

Developing Leadership in Cancer Clinical Nurse Specialists: The Pick 'n' Mix Approach

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Aim

The North Central London Cancer Alliance (NCLCA) Clinical Nurse Specialists (CNS) Leadership Programme aims to foster leadership development and collaboration within the healthcare system. Designed to be flexible and progressive, it supports participants' professional growth while considering the time pressures they face.

The programme accommodates individuals with varying levels of leadership skills, from novice to advanced. It is a modular course rooted in the Leading through Education and Excellent Patient Care (LEEP) framework, further developed with input from NCLCA Lead Cancer Nurses and the Macmillan Competence Framework, and now also incorporates leadership principles from the ACCEND framework to ensure alignment with national standards for cancer nursing career progression.

We are continuously enhancing the programme by integrating participant feedback and aligning with the ACCEND framework, ensuring it remains relevant to the evolving demands of patient care.

Methodology

The programme addresses barriers faced by healthcare professionals in attending training, such as taking time away from clinical practice, training accessibility, and staff motivation¹. To overcome these obstacles, the programme adopted a self-deterministic approach² and was originally divided into three modules with specific themes, allowing learners to choose subjects most relevant to their needs. Initially, the modules were delivered online to improve accessibility due to COVID-19.

Initial Feedback

"Great course, very insightful and helpful"

"I feel that the contents of [Module 1] are effective as provides a building block for following modules... Definitely keen to apply for further modules after today"

"[Module 3 specifically] For a one-day course there was so much to take in. It may be better if this can be run in 2 days"

Themes

Enjoy the modular approach and able to pick modules based on learner needs.

Module 3 too much information and would be beneficial to be 2 days.

Programme development

1. Ensured future programmes were delivered face to face. Have modules scheduled in advance to allow learner to schedule around workload.
2. Modules 1 and 2 were revised following a thorough analysis of post-course evaluations and participant feedback from the 2025 CNS Conference.
3. Developed module 4, which is practical and allows the division of content and consolidation of learning which was in module 3.

Figure 2: Examples of participant feedback, the themes that emerged and how this influenced programme development following the pilot

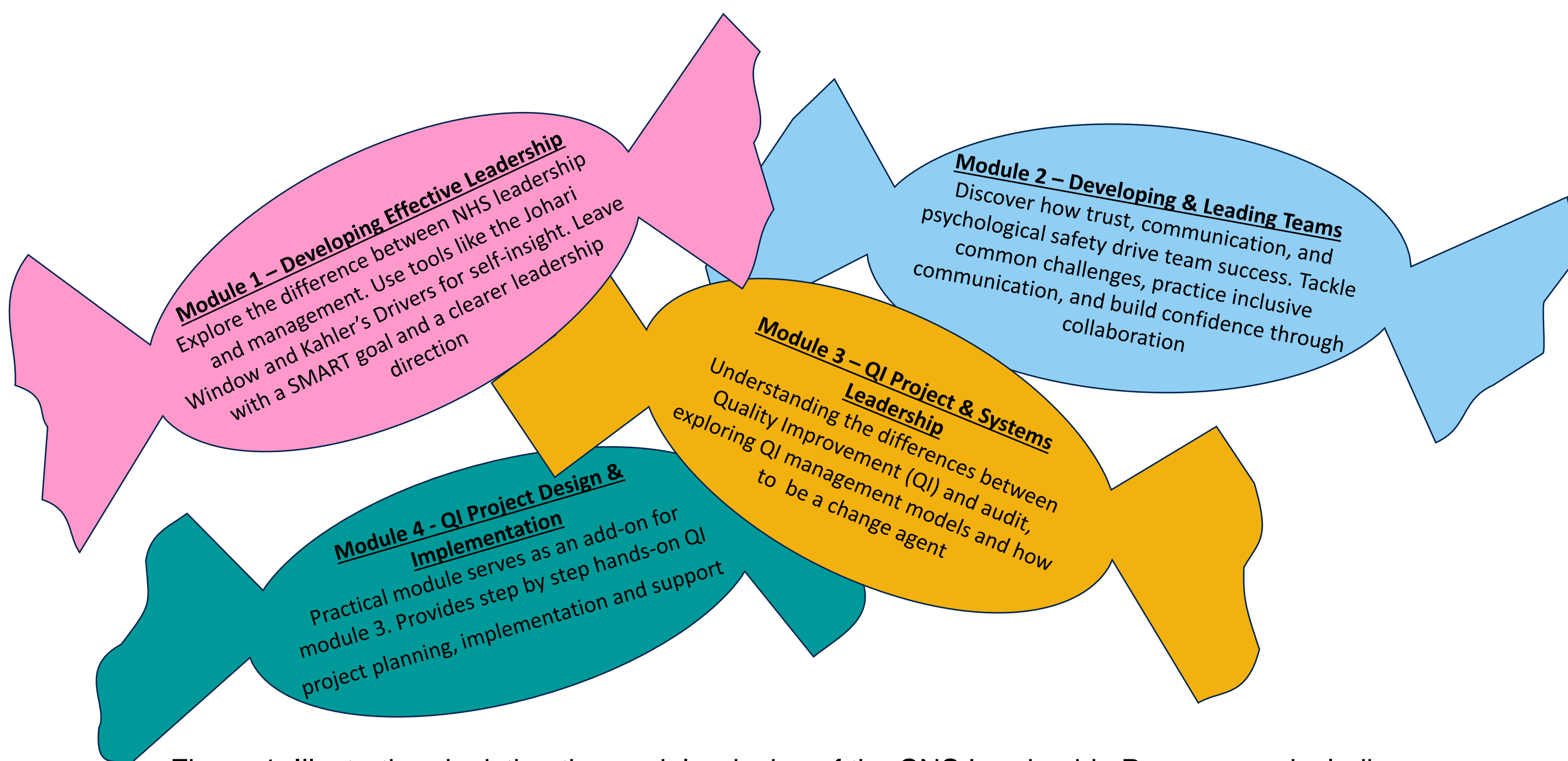


Figure 1: Illustration depicting the modular design of the CNS Leadership Programme, including module 4 which was developed following participant feedback

Results and Conclusions

Pilot modules were conducted in 2022, with qualitative and quantitative data collected via anonymous Microsoft Forms surveys. Participants evaluated content, activities, and improvements, and their feedback was analysed to identify themes. These themes guided the programme's further development to meet learners' needs.

Now entering its fourth year, the programme is preparing for Cohort Seven. It has continued to evolve based on learner feedback to remain relevant and impactful. Participants have highlighted the diversity and significance of the modules to their clinical roles, choosing to attend only those most beneficial to their development as learners and leaders.

References:

- ¹Ward, J., & Wood, C. (2000). Education and training of healthcare staff: the barriers to its success. *European Journal of Cancer Care*, 9(2), 80-85.
- ²Guay, F. (2021). Applying Self-Determination Theory to Education: Regulations Types, Psychological Needs, and Autonomy Supporting Behaviours. *Canadian Journal of School Psychology*, 37(1).
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