

# Leadership Excellence Framework

## **Our Vision:**

**Excellent Third Sector Leadership in Scotland.**

## **Our Mission:**

**Shape the future of Scotland's third sector by providing every leader with opportunities to develop, influence and excel.**

## Contents

	Page Number
Introduction and Foreword	3
The Leadership Excellence Framework	4
The Framework - In Summary	4
Who is it for?	5
How to use The Framework	5
Shaping Strategy and Setting Direction	6
Enabling and Enhancing Performance	7
Building Capability	8
Delivering Results	9
Working Collaboratively with Others	10
Continuous Improvement	11
Personal Characteristics	12
An aptitude test for Third Sector Chief Executives	13

## Introduction

This 'Leadership Excellence Framework' is a structure that has been developed based on feedback from you - our members.

We are operating in an increasingly complex environment and as Scotland's Third Sector leaders we have to continually strive for excellence in all that we do.

It is our leadership capability that influences organisational performance and shapes the future of Scotland's Third Sector.

The purpose of the framework is to provide guidance on the key competencies that all Third Sector leaders should be demonstrating on a consistent basis.

In publishing this framework we are championing leadership excellence in order to enhance not only organisational performance but also that of Scotland's Third Sector as a whole.

## Foreword

At ACOSVO we take pride in saying our vision is: "Excellent Third Sector Leadership in Scotland" but what does that mean, how do we measure our success as leaders and how do we at ACOSVO support leaders to be excellent? We are indebted to the work carried out by Joanne Thomas and Will Craigie who have listened to our board and our members and developed a framework to support leaders to address all those questions. We are also grateful to IIP Scotland, as it was through working towards our Investors in People gold accreditation that we started to really think about how we develop our support to Third Sector leaders and what excellent Third Sector leadership really looks like.

The third sector in Scotland is key to addressing inequalities and social justice and it is incredibly important that the leaders who drive this work forward have access to peer support, good practice sharing and leadership development opportunities. We hope this framework will be a useful tool at all stages of your leadership journey.

**Pat Armstrong, Chief Executive, ACOSVO**

This framework has been endorsed by Investors in People Scotland. It is consistent with the features of good practice which are defined in the new version of the Investors in People standard which was launched on 15<sup>th</sup> September, 2015.

**Peter Russian, Chief Executive, Investors in People Scotland**

## The Leadership Excellence Framework

Leadership capability is undoubtedly one of the most important factors in creating and maintaining an organisation and a sector which achieves outstanding and sustainable results. The Leadership Excellence Framework describes a set of key competencies aimed at enhancing leadership capability. We believe it is a tool that will guide and support Third Sector leaders in improving not just the performance of the individual and their organisation but the Third Sector as a whole. The list is not exhaustive but has been selected based on feedback from, and consultations with, you - our members.

### The Framework - In summary

<b>Shaping Strategy and Setting Direction.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As leaders we have one eye on the future and the other on the here and now.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We drive the organisation's vision, instilling a sense of purpose and direction. We make the organisation's objectives clear, inspiring people to deliver them in a way that embodies the core values of the organisation.</li> </ul>
<b>Enabling and Enhancing Performance.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We exercise our leadership in such a way that people fully understand their role and have the information they need to make and act on their own decisions.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We take this a step further by encouraging people to be tenacious and to strive for excellence.</li> </ul>
<b>Building Capability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As leaders we are committed to learning and development.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We demonstrate self-awareness, a good understanding of our current stage of leadership and pursue opportunities to develop our leadership capability.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We ensure that all our people are equipped with the skills and knowledge they need to meet both present and future challenges.</li> </ul>
<b>Delivering Results</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We focus our organisations on delivering the results expected of us.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We not only drive a culture of achievement but we demonstrate a commitment to deliver beyond expectations.</li> </ul>
<b>Working Collaboratively with others</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As leaders we build a culture of collaboration, encouraging relationships within the organisation, across the sector and with a diverse range of stakeholders.</li> </ul>
<b>Continuous Improvement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As leaders, while delivering on day-to-day demands, we must at the same time continuously seek improvement.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We promote an environment where people are encouraged to look for fresh perspectives and forward-thinking innovation designed to take the organisation and the sector confidently into the future.</li> </ul>
<b>Personal Characteristics</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As well as strong leadership capability we as leaders require well developed personal characteristics in order for us to perform our role effectively.</li> </ul>

## Who is it for?

The framework is aimed principally at Chief Executives and senior managers within the Third Sector. We do however recognise that a vibrant Third Sector requires leadership at all levels and we believe that the competencies described in The Leadership Excellence Framework will provide guidance for the development of aspiring leaders.

