

**A call out to join an Action Learning set**

As part of the Evolve development programme, we heard there was evidence of positive experience of action learning as a way to provide the space for officers to reflect on their practice and think through specific challenges with support from the other set members.

As part of Evolve, three virtual action learning sets will be established, and this is a call out for anyone interested in joining a set. What follow is some more information about Action Learning, and details of how to get involved.

**What is Evolve?**

Evolve is led by the London Culture Forum in response to a desire to create opportunities to enable learning from the legacy of London Borough of Culture (LBoC), as well as supporting the professional development of local authority culture officers.

Evolve is a learning framework which is deliberately designed to be a flexible programme that offers a breadth of opportunities for you to engage in ways that suit your own capacity and interests, with a mix of space for reflection alongside high quality content. Evolve offers different ways to hear about the learning from LBoC to date, and to encourage collaborative working across the London boroughs.

The Evolve programme is running from February 2020-June 2021, and is funded by the Greater London Authority.

**What is an Action Learning set?**

Action learning involves a group of individuals getting together in a structured and reflective way (hosted by a facilitator) to explore their own solutions to their ideas, questions or issues. Action Learning can take place face to face, or virtually. The methodology is the same for both options, and the experience can be equally impactful in a virtual context.

Action learning works well when set members listen actively and generously to fellow participants, and ask open questions to support the process of thinking of potential solutions. It’s a bit like coaching, but in a group or set, and is called action learning as participants invariably have actions to be tried out or taken having met.

While bringing your experience is very valuable, action learning is not about offering advice or solutions unless they are invited.

Action learning gives people the chance to step outside the pressures of their professional role and to view things from a different perspective. Working with a small group of others, you get the opportunity to raise, discuss and learn about any issue that is significant for you.

Through listening (really listening), questioning and sharing feedback, the group will challenge, support and assist the individual to identify their own solutions to take away and try out. To help enable this, the group is guided by a skilled facilitator who has been trained in the action learning process.

So, if you’ve got ideas, problems, issues or an interest in learning and reflection but no time to make it a priority, then action learning could be for you. Action learning sets have been described as “user-led think tanks” and a “a space for peer support and individual reflection”.

**Who is this opportunity for, and how will it work?**

The action learning sets are for local authority arts and culture officers working in London.

There will be three sets, or groups with up to six members in each. We are putting an open call for people to join in through the London Culture Forum and are keen to receive expressions of interest from a wide range of people bringing different skills and experience.

**When will this happen, and where?**

Each set will meet online three times between January and June 2021, and will be facilitated by Amanda Smethurst, an accredited Action Learning Facilitator. After June, the set can then choose to continue as a self-facilitated set, or to disband.

The dates and times of each session will be agreed with participants, as it’s really important that everyone can attend. The sessions last for around three hours and will be held via Teams.

We will also review the viability of holding one of the sessions for each set in person, if restrictions are lifted.

**Timetable**

Deadline for expressing an interest in joining the action learning set is 11 January 2020, and we’ll be in touch to let you know if you have a place in the sets by 13 January.

The first meetings of the sets will take place in the weeks beginning 18 and 25 January 2021, and dates for the two further sessions will be agreed.

**What does it cost, and what’s expected of me?**

Evolve is funded through a grant from the GLA, so there is no charge to attend.

What we expect from you

* Full commitment to the four sessions (this action learning set can only thrive if all members attend all sessions in person)
* An open-minded approach to others’ problems, issues and questions
* Adherence to confidentiality rules concerning the subjects discussed in sessions
* Participation in an evaluation process at the end of the three sessions

Set members are expected to attend each meeting and commit to trust, participation and confidentiality. In order to build on shared learning and maintain trust, all members should be present for each Action Learning meeting. We appreciate that when projects come to a head, or deadlines approach, it can be difficult to stick to a fixed date in the diary. However, the pay-off of taking the time to pause, reflect and plan with your set more than makes up for it.

**How do I get involved, or find out more?**

If you’d like to express an interest in joining an action learning set, please fill in the application form and send it to Amanda Smethurst [hello@amandasmethurst.com](mailto:hello@amandasmethurst.com) by 11 January 2021.



**Evolve Action Learning set application**

There will be three sets, or groups with up to six members in each.

This application form will help us to ensure the members of the sets are diverse enough to bring a breadth of perspective and experience, and have enough in common to be able to understand each other's needs and barriers. We will also ensure that people from the same borough are placed in different sets.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| 1. Name: |  | |
| 1. Borough: | |  |
| 1. E-Mail Address: | |  |
| 1. What is your role? | |  |
| 1. What attracts you to being part of an action learning set? (150 words max) | |  |
| 1. Have you been part of an action learning set before? What did you find useful or not so useful about your last experience? (100 words max) | |  |
| 1. Please let us know the dates and times below you ARE available by putting and x in the box. This will help us decide on the first meeting date. | | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | |  | Mon 18 January | Tues 19 January | Wed 20 January | Mon 25 January | Tues 26 January | Wed 27 January | Fri 29 January | | AM 10:00 – 13:00 |  |  | Not available |  |  |  |  | | PM 14:00 – 17:00 | Not available |  |  |  |  |  |  | |
| 1. To allow us to try and plan the 3 other sessions please let us know if there are any days that are usually not possible for you | | |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | |  | Mon | Tues | Wed | Thurs | Fri | | AM 10:00 – 13:00 |  |  |  |  |  | | PM 14:00 – 17:00 |  |  |  |  |  | |
| 1. Are you happy for us to contact you via email about other London Culture Forum or Evolve events and opportunities? | | Yes or No |

**By signing this application, you are agreeing that if you are successful you will adhere to the principles of the action learning set described above in the ‘What we expect from you’ section.**

**Printed Name:**

**Signed: Dated:**

Please submit your application by 11 January 2021 to hello@amandasmethurst.com