

Workshop Outcomes: Advancing Digitally Mediated Leadership Development in The UK EY Sector

In a series of two design thinking workshops in November 2022, leaders from influential early years (EY) sector bodies across the UK collaborated to construct sector-wide advancements for leadership development. Below, we have detailed the main outcomes of this process and how we plan to move these advancements forward.

Problem Statement

How might we get the sector to prioritise leadership development in the context of the EY sector's problems such as ratios, recruitment, retention and sustainability so that we may focus on professional development?

How might we design digitally mediated leadership development that promotes authentic reflection by protecting time for professional development so that leaders may engage critically with their roles?

How might we encourage leaders to make time and space for leadership development so that they can focus more on their professional learning so as to best support children, families and staff in the long run?

Way Forward

In order to prioritise professional development, we need EY leaders to see themselves as professionals. This depends on a four nations effective campaign to elevate the status of the sector. Working across the four nations of the UK is essential.

In order to promote authentic reflection, we need to define what an effective reflective leader is and how leadership development programmes can practically support reflective practice.

In order to ringfence leadership development in the English EY sector, we need regulatory expectations about what leadership development involves. Clear expectations will enable the sector to better plan how to deliver leadership development in an equitable way.

Intention

We need to generate connections across the four nations, enabling team working between professionals, sector bodies and government departments in England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales.

We need to generate dialogues across the UK EY sector about what reflective leadership looks like and how we can support it.

We need to liaise with the Department for Education (DfE) and Ofsted to understand how they might consult with relevant sector bodies in the creation of such expectations.

First Steps

Map the connections that already exist in EY across the four nations. Having identified gaps, meet with stakeholders to explore how we can extend four nation partnership working.

Support practice-sharing between training providers on supporting reflective leadership. Start and sustain a conversation via social media and sector-facing publications between EY leaders about reflective practice.

Meet with the DfE and Ofsted to weigh their interest in creating expectations for the sector about leadership development.