



# If leadership is the answer what is the question?

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# Leadership – a silver bullet?

- Leadership is seen as a solution to problems in the sector, and is back in vogue
- But people mean very different things when they talk 'leadership'
- Leadership vs Management
- Leadership as 'position' or as a social process
- So hard to define, can it be 'pinned down' (studied, measured, communicated)?



## (Just one) definition?

purposeful interventions in organisations by one leader or a group of actors, designed to affect the strategy, the climate, the decisions and the structures of that organisation, with responsibility for its survival and success



# Leadership – why now?

- A comforting (and cheap?) response to uncertainty and lack of *functional* policy?
- The idea of a leadership deficit
- Leadership programmes directed at different parts of the sector
- Serving different purposes, but reproduce 'heroic leadership'
- What do they seek to achieve and how do we know they are working?



# The challenges of improving leadership

- If we agree we should be *improving* leadership, there are some critical barriers
  - Coordinating funders and a crowded 'provider' landscape
  - Is 'leadership' always what it says on the tin !?
  - **The state of knowledge**
  - Reaching those who need it most – the need-awareness paradox
  - Modes and styles – do we know what works?



# Our role

- To think and refine
- To challenge – critical thinking
- To research (better)
- To work with others
- To publish (openly)
- To teach





# Free, open online courses – plug plug!

## Introducing leadership in voluntary organisations



15 hours of learning, Level 1


Develop energetic, practical and thoughtful leadership practice. You will gain insights and techniques to help you step into leadership. This free course provides an opportunity for people who work within voluntary organisations, as paid employees or staff, to develop energetic, practical and thoughtful leadership practice.

## Collaborative leadership in voluntary organisations



24 hours of learning, Level 2, free badged course

Develop collaborative leadership practices that will make a difference. This free badged course explores collaborative leadership, as a way of moving beyond the figure of the leader to ways of leading that engage and energise a wider group of people. You will explore the dynamics, contexts and practices of collaborative leadership. This free course is

aimed at those who work as paid staff or as volunteers or who work regularly with voluntary organisations, such as public sector staff or politicians. 



# Our offer

- We can build courses in partnership with the sector and others, using our leadership and tech expertise
- We do rigorous academic research and policy-applied and flexible research
- We engage constantly with the sector at different levels, nationally and locally, and multi-channel
- PhD researchers and new ones joining us; mainstream OU curriculum