



Next Generation feedback survey

2018/19



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Summary

During early 2019, the Local Government Association (LGA) conducted an online survey of councillors who had participated in Next Generation in 2018/19, in order to get feedback on the quality, content and outcomes of the programme. The results will be used to improve and develop the programme.

Methodology

A survey was sent via email to the 63 Conservative, Labour, Liberal Democrat and Independent councillors who participated in Next Generation in 2018/19, on completion of their course. A total of 50 submitted responses – a response rate of 79 per cent.

Key messages

Feedback on the Next Generation 2018/19 course was very positive, with respondents reporting high levels of satisfaction, increased confidence and that they had learnt practical tools that could be put to use in their role as councillor.

Results

- **Overall satisfaction with Next Generation:** Nearly all (96 per cent) were either very or fairly satisfied with the course.
- **Increased confidence in ability to carry out role:** Nearly all (96 per cent) said that the course had increased their confidence to either a great or moderate extent.
- **Objectives:** When asked about their objectives for the course, 80 per cent said that they wanted to learn more about their personal strengths and weaknesses as community and political leaders. Seventy eight per cent wanted to network and learn from other councillors, and 70 per cent wanted to develop their capacity to lead.
- **Achieving objectives:** Most respondents (92 per cent) said that the objectives they had for taking part in Next Generation were largely or fully achieved.
- **Practical tools:** All but one respondent (98 per cent) said that they had learnt practical tools that could be put to use in their role as councillor, to either a great or moderate extent.
- **Tutor expertise and venue:** Both of these were rated as either very or fairly good by all respondents. The overall agenda and content of the programme was rated as either very or fairly good by 98 per cent.
- **Access needs/special requirements:** All respondents (excluding those who answered 'not applicable') – 37 respondents – said that their access needs or special requirements were either very or fairly well met.

- **Recommending the course:** Nearly all (98 per cent) said that they would be either very or fairly likely to recommend Next Generation to fellow councillors if asked about it.

Introduction

During early 2019, the Local Government Association (LGA) conducted an online survey of councillors who had participated in Next Generation in 2018/19, in order to get feedback on the quality, content and outcomes of the programme. The results will be used to improve and develop the programme.

Methodology

An online survey was sent to the 63 Conservative, Labour, Liberal Democrat and Independent councillors who participated in Next Generation in 2018/19, on completion of their course. A total of 50 submitted responses – a response rate of 79 per cent.

Whilst these results should strictly be taken as a snapshot of the views of this particular group of respondents, rather than representative of all councillors who attended Next Generation in 2018/19, this level of response means that the results are likely to provide a good indication of the views of this group more widely.

A full breakdown of response rate by political party is shown in Table 1.

	Number	Per cent
Conservative	17	77
Labour	15	79
Independent	9	90
Liberal Democrat	9	75
Total	50	79

Please note the following when reading the report:

- Where tables and figures report the base, the description refers to the group of people who were asked the question. The number provided refers to the number who answered each question. Please note that bases vary throughout the survey.
- Throughout the report, percentages in figures and tables may add to more than 100 per cent due to rounding.
- The following conventions are used in tables: ‘*’ - less than 0.5 per cent; ‘0’ – no observations; ‘-’ – category not applicable/data not available.
- Where the response base is less than 50, care should be taken when interpreting percentages, as small differences can seem magnified. Therefore where this is the case in this report, absolute numbers are reported alongside the percentage values.

Feedback on Next Generation

This section provides full results for each survey question.

All respondents were asked how satisfied or dissatisfied they were with the Next Generation course that they attended. Nearly all (96 per cent) said that they were either very or fairly satisfied. One respondent said that they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied and one respondent said that they were fairly dissatisfied.

Table 2: Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied were you with Next Generation?		
	Number	Per cent
Very or fairly satisfied	48	96
Very satisfied	44	88
Fairly satisfied	4	8
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	1	2
Fairly dissatisfied	1	2
Very dissatisfied	0	0
Don't know	0	0

Base: all respondents (50 respondents)

All respondents were asked to what extent, if at all, attending Next Generation had helped them to feel more confident in their ability to carry out their role. Nearly all (96 per cent) said that it had helped to either a great or moderate extent. One respondent said that it had only helped to a small extent and one respondent not at all.

Table 3: To what extent, if at all, do you feel more confident in your ability to carry out your role having participated in Next Generation?		
	Number	Per cent
Great or moderate extent	48	96
To a great extent	34	68
To a moderate extent	14	28
To a small extent	1	2
Not at all	1	2
Don't know	0	0

Base: all respondents (50 respondents)

All respondents were asked to select their objectives for taking part in the course from a list. Four in ten (80 per cent) said that they aimed to learn more about their own personal strengths and weaknesses as a community and political leader, 78 per cent wanted to network and learn from other councillors within their own political group or as an independent councillor and 70 per cent wanted to develop their capacity to lead.

