 8.1.4)

8.3.5 To what extent did the delivery of the programme encourage and enable peer support and connections? What more could be done to enable peer support?

Peer Support involves either social, emotional, or practical support being provided by peers. Peer Support can involve group work or can alternatively be one-to-one, dependent on identified needs. This support can take the form of counselling, listening, befriending, and providing information and signposting (Perrin, 2017). Peer Support also involves the provision of emotional support.

Particularly relevant to the ELEVATE cohort, was the provision of emotional support, offering elements of "reassurance, information and practical assistance" (Perrin, 2017: 13), and this is apparent when considering the following comments from cohort members;

"The majority of the value from this programme has not come from the programme itself. It's come from the side conversations and the conversations after the sessions because that's where the therapeutic value of all of us coming together and even reflecting on what we've just done, not the forced kind of programme that they have". (Participant 4)

"I think as a group we learnt from each other as much as we learnt from the people who were coming and delivering, to know that we have people who went through really, really bad traumatic events and they are here and dressing up and being good and having hope and choosing to be part of the solution, it's an honour to be around these people". (Participant 3)

During the CJA focus group, staff also recognised the importance of the peer network that emerged from the programme:

"It's a peer network, isn't it? That's one of the main aims, I suppose, you know, if nothing comes out of this, it's these people have found a bond amongst themselves, and I think that's a big takeaway from a programme like this. You've found your – whatever, your hive or whatever it's called".

There is a basic understanding of peer support as being the embodiment of values of mutual reciprocity, shared problem solving, empathy and experiential exchange. Though social support has been conceptualized in a number of ways, there is agreement that it relates to an exchange of resources between individuals (Shumaker and Bronwell, 1984; Suurmeijer et al., 1995). Exchanges are by nature two-way, which means that a person may either give or receive. One aspect of giving was the educational and experiential exchange from cohort members willing to assist their peers;

"Like even one of the other participants, because he studied law and that, he was teaching us, just off the cuff, he was teaching us how we can go onto a certain system and ask for some of our old convictions to be taken down. I thought that's good, I've got it saved on my phone". (Participat 11)

8.3.5 Buddying

Buddying: However, the sharing of experience and learning from those like 'us' is a complex proposition. This complexity starts from the contention of what or who a peer is; close friends, associates, other people in a shared environment or task could all be described as peers. However, as Shiner (1999: 557) postulates, "the question remains, what makes somebody like us?" In short: identity. Individuals construct and mould identities in relation to an array of characteristics which can emanate from a range of sources. Shiner (1999) advances that these can include roles that social actors take on, group categories they feel attached to and experiences that they have. One such example of an acquired identity in ELEVATE was the creation of the 'buddy' role'. There is a level of emotional labour that comes with being a 'buddy' and there was a level of uncertainty experienced about the construction of such a relationship;

"No type of what this relationship should look like or any prompts about boundaries or, you know, nothing like that". (Participant 4)

There was incompatibility amongst some of the buddies, something that has arisen from the selection of buddy pairings. This was a quite random and seemingly unstructured process. As such, members of the cohort migrated away from a formal buddy network to a more organic, informal construct -a more autonomous approach that actually fosters agency and empowerment.

Given the variability of the cohort being at differing stages of their journey and personal development, it is suggested that more focus be given to establishing the parameters of a formal buddy scheme (Section 8.2.6). Also, a key area to consider is the allocation of buddys to ensure that compatibility across the realms of providing support is achieved alongside the notion of providing clear expectations of a buddy scheme and the rationale and purpose for doing so. Participant 4 shared their feelings surrounding the ambiguity of the role and the unboundaried nature of it which connects to the idea of emotional labour;

"I've got love for you but I'm not your therapist and, [laughs] you know, I'm your buddy but we need to create some boundaries here, you know what I mean?".

This links into a broader notion of when peers are involved in service delivery (in this case in the ELEVATE programme) , their unique roles and responsibilities can lead to a unique set of work-related emotional challenges. The concept of emotional labour (Hochschild, 1983) provides one pathway to new knowledge and understanding, as the ensuing analysis is structured to illustrate. Emotional labour is the work of expressing and regulating affect or feelings in the context of paid employment in order to conform to professional and organizational rules (Ashforth and Humphrey, 1993; Hochschild, 1983). The emotional labour construct has been used to explore how workers manage their emotions in a variety of service-related positions, as well as human service professionals (Mancini and Lawson, 2009)

Individuals may engage in emotional labour when they experience overwhelming genuine emotions in their work with service users (Ashforth and Humphrey, 1993). How these management techniques and experiences conform to workers' personal values and identity, and the level of support they receive in the organizational environment and culture can determine whether emotional labour will have a positive or negative effect on workers' well-being (Ashforth and Humphrey, 1993). When peer and non-peer-providers are able to establish and develop, authentic relationships with clients, this bonding underpins service effectiveness and outcomes. This emotional labour may also have extended outcomes on enhancing work engagements, job satisfaction, work effectiveness, a sense of personal efficacy

and accomplishment, and overall well-being (Mancini and Lawson, 2009; Hochschild, 1983).

