

# Leadership Development for Analysts

The  
Strategy  
Unit.

TRAINING

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# Course summary

The Leadership Development for Analysts training is designed to equip analysts with the skills, confidence and mindset to lead more effectively within their organisations and across health and care systems. Delivered by the Strategy Unit's experienced team, 100s of analysts have benefited from the training which blends key aspects of leadership development to help analysts amplify the impact of their work.

At its core, the programme recognises that analysts play a pivotal role not only in generating high-quality analysis - such as structuring complex problems, visualising data, and telling compelling stories with evidence - but also in shaping decisions, building trust, and driving improvement. Over the course of 2 - 4 days (flexible to your needs), participants will explore what it means to be an analytical leader: someone who can bridge the gap between data and action, and who can influence decisions even without formal authority.

## Participants will:

- Develop deeper self-awareness about their personal leadership styles and strengths.
- Learn how to use technical expertise - problem structuring, interpretation, and communication - as a source of power and influence.
- Build skills to engage decision makers early, communicate insights clearly, and advocate for evidence-informed action.
- Understand how to work effectively in complex systems, and how to create networks that sustain learning and change.
- Gain practical tools and frameworks they can immediately apply to their own teams and challenges.

For organisations and systems, this programme helps analysts become more proactive partners in improvement - people who can frame the right questions, surface new insights, and inspire confidence in evidence. For individuals, it offers a structured, supportive space to grow as leaders, connect with peers, and plan their personal development journey.

Whether analysts are particularly focused on problem structuring, data analysis, storytelling, or the broader challenge of working with and influencing others, this programme offers a rich, applied learning experience to meet them where they are - and help them go further.

# Programme outline

This course can be delivered online or in person and can be designed to suit the needs of the analysts attending.

**Duration:** 2-4 days, depending on learning needs / preferences

**Content:**

- Introduction session for line managers of participants (1 hour)
- Day 1 - **Understanding yourself**
- Day 2 - **Technical sources of power**
- Day 3 - **Decision making as an opportunity for influence**
- Day 4 - **Influencing the system**
- End of programme celebration event (1 hour)

# The importance of this programme

- We believe that, as well as the development of technical skills, analysts should focus on the development of leadership skills to ensure that their work has an impact in their organisation and local system.
- Analysts play a vital role in health and social care. The ability to turn data into insights that can support decision makers is essential to delivering improvements in patient care and outcomes.
- This programme will enable you to build your skills and confidence as an analytical leader. Supporting you to bring analytics into the heart of decision making.

*"For the NHS, and its patients, to benefit from high-quality practical operational analytics, we need a 21st century NHS analyst workforce, with a range of skills and skill levels, delivering innovative and efficient data analysis on questions relevant to clinicians, commissioners, patients and policymakers."*

*Ben Goldacre et al, 2020*

*"Analytical leadership requires not only the leadership of analysis, but more importantly a form of leadership which is itself analytical"*

*Faculty of Public Health, 2025*

# Who is it for?

This programme is designed for senior analysts, those in team leadership positions or who are aspiring to be in a leadership position. The training is most effective when participants to have:

- **Technical skills**
  - A good overview of analytical methods and their uses.
  - An in depth understanding of a number of techniques and the ability to liaise with others and signpost when the question is not their area of expertise.
- **Communication skills**
  - Able to translate findings to different audiences - and different levels of seniority.
- **Developmental skills**
  - Experience of leading a team or coaching / mentoring more junior members of staff.
- **Knowledge and experience**
  - Experience and understanding of different contexts – for example working in different organisations.
  - Understanding the different moving parts of the system and being able to respond to queries from different areas.

**And finally, a willingness and enthusiasm for improving the position of analysts and analytics in decision making in health and care**

# What will you learn?

Developing strong analytical teams, improving the use of data, and maximising the impact of the profession, requires analysts to be working more closely with decision makers. An effective analyst: decision maker relationship is vital. To enable this, we see a need to focus on the development of leadership skills, as well as the technical skills, of analysts.