## How to use The Framework?

The Framework is designed to facilitate meaningful leadership development discussions. It will enable you to focus on the themes that have the most impact on the leadership of your organisation, confirming strengths and identifying areas for development plus allow for the prioritisation of personal development.

It is essential that our leadership capabilities are clearly driven by the needs of the organisation and specifically aligned to:

- The organisational priorities
- The performance management system in place so that it informs relevant and appropriate development opportunities
- Any succession planning / talent identification programmes within the organisation to ensure that future leaders are equipped with the necessary leadership capabilities.

The framework can be used as a self-assessment tool and for personal career planning. A more in depth and insightful assessment can be obtained by asking colleagues to provide feedback on your leadership in the form of 360 Degree Feedback. 360 Degree Feedback collates feedback from a number of sources and is widely considered to be more accurate and more reflective of an individual's performance.

The competencies do not stand alone, rather they are linked and it is the interplay of capabilities which results in true leadership excellence. We would recommend that applied learning takes place in each area, leveraging strengths and tackling areas for development.

# 1. Shaping Strategy and Setting Direction.

As leaders we have one eye on the future and the other on the here and now.

We drive the organisation's vision, instilling a sense of purpose and direction. We make the organisation's objectives clear, inspiring people to deliver them in a way that embodies the core values of the organisation.

## As leaders we:

- Conceptualise and communicate a compelling vision - involving others (including external and internal stakeholders) in developing it.
- Are future orientated - keeping the bigger picture in sight and developing long range strategies.
- Leverage stakeholders' commitment to strategic plans.
- Provide clarity around the organisation's purpose, objectives and core values.
- Ensure that the organisational strategy is cascaded down and translated into comprehensible performance measures so that people understand the part they play in delivering results.
- Develop and champion the core values by acting as a visible exemplar - encouraging and supporting people to challenge behaviours that are not in line with those values.

## 2. Enabling and Enhancing Performance.

We exercise our leadership in such a way that people fully understand their role and have the information they need to make and act on their own decisions.

We take it a step further encouraging people to be tenacious and to strive for excellence.

### As leaders we:

- Are open and transparent about sharing information throughout the organisation and sector which enables others to make and act on decisions.
- Champion performance management and drive a culture whereby people are actively supported and developed to realise their full potential.
- Delegate authority with responsibility, motivating people by transferring greater ownership to individuals.
- Visibly role model coaching as a way of working.
- Genuinely value the contribution of others - maintaining a high performance culture by celebrating success and engaging in activities to enhance morale.

### 3. Building Capability

As leaders we are committed to learning and development.

We demonstrate self-awareness, a good understanding of our current stage of leadership and pursue opportunities to develop our leadership capability.

We ensure that all our people are equipped with the skills and knowledge they need to meet both present and future challenges.

#### **Self - As leaders we:**

- Regularly seek a range of feedback on our performance to identify areas of strength and areas for development.
- Are open and responsive to feedback demonstrating an ongoing commitment to learn from the views of others.
- Actively commit to, and participate in, ongoing professional development.
- Identify new challenges to increase knowledge and broaden experience seeking cross sector learning opportunities whenever possible.
- Seek opportunities to develop leadership capability in others.
- Think about the impact we are making and about our leadership legacy -as a result of my leadership what will remain after I have left?