However, those performing in ways that contradict their felt emotions and authentic selves, or who experience role confusion, can experience emotional exhaustion and burnout which can lead to high turnover or withdrawal (Mancini and Lawson, 2009).

"I feel like I had to really check in on my buddy, and I disliked that afterwards. I became a bit reluctant. Like seeing their name pop up, I was just like, 'Oh my gosh'". (Participant 12)

Peer-providers must give something of themselves to other people, a process that requires energy, commitments, and risk. Moreover, this emotional labour entails an ethic of caring (Himmelweit, 1999). However, this ethic of caring often is constrained by professional and organisational environments and cultures that can lead to the experience of negative emotional labour. Acknowledgement of these constraints and the existence of supports can mediate these effects.

What is indicted resonates with the notions that peer-providers may be prone to experience three interrelated person situation interactions that could result in negative emotional labour. First, peer-providers are expected to use their personal experiences in their work with fellow service users. While this has the potential to be rewarding and mutually beneficial, this 'boundary blurring' can also result in overidentification with clients and vicarious re-traumatization when their work with other service users 'hits too close to home,' resulting in high negative stress. Second, peer-providers may experience problems related to their own mental health. This problem is especially likely to eventuate when supports within the organization are not in place. Third, peer-providers often work closely with traditional, non-peer mental health professionals in non-peer-dominated organizations, which can result in a sense of role confusion. Mechanisms combatting this potential is advanced through the recommendations at the end of this section of the report.

Migrating away from the peer focus in the buddy scheme, the networking opportunities offered in the wider programme were viewed favourably by the group. Participant 3 described the programme as;

"An eye opener and door opener".

Participant 10 recognised;

"I think what CJA has done, I didn't mention that which is an amazing thing, is they are connected with a lot of organisations".

The programme was recognised by Participant 3 as one that afforded opportunity that they were looking for, in terms of their motivation and rationale for engaging in the programme, to make connections which they ;

"wanted to achieve or gain from the experience and from being on the programme. I knew it would give me access to networking. You know, I knew I would get some benefits".

"Access to networking, resources. What else? Access to networking, resources, confidence, a community connection. I knew I would learn new things. One of the things that this course wanted to do, or set out to do, was to bring people with lived experience to the decision-making table. Now, I've actually been (given) opportunity, to have to be in that".

This was a position shared by others including Participant 10

"So they've got – the network, I think networking is key".

As such, it was apparent from the interviews with the cohort that networking was a central aspect of motivation to engage with

the programme and support development moving forward. The opportunity to attend events and meet influential figures in the field of criminal justice and politically was an illustration of the CJA network and the transformative power of networking opportunities;

"I wouldn't have had access to that symposium if I wasn't on the ELEVATE project. But you see, when I attended it, I met Dr Rona Epstein....I went into her workshop and afterwards I asked her a question...So from then on, we began to, you know, network. We'd talk through emails and she was part of a programme... and she told me to come with her. So I went to the Houses of Parliament and they were like thrashing out something to do with housing and, you know, like landlords? So I, for the first time, was part of that process and my name was credited, you know..."
(Participant number withheld)

8.3.5.1 Summary

Based on the findings in this section, peer support has formed one of the key benefits of the programme for participants. However, this is not without its issues. Returning to a consideration of the themes of allocation, emotional labour, boundaries and expectations, there are several ways in which the CJA can help to scaffold a space in which participants' peer interactions are more effectively supported.. A brief questionnaire could be devised and feed forward from the selection process used to match individuals with similar personalities, social and learning styles/approaches, and future goals. The provision of buddy training would allow clear parameters, boundaries and role depth and details to be clearly established. In addition, to ensure the effectiveness of the provision, the role of evaluation needs to be more established, including robust feedback collection, which can support an effective buddy network. Regular check-ins as part of the ongoing programme evaluation would illustrate willingness to engage with feedback and address suggestions or issues in a beneficial manner to all parties. A key notion is to continue to provide networking opportunities for the cohort with the CJA and political actors and make them a more prominent and frequent provision as this has been well received by the cohort.

8.3.6
What did the employers involved in the toolkit production and / or work placements value about being involved in the programme and what would they have changed? How can the CJA best embed positive changes in practice and inclusive workplace culture in the sector in year two?

It is not possible for the process evaluation to address these questions, as work with employers was still at an early stage when focus groups were conducted with CJA staff. These areas will now be considered as part of the outcome evaluation in 2024.