## **You will learn:**

- What it means to be an analytical leader, exploring different leadership styles and approaches.
- How to lead in and with a high performing team.
- How to create networks within organisations and systems.
- The key components of systems, systems thinking and working in complex systems.
- The role of analysts in decision making in health and care.

## **This course will help you to:**

- build your confidence in yourself as a leader (current or prospective).
- develop your practices, skills and methods for leading.
- understanding your development trajectory as a leader.

# Training delivery – core team

## Core team:

- Fraser Battye, Principle Consultant (host and trainer)
- Rachel Caswell, Senior Healthcare Analyst, Training Lead (co-host and trainer)
- Professor Mohammed A Mohammed, Principle Consultant (trainer)
- Steven Wyatt, Head of Research and Policy (trainer)

## The training sessions are:

- Applied – participants bring real examples
- Participative – expertise and experience of others in the room
- Challenging, stimulating, rewarding and enjoyable

# What will it cover?

1: Understanding  
yourself

2: Technical  
sources of power

3: Decision making  
as an opportunity  
for influence

4: Influencing the  
system



# **Our theory of analytical leadership**

# What do we mean by analytical leadership?

We define analytical leadership as leadership of, by and with analysts. Yet analysts often don't see themselves as leaders. Davis (1981) suggests that:

*Scientific and professional employees are a major source of talent for promotion to management, but sometimes their transition to management is difficult. Their orientation towards logic, the physical world and/or the framework of their speciality may result in narrow viewpoints and blind spots.*

In our work we see analytical leadership playing out at all levels in health and social care. The abilities, characteristics and mindset of analytical leaders include:

- Being able to structure problems and bring the analytical voice to challenges faced.
- The ability to build relationships with, and influence, decision makers.
- The ability to communicate findings clearly to a variety of audiences.
- Supporting the development of analytical teams through the coaching and mentoring of others, and understanding how to use the different skills that individuals bring.
- Being able to use frameworks to enhance the quality of decision making.

**We believe these are strengths that need to be nurtured.**

# Why is analytical leadership important?

We know the difference good analytical leadership can make to multi-disciplinary teams and collaborative decision-making. Where analysts are involved early in change processes, their insights can help shape outcomes, rather than simply responding to pre-determined strategies.

But analysts rarely find themselves in roles with formal or positional power. They typically work 'to' others, providing inputs to decisions. Often we hear frustration around this, that they're brought in too late, that people don't want to hear 'bad news', or that analysts don't know how their work is being used. To overcome these frustrations the ability to build relationships and influence is key.

There will always be more questions asked than analytical resources can answer. Framing questions, identifying the data sources, and shaping how analysis is approached is a source of influence (and also risks bias). This is subtle, but powerful. The communication of results, and identifying the key messages for different audiences also plays a part in this.

There is a continuing and growing demand for evidence-based decision-making. The role of analysts not only as technical specialists but also as leaders is therefore increasingly important. Their authority lies in their technical capability, their ability to structure problems and be clear on the benefits and limitations of their work. In addition to this they need to ensure that others' trust in their work. This means that personal integrity, as well as demonstrated capability, matters.

# How can we support analytical leaders?

By the end of this programme participants will:

- Understand their own strengths and capabilities as analytical leaders (whatever their role).
- Be able to take up their authority through identifying and enhancing – their sources of power (problem structuring, interpretation of data etc.).
- Understand where they fit in the health and social care system and how they can influence to improve outcomes.
- Be aware of some of the challenges of working in a complex system and how they can overcome them. - Gain a set of tools that they can use to support decision making in their team and organisation. - Understand the power and role of collective analytical leadership

