Birmingham launches unique Public Services Academy

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The University of Birmingham is launching a unique academy in collaboration with Birmingham City Council to provide a new focus for developing skills and leadership across public services in the West Midlands.

The Public Services Academy will offer bespoke training, internship programmes and crucially will provide a link between academic experts at the University and practitioners working in public services.

The new academy will be officially launched by Professor David Eastwood, Vice-Chancellor of the University and Sir Albert Bore, Leader of Birmingham City Council at an event on July 10th at the University of Birmingham.

The new academy will focus on four key themes that cover a broad range of public services:

- Localisation
- Cohesion
- Health and Wellbeing
- Social Work (through the existing Social Work Academy)

Dr Helen Dickinson Director of the new academy comments: *"The future shape of public services has been the subject of fierce debate in the last few years. Professionals are being asked to deliver more flexible, personalised services in a period where resources are scarce.*

As the largest unit of local government in Europe, Birmingham has all of the potential benefits, but also some of the challenges, of delivering and simultaneously transforming public services on a very significant scale.

We hope the academy will provide a new model to allow professionals to work with our academic experts in developing better public services for the city.

Ultimately we want Birmingham to be an example of best practice in this area so we can use the model we develop to help public services across the UK."

Initial activities planned for the new academy include new research projects, training opportunities for City Council staff, internship opportunities for students and sessions to help young people understand the benefits of careers in public services.

Sir Albert Bore, Leader of Birmingham City Council, said: "*The council's greatest asset has always been its workforce, and that must remain the case if we are to serve citizens as effectively as we can.*

"The Public Services Academy is a collaboration which will give us the best chance of ensuring that we have the most talented public sector employees possible, leading the way nationally in everything we do."

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For further information contact Ben Hill, PR Manager, University of Birmingham, Tel 0121 4145134, Mob 07789 921163

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- **Visit: www.birmingham.ac.uk/psa (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/psa) for more information**
- **Dr Helen Dickinson is available for interview**

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