Recommendations

7.7
Methodological Recommendations

It is recommended that for future iterations of the programme, there is a unified approach taken to data collection, which enables standardisation of evaluation tools. In addition, a single repository of all data and programme materials, which is fully accessible to the evaluators, should be created. Earlier involvement of the evaluators was suggested by one of the ELEVATE participants. This would contribute to devising a unified evaluation processes.

8.1.1.
Lived Experience Led

According to the responses of the first cohort, the CJA should continue to recruit a relatively equal balance of lived and learned experience practitioners to design and deliver the programme.

The CJA should consider ways to mitigate the potential for high levels of vulnerability to be experienced by participants and the project manager due to a concentration of responsibility at the project manager level. Consideration may be given to greater IAG involvement in pastoral support. However, the appointment of a new project manager with indirect lived experience may alter the relational dynamics with the next cohort, and the CJA and the project manager should be aware of and monitor this.

In the medium term, the CJS should consider more lived experience appointments at board level.

8.1.2
Equitable and Inclusive

It is recommended that the CJA create a comprehensive EDI statement to enable clearer EDI monitoring in future. It is also recommended that the CJA gather relevant demographic data as a matter of course for all applicants during recruitment and selection processes. This will allow for more rigorous analysis of the data. It may also be useful for the CJA to collate demographic information for facilitators of ELEVATE.

In general, recruitment for ELEVATE was successful and participants were engaged by the social media campaign and related events. The CJA should continue to engage all current networks and publicise ELEVATE at the frequency of the earlier campaign.

The CJA might like to consider reaching out to social justice and activist networks, who were perhaps missed in the first iteration of recruitment campaign.

With a view to better managing participants' expectations later on, the CJA might like to consider a better balance of the inspirational with more substantive content (e.g. setting out programme content, learning outcomes etc).

The video application appears to have been a particular success for those participants who used it, and this option should be clearly communicated to all potential applicants for the second cohort.

There were some concerns about the interview format and the consistency and size of the interview panel. The CJA might consider a more trauma informed approach to interviewing (Triestman, 2021), and one participant suggested a day or afternoon-

long group interview to put participants at ease. There is a tension between EDI best practice, which requires a panel of three interviewers (CIPD 2021) and concerns expressed by some participants. The CJA should also consider having the same panel members across the interviews, in order to maintain consistency in conducting the interviews.

8.1.3 Broad Definition of Lived Experience

In the main, participants were appreciative of the broad definition of lived experience, although it was not without its problems and the need for negotiation between members. However, there is a sense that, if the broad definition can be made to work, it should be.

The CJA should consider giving future cohorts clearer and earlier information (i.e. before the programme begins) about the types of lived experience they may encounter on the programme, along with expectations around types of information participants will be asked to volunteer about their own lived experience within the group. Space should be created for individual lived experience journeys within group activities, not only in one-to-one therapy and coaching sessions.

The type of lived experience that was most problematic concerned participants who were victims of crime or who had indirect experience of the CJS and during interviews and focus groups the following three proposals emerged:

- Narrow the selection criteria to include only those with experience of the CJS as perpetrators of crime
- Recruit a better balance of different types of lived experience in the cohort
- Recruit two groups to be divided along types of different types of lived experience
- It was also suggested that facilitators and IAG members are chosen to reflect better a balance of types of lived experience.

This point is highly complex and cannot be resolved by a set of evaluation recommendations. It requires discussion between CJA staff and the IAG. However, it is suggested that greater clarity may be achieved by focusing more on the levels of lived experience than the definition (see recommendations for section 8.2.6)

8.1.4
Theoretical Underpinning

The social change leadership model requires firmer embedding into the programme.

Communicate the social change model of leadership to participants at an earlier point in the programme's schedule. At a minimum, distribute the programme handbook at the beginning of the programme, but also consider introducing the model during the Taster Days and other recruitment events.

The CJA should consider undertaking a substantive review of the programme design. This may be conducted by relevant CJA personnel or by an outside consultant. Two approaches are suggested; one pedagogic, one programmatic. Each of which can offer a more robust framework for embedding and communicating the social leadership model as the underpinning theory for ELEVATE.

Clearer communication of the social change model and requisite learning outcomes should be cascaded to freelance facilitators prior to the beginning of the programme to help them prepare and align their learning materials with the aims and outcomes of the programme. If possible, an in-person session should be organised with the facilitators. Systems should be implemented that enable the project manager to coordinate and check learning materials before their delivery.

Following the second iteration of ELEVATE the CJA may want to consider the appropriateness of the social change model for the ELEVATE cohort.

8.1.5
Systemic Change

Clearer framing of what systemic change is and what it might look like for the ELEVATE participants in needed.

This can partly be addressed by further embedding the social change model into the programme in order to demonstrate the interconnections between individual, group and community levels of change.