# Training overview

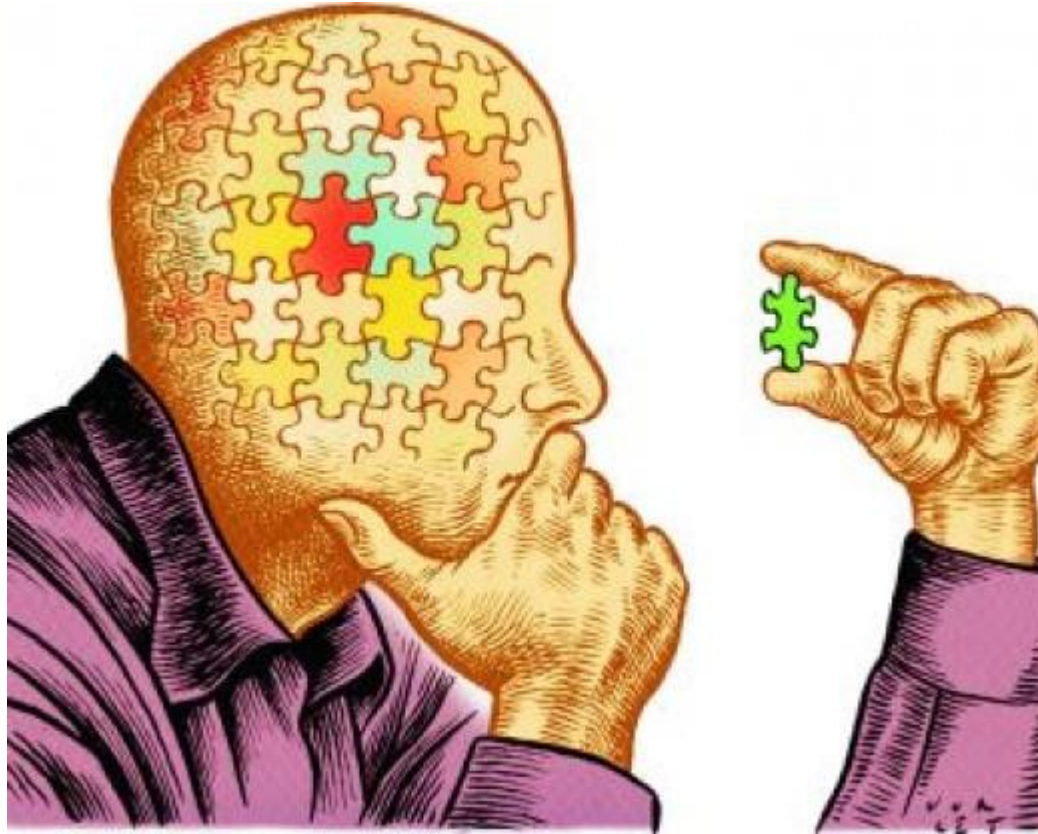
# Pre-session with line managers

Line managers will be invited to a meeting to provide an overview of course content and to highlight how they can act as a sponsor for their line managees.

The purpose of the sponsor role is to provide support and encouragement to nominated programme participants. This will help ensure that each person is able to gain full benefit from the opportunity to develop their personal leadership skills, as well as maintaining a link between programme activity and local organisational and / or system objectives. To achieve this, sponsors are expected to:

- Meet with nominated participant(s) prior to commencement of the programme to discuss programme benefits and learning objectives from a personal and organisational perspective;
- Meet with participant(s) throughout the programme (at a frequency determined between sponsor and participant) to review progress against learning and improvement objectives;
- Support the participant in finding opportunities to share their learning, test their skills and hone their abilities as leaders;
- Enable participant attendance at programme modules and activities

# Session 1: Understanding yourself



## Session aims:

1. To have developed a shared understanding of analytical leadership.
2. To have increased participants' awareness of themselves as analytical leaders.

## Topics covered:

- Management vs. leadership;
- What it means to be an analytical leader and the need for both technical and relational skills;
- Understanding yourself – participant lifelines and DiSC, and understanding others;
- What does all this mean for you as a leader?