#### **Others - As Leaders we:**

- Ensure that workforce capability is developed to successfully meet current organisational requirements.
- Continually look to the future to identify the capabilities and plan the development people will need to deliver sustainable organisational success.
- Monitor skill gaps in key roles to ensure that the talent pipeline is robust - developing talent and recruiting expertise into the organisation to improve performance.
- Encourage people to engage in continuous learning and development.
- Actively seeks opportunities for others to stretch and step outside their comfort zone.
- Foster a culture of knowledge sharing across the organisation and with other organisations (inside and outside the Third Sector.)

## 4. Delivering Results

We focus our organisations on delivering the results expected of us.

We not only drive a culture of achievement but we demonstrate a commitment to deliver beyond expectations.

### As leaders we:

- Display a strong commitment to action and determination when focusing self and others on delivering organisational objectives.
- Demonstrate a personal drive to achieve beyond expectations.
- Assume personal accountability for the success of the organisation - working through barriers and persisting in the face of setbacks.
- Identify clear outcomes and establish transparent measures - continually reviewing progress against plan.
- Demonstrate resolve when holding others to account in delivering on agreed objectives.
- Regularly review the organisational structure - ensuring that it is designed to deliver the organisation's objectives.
- Demonstrate a clear understanding of the governance structure of the organisation and develop strong working relationships as appropriate with the Board of Directors.

## 5. Working Collaboratively with Others

As leaders we build a culture of collaboration, encouraging relationships within the organisation, across the sector and with a diverse range of stakeholders.

### As leaders we:

- Understand and help others to comprehend the wider environment and political context within which we work, examining situations in terms of the bigger picture and the potential impact.
- Establish constructive relationships with stakeholders, maintaining a high degree of consultation and communication.
- Proactively build relationships and create long-term partnerships that support the strategic direction of the organisation.
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- Actively seek out opportunities to improve organisational capability through sector / cross sector partnership.
- Create the conditions for cooperation - encouraging teamwork and providing positive feedback when people work collaboratively within the organisation and with partners.
- Are emotionally intelligent - aware of how our emotions influence our actions and of how our emotions impact others.

## 6. Continuous Improvement

As leaders, while delivering on day to day demands, we must at the same time continuously seek improvement.

We promote an environment where people are encouraged to look for fresh perspectives and forward-thinking innovation designed to take the organisation and the sector confidently into the future.

### **As leaders we:**

- Are forward looking - consistently embracing and implementing change to deliver positive outcomes for the organisation.
- Continually scan the external environment, networking and learning from others and sharing best practice to enhance the performance of the organisation.
- Question established approaches, seeking a fresh perspective and valuing others expertise.
- Encourage people to identify ways to improve how they do their job.
- Take appropriate risks, exploring new ideas with an open mind and capitalising on innovative solutions.

## 7. Personal Characteristics

As well as strong leadership capability we as leaders require well developed personal characteristics in order for us to perform our role effectively.

### As leaders we:

- Are authentic – acting with integrity and willing to take the lead on controversial issues.
- Communicate effectively by adapting style to different audiences in order to optimise impact and understanding.
- Are decisive and have the courage to make tough decisions – knowing when to act unilaterally and when to adopt a collaborative approach to decision making.
- Demonstrate resilience and consistently focus on achieving organisational objectives even when under pressure.
- Have a good understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing the Third Sector, assessing the implications and applying sound judgement to take the organisation forward.
- Negotiate persuasively - working with differing views equitably and calmly to achieve the desired outcome.

## An Aptitude Test for Chief Executives

And finally.....do you **actually** have what it takes to be a Third Sector Chief Executive?

**Can you:**

- Fake a smile convincingly all day long?
- Read only one paragraph from a text and make it sound like you have read the whole thing?
- Use your fingers to add and take away without anyone noticing?
- Draw a line, stick to it and, then move it and pretend it was there all along?
- Look as if you are listening even if you are miles away?
- Use Google quickly and subtly when you are out of your depth?
- Convince someone that you recognise them even though you haven't got a clue who they are?
- Fool people into believing you know what you're talking about?

With thanks to Debra Allcock Tyler, adapted from her book 'It's Tough at the Top – The no fibbing guide to Leadership. ”

It made us smile!