If introduced sooner and given greater priority, the research project can act as a suitable kinaesthetic activity to allow participants to demonstrate systemic change.

The CJA can be seen to more actively support the ambitions of participants to effect systemic change by:

- Including greater numbers of participants in CJA campaigns and events, if deemed appropriate.
- Allowing participants to bring their personal interests in systemic change to the research project by proposing, researching, and debating individual topics. Groups would select one topic to investigate fully for the final research project task.

8.1.6
Collaboration

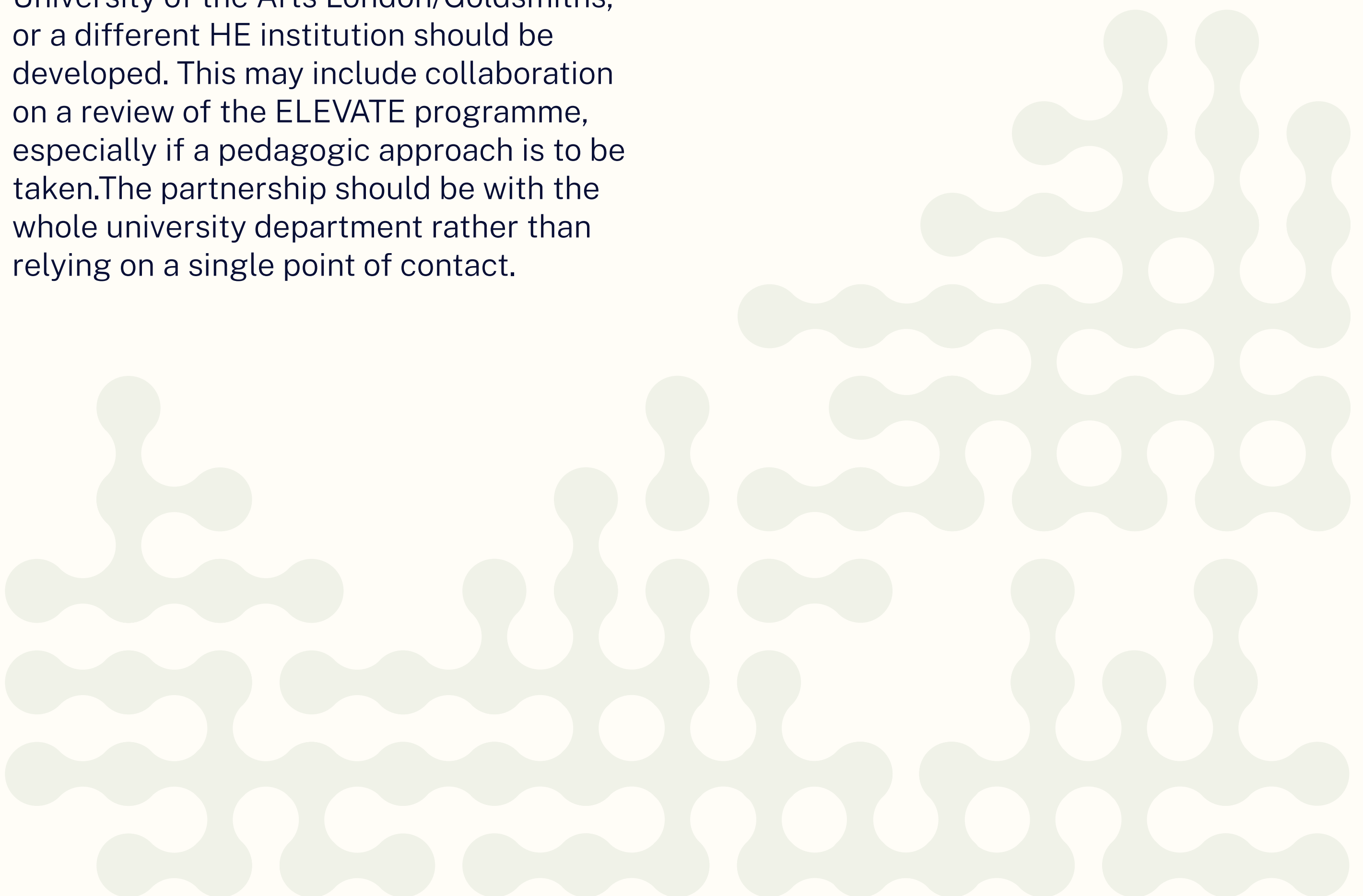
Partnerships appear to be central to the CJA's ways of working and this is no exception for the ELEVATE programme. Partnerships were developed for the first iteration of ELEVATE with a lived experience leadership organisation in the US and one an education partner based in London. Both partnerships offered valuable contributions to ELEVATE.