Table 4: What were your objectives in taking part in Next Generation?		
	Number	Per cent
To learn more about my own personal strengths and weaknesses as a community and political leader	40	80
To network and learn from other councillors within my own political group or as an independent councillor	39	78
To develop my capacity to lead	35	70
To explore different styles and approaches to political leadership	33	66
To refresh or sharpen my communication and media skills	31	62
To define my personal and political leadership vision for my council/ward/group	29	58
To increase my understanding of the practical strategies to policy making and best practice	28	56
To take the opportunity to raise my profile at a local and national level	24	48
To take advantage of alumni opportunities after completing the programme	24	48
To explore and test new ways of working	23	46
To work with others on the big issues facing local government	20	40
To better understand my party's distinctive approach to policy and governance	7	14
Other	4	8
Don't know	0	0

Base: all respondents (50 respondents)

Note: Percentages total to more than 100, since respondents could select a range of objectives.

All respondents were asked to what extent, if at all, they had achieved their objectives. Nine in ten (92 per cent) had fully or largely achieved their objectives.

Table 5: Were the objectives that you had for taking part in Next Generation achieved?		
	Number	Per cent
Fully or largely achieved	46	92
Fully achieved (met all goals)	14	28
Largely achieved (met most goals)	32	64
Partially achieved (met some goals)	3	6
Not achieved (met none of the goals)	1	2
Don't know	0	0

Base: all respondents (50 respondents)

All respondents were asked to what extent, if at all, they had learnt practical tools that could be put to use in their role as a councillor. Nearly all (98 per cent) said that this was the case to either a great or moderate extent.

Table 6: To what extent, if at all, did you learn practical tools you can put to use in your role as a councillor?

	Number	Per cent
Great or moderate extent	49	98
To a great extent	35	70
To a moderate extent	14	28
To a small extent	1	2
Not at all	0	0
Don't know	0	0

Base: all respondents (50 respondents)

All respondents were asked to rate the overall knowledge and expertise of the tutors, the overall agenda and content of the programme and the venue. All respondents rated the overall knowledge and experience of the tutors and the venue as either very or fairly good, whilst 98 per cent rated the overall agenda and content of the programme as very or fairly good.

Table 7: How would you rate the following?

	Very good		Fairly good		Not very good		Not good at all		Don't know	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
The overall knowledge and expertise of the tutors	44	88	6	12	0	0	0	0	0	0
The overall agenda and content of the programme	36	72	13	26	1	2	0	0	0	0
The venue(s)	39	78	11	22	0	0	0	0	0	0

Base: all respondents (50 respondents)

Respondents were asked if they had any other comments about the knowledge and expertise of the tutors, the agenda and programme content or the venue. Seventeen responses were received and a summary of the key themes is provided below:

- **The knowledge and expertise of the tutors:** Two respondents provided other comments on the expertise of the tutors:

“Fantastic. World class training and mentorship.”

Conservative councillor

“The various speakers were all experts in their field and the sessions were informative and engaging.”

Independent councillor

- **The agenda and content of the programme:** Whilst the overall view of the agenda and content was very positive, the comments provided focused on identifying areas for improvement, for example:

“We were given a lot of useful information, but not so many practical strategies for applying the knowledge.”

Conservative councillor

“Had not expected to find members of recognised parties i.e. Greens. Think there was a missed opportunity to learn about how they work.”

Independent councillor

- **The venue:** Again, whilst overall views of the venues were positive, a small number of respondents provided comments suggesting improvements. For example:

“If they just sorted out the coffee machines and dimmed the lights in the bar it would be much better. The quality of the food continues to slowly decline. But the comfort of the rooms and the ability to work are perfectly adequate for our needs so unless we have a better idea, I’d not let it prevent me from attending further training events there.”

Liberal Democrat councillor

All respondents were asked how well the course met their access needs and/or special requirements. All respondents (37 excluding those who answered ‘not applicable’) said that these were either very or fairly well met.

Table 8: How well did the programme meet your access needs and/or special requirements?		
	Number	Per cent
Very or Fairly well	37	100
Very well	29	78
Fairly well	8	22
Not very well	0	0
Not at all well	0	0
Don’t know	0	0

Base: all respondents excluding those who answered “not applicable” (37 respondents)

Respondents were asked what aspects of the overall Next Generation programme they had found most useful. Thirty-six responses were received and a summary of the key themes is provided below:

- **Course content:** Half of the respondents identified a range of specific elements of the course content that they found most beneficial. For example:

“The speaking training, the community engagement analysis, the opportunity to hear what other councils and labour groups are doing, the opportunity to develop networks with Labour councillors.”

Labour councillor

“The communications section, the MBTI personality testing, the managing difficult conversations session (particularly the colours section). The speeches training and mock council. The vocal exercises.”

Independent councillor

- **Networking and learning from others:** Around a third of respondents said that they had benefitted from working with others and learning from their experiences.

“The drama coach session was helpful, the case study was really useful, but mainly the collective experiences and idea sharing.”