# Session 2: Technical sources of power

## Session aims:

- 1) To have explored how analysts can use their technical skills for influence.
- 2) To have introduced participants to different tools they can use to increase their power.

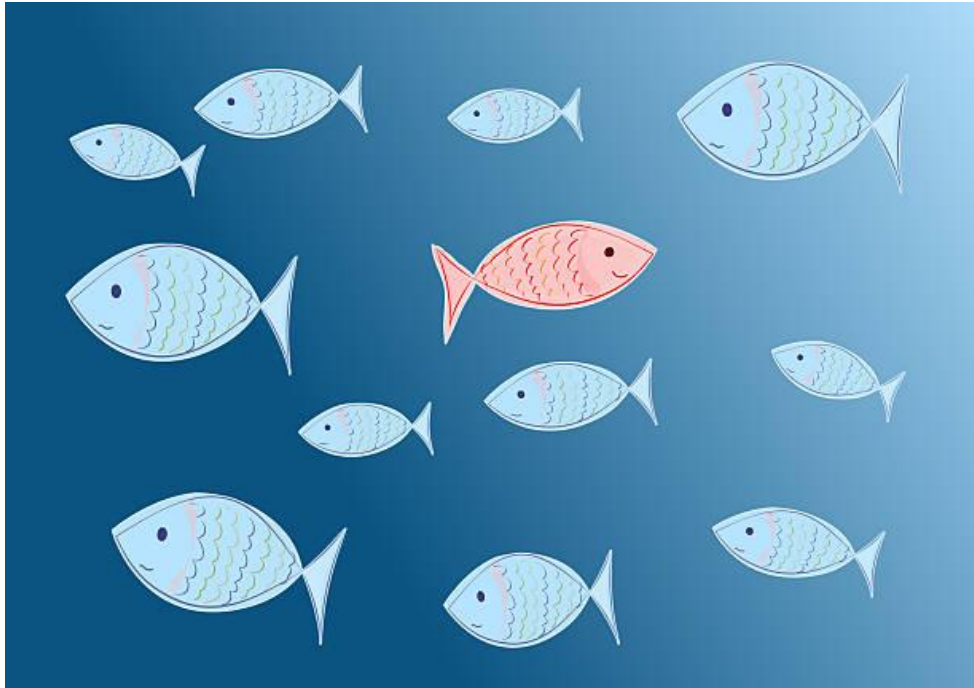
## Topics covered:

- Problem structuring: Problems, puzzles and messes
- Responsible analytical leadership – panel discussion;
- Conversations between managers and analysts
- Mechanisms for influence.
- From descriptive to evaluative analytics, a typology of analytical projects
- Telling the story and use of metaphor





# Session 3: Decision making as an opportunity for influence



## Session aims:

1. To introduce the decision quality chain as a framework for analytical decision making.
2. For participants to think about how they can influence within the system.

## Topics covered:

- The decision quality chain as a tool;
- What role can analysts play in improving the quality of decisions;
- Ways of boosting the power of analysts within the decision making process;
- Organisational power and politics.

# Session 4: Influencing the system

## Session aims:

- 1) To introduce participants to complexity and systems thinking.
- 2) For participants to think about how they can increase their impact.

## Topics covered:

- Complexity thinking;
- Different types of leadership and what that might look like for an analyst;
- Personal impact.



# End of programme celebration!

- Participants to reflect on what they have learned
- Commit to take things forward
- Ask for support from their line managers to do this



## Previous participants

*This programme is totally worthwhile - the networking, the ideas and shared experiences alone are incredible learning opportunities.*

*I've been given expert-level tours in the milieu of analytical leadership, the result of which has widened my horizons. Whilst I now feel much smaller in the greater scale of things, I'm much better prepared to continue my development journey*

*The networking opportunities; the friendly, knowledgeable and enthusiastic facilitators; being exposed to a wide range of concepts and ideas which are relevant to my role and helped me develop my own learning journey now this programme has ended.*

*If you never changed anything it (the course) would still be perfect!*