The partnership with JustLeadershipUSA was clearly inspirational for participants and other facilitators, and also allowed international perspectives and the possibility of extending networks. This partnership should be further developed in the second year. However, it will also be instructive for the CJA to consider how US influences on the ELEVATE programme may be adapted to better align with British cultural contexts.

A university partnership offers a rich mix of pedagogic, practical and transformative dimensions and a partnership either with University of the Arts London/Goldsmiths, or a different HE institution should be developed. This may include collaboration on a review of the ELEVATE programme, especially if a pedagogic approach is to be taken.The partnership should be with the whole university department rather than relying on a single point of contact.

8.1.7
Dual-Prong Approach

It is not possible for the process evaluation to address these questions, as work with employers was still at an early stage when focus groups took place. These areas will now be considered as part of the outcome evaluation in 2024.



8.2.1
Usefulness of Content

It was not possible to offer a rigorous quantitative analysis due in part to inconsistency in data collection by the CJA on their end of session feedback forms. It is recommended that a standardised end of session feedback sheet is developed for this purpose.

There is currently little shared vocabulary between staff and participants in terms of programme components or leadership expectations. This was articulated as an 'expectation gap' in discussions with facilitators and IAG members. A heuristic, spatial tool is provided, which was used to capture participants' responses to programme content. The tool sets out the extremes of personal and professional development, practical and creative activity desired of the programme by participants. It is suggested that this tool can also be used to develop a shared vocabulary of leadership and learning, which both includes and challenges participants' leadership expectations in future cohorts.

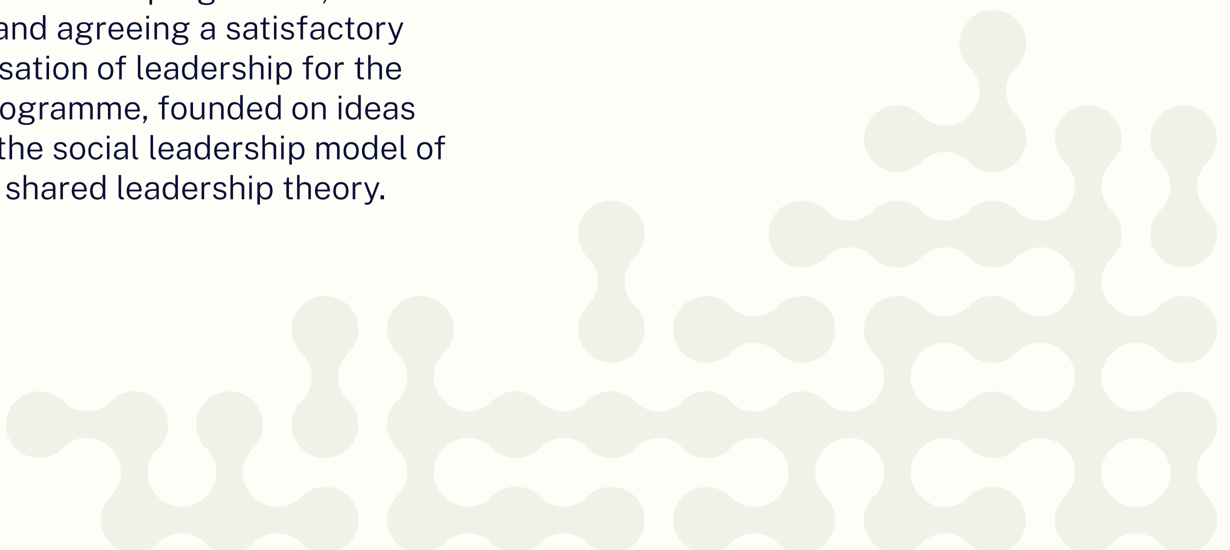
It is recommended that both staff and students attend sessions before the beginning of the new programme, aimed at creating and agreeing a satisfactory conceptualisation of leadership for the ELEVATE programme, founded on ideas taken from the social leadership model of change and shared leadership theory.

8.2.2
Missing Content

In line with findings from Section 8.2.1, most of the content suggested is concerned with practical, professional development skills. However, there is little agreement on specific content. Some of the diversity of requests may be addressed by including participants in an early group discussion on their expectations, understanding of leadership and ELEVATE's ability to address these requirements (see detailed recommendation in 8.2.1)). This can also allow participants to develop their abilities to identify and negotiate their learning agendas as active learners.

At times participants request content which is already provided. This emphasises the importance of clearly signposting content as well as delivering it.

The provision of learning around the research project is flagged as potentially inadequate, however the solution to this may lie more with the delivery than the content and may be addressed via an continuing academic partnership with University of the Arts/ Goldsmiths or a new partner.



