

Highlight Report: Independent Evaluation of the Ignite Pilot Training Programme

The Ignite pilot training programme was commissioned by the Department of Health and Social Care and delivered by EY to strengthen senior commissioners' ability to address complex commissioning challenges and act as agents of change.

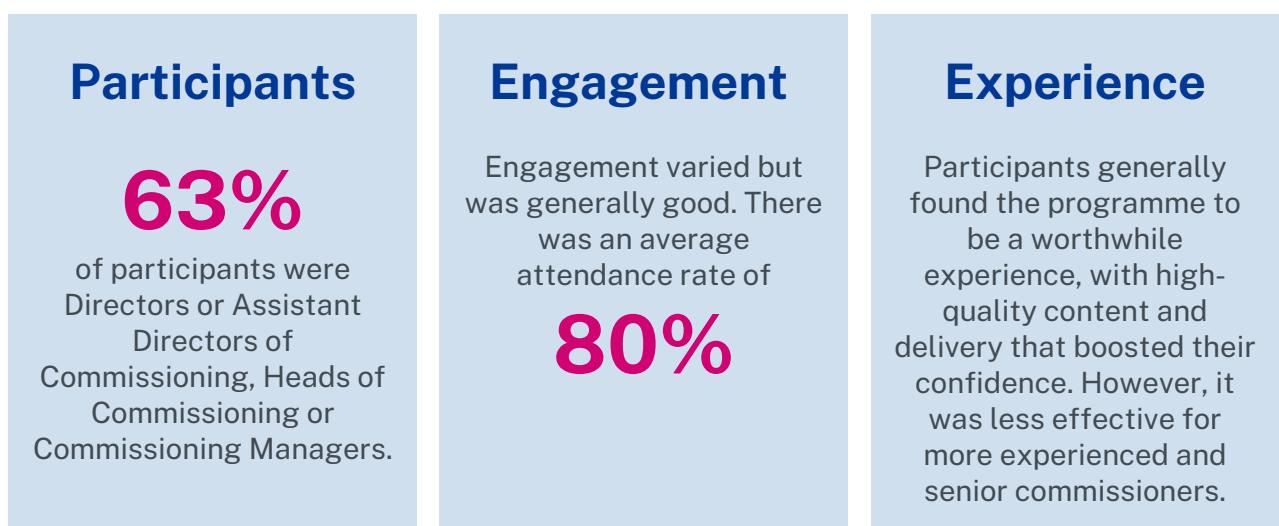
Running from July 2024 to March 2025, the programme consisted of three in-person core modules and two online applied learning hubs, with optional virtual masterclasses and spotlight sessions.

This highlight report was produced by the Institute of Public Care at Oxford Brookes University, which independently evaluated the programme. The evaluation included analysis of attendance and feedback data, observation of sessions, and surveys and interviews with programme participants, their line managers and Directors of Adult Social Services.

There was a high level of interest in the programme:



Most found the programme valuable:



Strengths

- Opportunities to connect and share experiences with colleagues from other areas of the country
- Dedicated time and space away from the day job to reflect and learn
- Valuable data, intelligence and practical tools

“It’s been a **very positive** experience for me - it has given me some space away from the day job to think about things differently as well as networking with others.”

“moderately disappointed - didn’t really hit the mark... was not aimed at the next round of strategic commissioner leaders and didn’t offer anything new or innovative”

Weaknesses

- The focus on core commissioning skills and practice examples limited opportunities to explore the more complex issues faced by senior commissioners.
- Varied seniority and experience levels of participants made it difficult to meet everyone’s needs.
- Some sessions were too one-way in format, with insufficient opportunity for discussion.

Impact

There is limited evidence so far of participants applying their learning, although only a short time has passed between the end of the programme and the final evaluation activities.

Conclusions

Whilst well delivered, the pilot programme did not fully succeed in meeting the needs of senior commissioning officers or aspiring leaders seeking support to address complex challenges and act as agents of change.

There remains an unmet need for a development programme that provides professional recognition for senior commissioners, alongside regular opportunities to reflect on their practice and collaborate with peers across the country to tackle shared, complex issues.

Recommendations

- 1 Carefully consider the target audience for any future commissioning training.
- 2 Better understand existing commissioning training and how this programme compares.
- 3 If the programme continues, adopt a different delivery approach.
- 4 Continue to invest in supporting networking among commissioners across the country.

Read the full report at www.ipc.brookes.ac.uk/publications