

# Introduction to and benefits of action learning sets

Resource part one of three  
Inclusive leadership programme

Leading change through action learning

# Welcome

Welcome to the action learning resources.

You are here because you have completed one or both of the following courses:

- Humanistic leadership in-person workshop
- Creating inclusive organisations webinar.

We have designed three resources that will help you to embed the learning and insights gained from the above programmes.

# Action learning sets

Leading change through action learning is powerful and effective. This work-based project is aimed at helping you to support change and have an impact on staff and students.

## About the resources

- This resource has been designed for education and professional services staff and leaders who wish to lead change in their organisations by using action learning sets (ALSs)
- This is part one of a three-part series designed to offer practical steps for participants undertaking ALSs in their organisations.

# Time allocation

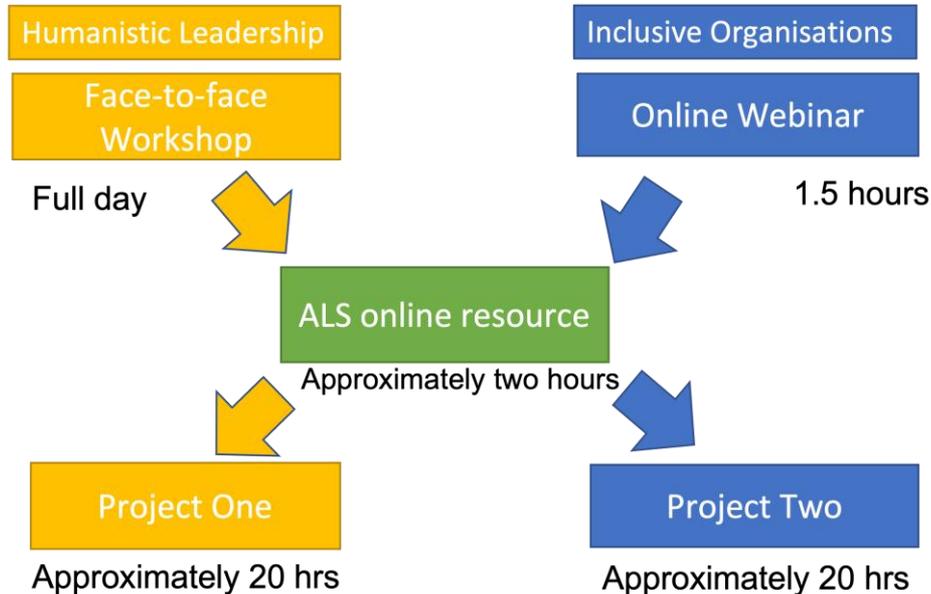
- We anticipate that completing all three parts of this resource will take approximately two hours in total, possibly less or more depending on the following factors:
  - Your existing knowledge of this subject
  - The amount of additional reading and research you decide to undertake
  - The scale and size of the ALS interventions you intend to launch.

# Leading change through action learning

Once you have reviewed these resources, you will be ready to implement a work-based project that will help you and your organisation to stimulate learning cultures and support you in embedding change that makes a difference to your organisation and its stakeholders.

## In summary

The diagram below shows how participants from both the workshop and the webinar will complete the three-part ALS online resource then proceed to implement a project.



### Guidance for Projects One and Two:

The 20 hours noted here for each project are a guide only. You may decide to shorten your ALS or you may decide to hold fewer meetings. The 20 hours is based on:

- Six two-hour ALS sessions equals 12 hours
- One hour of admin time per ALS session equals six hours
- Two hours of project management time equals two hours.

Total time equals twenty hours, however, this is purely a suggested example.

## About project one

Participants who have completed the 'Developing myself: humanistic leadership' workshop are asked to focus their action learning initiative on embedding change that has an impact on staff and students.

## About project two

Those of you who have completed the 'Developing inclusive organisations' webinar are asked to focus your action learning initiative on identifying and addressing structural bias within the organisation.

# What to expect in each part of the resources

## Leading change through action learning

### Part one

Introduction and benefits of action learning:

- will provide an introduction to ALSs and help you to understand the benefits of using them in leading change.

### Part two

Structure, process and rules:

- will cover how an ALS should be structured, the process that should be applied and the rules that should be used to ensure that the ALS experience has the greatest impact possible.

### Part three

Effective questions and listening skills:

- will help you to get to grips with basic coaching techniques that will enable you to explore challenges effectively during an ALS session.

# Action learning sets – part one

This part provides an introduction to ALSs and will help you to understand the benefits of using them in leading change.

By the end of part one you will be able to:

1. define what action learning is
2. recognise the pillars that support action learning
3. understand the outcomes and impact that this approach leads to
4. know how action learning benefits individuals, teams, leaders and organisations.

# What is action learning? – A definition



Action learning is a peer-coaching session where each person in the group takes their turn to share their issue or challenge.



Other members of the group listen and ask coaching questions that help the person presenting their challenge to explore the issue and find potential solutions.

# What is action learning?

## – Pillars that support action learning

Learning is most effective when we are faced with a real problem to solve.

The process requires a small group to meet with the purpose of reflecting on real work issues.

The group applies coaching approaches to nurture an environment of collaborative learning and enable the group to learn from each other.

The process leads the person presenting the problem to further define their problems and form their own solutions.

The resulting insights and actions are owned by the person with the problem and may lead to further questions or solutions.

Action learning is about promoting courageous choice, helping people to take action that is meaningful for them, rather than directing people into a course of action that you think you would take in their shoes.

# What is action learning?

## – Outcome and impact resulting from action learning

Action learning is about promoting courageous choice, helping people to take action that is meaningful for them, rather than directing people into a course of action that you think you would take if you were in the same or similar situation.

# Benefits of action learning: for individuals



A dedicated time to pause and reflect on a workplace problem.



Develops problem-solving skills, listening skills and coaching skills among individuals.

## Benefits of action learning: for teams



Team cohesion, adaptability and resilience is strengthened.



Enables teams to check in and reinforce the shared commitment to team goals.

# Benefits of action learning: for leaders



Supports leaders in leading change and improving the performance of their teams.



Helps leaders to develop leadership styles that are inclusive and humanistic, thus enabling them to lead teams in a 21<sup>st</sup> century workplace.

# Benefits of action learning: for organisations



Develops problem-solving skills, listening skills and coaching skills among individuals across the whole organisation.



A tool that will help organisations to develop learning cultures and growth mindsets.

## Next steps

- Review this resource in areas where you feel you want to increase your confidence
- Alternatively, carry out some research of your own and/or find someone within your network who has experience in action learning. Speak to them about their experience
- Move on to part **two** of this resource.

**End of part one**

**Leading change through  
action learning**