8.2.3
Senior Level Work Placements

Senior-level work placements and completion of the action research project had not been achieved at the point in time when one-to-one interviews were conducted with the ELEVATE cohort. It was agreed that the results of this work will be included in the outcome evaluation at the end of Year 2 of ELEVATE.

8.2.4
Coaching and Clinical Supervision

Implement a document, at selection phase, for the cohort to provide their background information to inform the coaching and supervision provision and a tailored response to the individual.

Implement a therapeutic support system that has early engagement with the cohort upon selection to allow for them to transition into the programme and develop a relationship with the therapeutic lead to a point where they are comfortable to share in group settings.

There needs to be continuity in communication between the programme leader/CJA staff involved in the programme and therapeutic lead at regular intervals that is documented -detailing all cohort impacting information/changes/decisions.

The therapeutic lead should be present or party to any programme related meetings to have input into, and awareness of, cohort impacting decisions.

Implement provision of therapeutic support for the staff/therapeutic lead to give them a space to unpack thoughts, feelings, and emotions.

Consider making coaching optional for those who see its relevance to their career journey. Alternatively, if the CJA believe coaching is an integral part of the ELEVATE programme, consideration could be given to offering a clearer introduction to the purposes of coaching, aimed at challenging assumptions about this type of personal development work.

Disparity in the relational dynamics achieved between different coaches and participants was noted, with one coach seen as particularly successful, while others, were less so. While it is not possible to engineer successful coaching relationships with precision, the CJA may want to consider relevant factors, such as lived experience and social demographics, that can play a role in relationship building in a coaching context.

It was noted that disparities between facilitators may be highlighted and exaggerated by different facilitators delivering the same material to different groups. In order to minimise these differences, it is suggested that sessions involving the same materials are delivered to the whole group by a number of facilitators.

For those whose experience of coaching was positive, a three to six month extension of coaching sessions beyond the end of the programme is suggested, as too, therapy sessions for any participant who would like to continue. This would allow participants to maintain momentum and continue to progress in the journeys begun on ELEVATE.

8.2.5
Participant Engagement

Participant engagement is currently equivalent to best outcomes in the HE sector, with an average of 60% attendance across the programme although a higher dropout rate of 25% compared to 5.3% in the HE Sector. It is not possible to make detailed inferences due to the inconsistency of data, however, it may be possible to contribute to increased attendance/decrease dropout in the following ways:

- Create clearer ILOs for every learning session. This should happen automatically as a result of developing a clearer underpinning theory for the whole programme, using constructive alignment or programme theory (Section 8.1.4). In particular, ILOs should specify a clear outcome and use action verbs to allow participants to demonstrate learning. Atkinson (2022) is recommended as a suitable source for guidance.
- ILOs should be devised from the residential weekends.
- Be aware of the disengagement experienced by participants in online sessions (see Section 8.3. for recommendations on how to address this).

8.2.6
Levels of experience/expertise

It is suggested that levels of lived experience may be considered by the CJA as a more effective way to structure the next cohort, rather than focusing on lived experience (though the broad definition could remain). Participants in the current cohort found levels of lived experience more salient to their experience of the programme.

Sandhu's (2019) definitions of different levels of lived experience leadership (early and aspiring, emerging, experienced, and senior), offer a highly pertinent and precise vocabulary to work from and would allow for a more tailored programme based on pedagogic content rather than personal history.

The CJA could consider creating a programme with two groups, one targeted at early/aspiring and/or emerging leaders, a second group aimed at experienced leaders. Sessions with level specific content may be augmented with whole cohort sessions where the focus is on peer learning.

Alternatively, the CJA could consider a single group of participants at various levels of experience, but with a strong buddying element that enables participants at similar levels of experience to work in smaller groups on content with greatest relevant to them.

8.2.7 Reflective Materials

The 360-degree assessment and reflective journal were often confused by participants, which again indicates clearer signposting to these tasks is necessary.

Engagement with these reflective activities was low and, based on participant suggestions, the following recommendations are made:

- Embed the reflective journal into the beginning of the programme in order participants get into the habit of completing it.
- Consider offering support from staff in the form of one-to-one feedback at regular intervals on journal entries. A less resource intensive option would be to create computer automated reminders and prompts to complete journal entries.
- The content of reflective journals might be incorporated into coaching or therapy sessions.
- Consider incorporating delivery of the reflective journal into a central digital platform/hub (see 8.3.1), which could include automated prompts and/or digital interaction with ELEVATE staff.
- Consider alternative modes of reflection such as videos or audio recording to address different learning styles (see also Section 8.3.1)

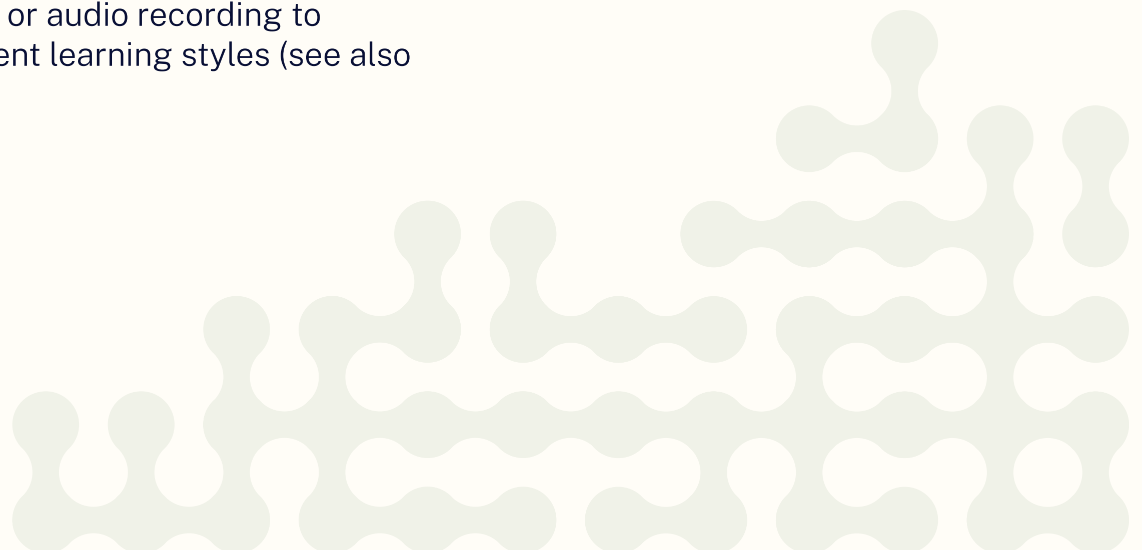
8.3.1 Learning Styles and Needs

Creation of a central digital platform/hub with all of the programme information.

The digital Hub would include a communications hub containing a message board

Format could see an offering that contains;

- synopsis of the learning for that week and the activities
- a clear set of aims and objectives,
- reading materials,
- resources,
- reflective tasks and
- knowledge checking tasks alongside
- any presentation slides and recordings for that week



8.3.2 Learning Hours and Time Commitment

The majority of participants felt they were unprepared for the amount of time commitment required by the programme. Suggestions to address this were:

- Participants to be provided with a full schedule of facilitators sessions and events in advance of the programme beginning (this will also allow for a more transparent recruitment system for freelance practitioners).
- Greater emphasis should be placed on the time commitment involved. It was suggested a 'real deal' briefing by alumni could succeed in communicating this most effectively.

There was a general feeling that 'less is more' among participants and it is recommended that the CJA are more strategic in their planning and delivery of contact hours. In general participants suggested a maximum of two online, Wednesday sessions per month and one Saturday in-person session.

The CJA could consider introducing more task-based learning, in or outside of the sessions. Less formal sessions would also create more space for peer-learning, which is already seen by participants as one of the strengths of the programme (see section 8.3.5).

8.3.3 Online and In Person Delivery

Reduction of online delivery to fortnightly delivery

Use less material to avoid information overload

Use shorter materials to focus attention and avert fatigue

Structure sessions to encourage cohort engagement to overcome issues of remoteness such as disconnect

Create opportunities for formal and informal learning in sessions

8.3.4 To what extent were the staff, facilitators, presenters, coaches, clinical supervisors, and others involved in the delivery of the programme perceived favourably by the emerging Leaders

Deliverers of the programme were generally well-received and appreciated by participants. However, there was some degree of variability, leading to the following recommendations. Implementation of a selection criterion for those involved in facilitation and delivery of components of the programme, based on a clear rationale and need, aligned with the aims and objectives of the programme.

A standardised template of sessional structure and content, aims and objectives would also support more consistency in the delivery to the cohort. (also see Section 8.1.4)

8.3.5 Peer Support and Connections

Establishing Suitable Pairings: A brief questionnaire with the cohort could be devised and feed forward from the selection process used to match individuals with similar personalities, social and learning styles/approaches, and future goals.

Provide Buddy Training: As part of the programme provide suitable training. It is important to ensure that buddies have a clear sense of the role, expectations, and emotional labour. A workshop would be a good format for experiential exchange of best practice.

Evaluation: To support an effective buddy network the role of feedback collection is important. Regular check-ins as part of the ongoing programme evaluation would illustrate willingness to engage with feedback and address suggestions or issues in a beneficial manner to all parties.

Continue to provide networking opportunities for the cohort with CJA and political actors and make them a more prominent and frequent provision.

8.3.6 Employer toolkits and work placements

It is not possible for the process evaluation to address these questions, as work with employers was still at an early stage when focus groups were conducted with CJA staff. These areas will now be considered as part of the outcome evaluation in 2024.

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Appendices

Process Evaluation: ToR Questions Checklist

8.1.1
Lived experience led: To what extent is the programme designed and delivered 'by and for' people with lived experience and how could this approach be further embedded in year two?

8.1.2
Equitable and inclusive: How far has the programme met the aims of the EDI statement and what more could be done to improve EDI in year two?

8.1.3
Broad definition of lived experience: What have been the advantages and disadvantages of having a broad definition of lived experience amongst the participants, and should the definition remain the same for year two?

8.1.4
Theoretical underpinning: To what extent has the theoretical framework from the Social Change Model been useful in framing and supporting the leadership development process and how could it be embedded further in year two?

8.1.5
Systemic: To what extent did framing the leadership programme within a broader objective of systemic change support greater understanding and solidarity amongst participants?

8.1.6
Collaboration: How successfully have our partnerships and collaborations worked in engaging participants and providing them with the skills and attributes for social change leadership? How could collaboration be strengthened in year two?

8.1.7
Dual-prong approach: How effective was our dual-prong approach, not just supporting lived experience leaders, but also working with employers and policy makers to dismantle the barriers to progress? How could we improve our work to change policy and workplace practices in year two?

Content

8.2.1
Which components of the programme have participants found most and least useful and why?

8.2.2
Was there any content they expected or would have liked to be included, but was missing?

8.2.3
What value did the senior-level work placements and group action research projects bring? How could their value be increased in year two? (Can't do it with data we have)

8.2.4
How effective was coaching and clinical supervision in supporting development?

8.2.5
To what extent did participants engage in the programme and achieve the learning outcomes? What were the enablers and barriers?

8.2.6
How well was the content pitched for the cohort's level of prior experience / expertise? Should any changes be made to the eligibility criteria / recruitment process for year two?

8.2.7
How useful were the 360 assessments and reflective journals as tools to monitor individual progress? What, if any, changes should be made to the tools in year two?

Delivery

8.3.1
To what extent were learning styles and needs taken into account in the delivery of the programme? What could be done differently in year two to make delivery more inclusive?

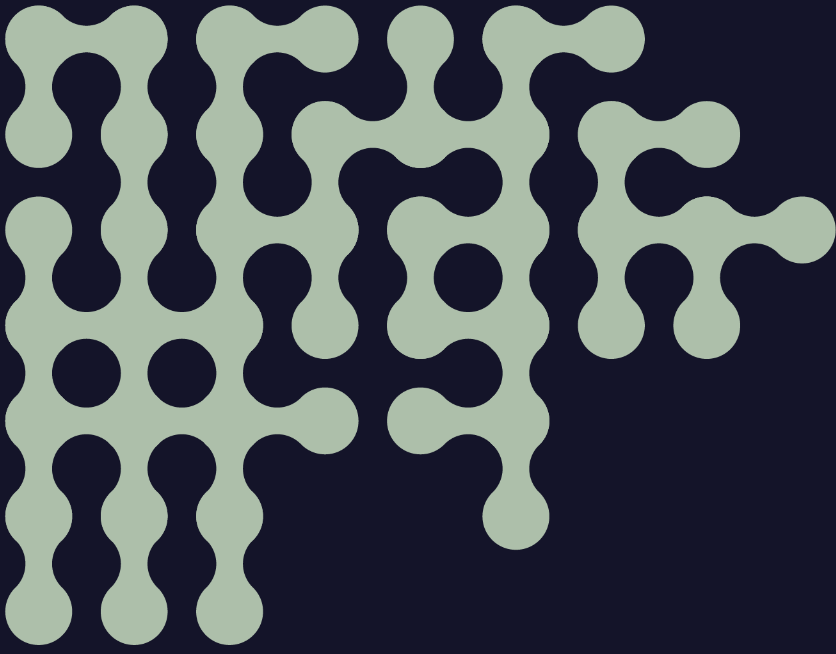
8.3.2
To what extent were the number of learning hours and timetable schedules appropriate and do-able given they were also balancing work and other commitments? What, if any, changes should be made?

8.3.3
What were the advantages and disadvantages of online and in person delivery? What changes, if any, should be made to the balance on online/in-person for year two?

8.3.4
To what extent were the staff, facilitators, presenters, coaches, clinical supervisors and others involved in the delivery of the programme perceived favourably by the emerging leaders?

8.3.5
To what extent did the delivery of the programme encourage and enable peer support and connections? What more could be done to enable peer support?

8.3.6
What did the employers involved in the toolkit production and / or work placements value about being involved in the programme and what would they have changed? How can the CJA best embed positive changes in practice and inclusive workplace culture in the sector in year two?



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Through our leaders' eyes

the CHURCHILL fellowship

Designed by Jemima Duncalf