Labour councillor

“Being part of a group of like-minded but very different, friendly people in a working political environment was excellent. From extroverts to introverts everyone was inclusive and it helped build a better understanding of how to work with others. I wish the party had a similar scheme 20 years ago.”

Conservative councillor

“Meeting fellow councillors and creating a network, finding out how other councillors achieve their goals and objectives, meeting the LGA chief executive and other senior members of the party.”

Liberal Democrat councillor

- **Feedback:** A few respondents said that they valued the feedback from the tutor and the 360 reviews.

“The 360 exercise was particularly enlightening.”

Independent councillor

Respondents were asked what about the course could have been different or improved, and how. Several respondents stated that no improvement was needed, whilst 32 made some suggestions. The key themes are provided below:

- **Structure:** Suggestions on structure were varied and included: changing the order of modules; balancing presentation sessions with training/practical sessions and providing more time for discussion.

“It felt like the overall course lacked clear structure and progression. All the sessions were valuable, but sometimes they felt a little out of order. For example, it would have been good to link the all the public speaking, communications, interview training etc together in one module.”

Conservative councillor

“The group assignment should be earlier on to give us more time. Fitting it into January was difficult with council commitments.”

Labour councillor

- **Suggestions for new content:** Some respondents took the opportunity to list additional areas of learning that they would benefit from.

“I’m still looking for a great/thorough introduction to local government finance, I’d still like to know more about governance models and labour group structures, and I’d still like a good briefing on the issues facing local government across all areas of operation. This might not have been the place for it. But I’m still looking for these things...”

Labour councillor

“I attended the LGA Data and Digital Masterclass session in London to which Next Generation members were invited and found it extremely useful. A session exclusively on digital transformation, which is so important to the future of local government, would be a good addition to the programme, to my mind. But of course there are time constraints and I wouldn't advocate losing any of the sessions currently included.”

Conservative councillor

Respondents were asked if they had any specific comments about the three modules.

Module one

Twenty one responses were received and these were largely positive. The field trip, networking and speakers were all highlighted as useful.

“Inspiring to see how a council leader with a strong vision and focus on economic development is able to make profound and long-lasting changes to an area.”

Liberal Democrat councillor

“Public speaking was brilliant.”

Labour councillor

“A good mixture of cohorts from different backgrounds and areas of the country made the course very interesting and was an extra benefit. This was true of all modules.”

Conservative councillor

Module two

Sixteen responses were provided, these were mainly positive and described elements that respondents had found most useful within the module.

“The different tools shared were very useful especially in developing my own voice and understanding how to develop effective support.”

Independent councillor

“I really enjoyed our group problem that we looked at in the action learning set. I know that other groups had different kinds of tasks, but I really appreciated the opportunity to engage with a real life leadership problem and to both think through and reflect on the process of responding to it...”

Labour councillor

Module three

Fifteen responses were given and these were also largely positive. Comments were focused around the value of the debates and leadership.

“Specifically loved the budget session - learnt so much”

Liberal Democrat councillor

“Excellent, the debates were so worthwhile and enjoyable whilst being nerve racking.”

Conservative councillor

“This module gave me the most I think, as it focused so much of our learning both about ourselves and practical approaches to leadership and being political in our councils...”

Liberal Democrat councillor

All respondents were asked how likely they would be to recommend Next Generation to fellow councillors if they were asked about it. All except one (49 respondents) said that they would be either very or fairly likely to do so.

Table 9: Taking everything into consideration, how likely would you be to recommend Next Generation to fellow councillors if asked about it?

	Number	Per cent
Very or Fairly likely	49	98
Very likely	46	92
Fairly likely	3	6
Not very likely	0	0
Not at all likely	0	0
Don't know	1	2

Base: all respondents (50 respondents)

Respondents were asked to provide any comments that could be used to help promote Next Generation to future participants. The comments provided included:

“It's a varied programme and really helps you think about the kind of councillor you want to be.”

Independent councillor

“I would highly recommend this course for anyone wishing to learn more about how to be a more effective councillor and skills for how to achieve this. I really enjoyed meeting my fellow cohort and have already gained greatly from their guidance and help. It's a fantastic programme that I've thoroughly enjoyed.”

Liberal Democrat councillor

“As a councillor, if you are struggling to be heard, get your point across, speak in front of lots of people or be interviewed, this is the safe place to just go for it and overcome your fears. The help and encouragement you get from the LGA team and others on the course is priceless. You also learn so much about things you've never even thought about to help your council and you personally.”

Conservative councillor

“Applying for the Next Generation programme was one of the best things I could have done since becoming a councillor. The overall programme is fantastic, the amount of knowledge you can pick up is formidable, and the tutors are amazingly supportive. If you haven't done so already apply now, you won't regret it!”

Labour councillor

Respondents were asked if they had any further comments about Next Generation. Respondents primarily took the opportunity to further praise the course, for example:

“Thank you to all involved in making this course happen. I believe there will be many future stars from this programme and long may it continue. I would be happy to help promote this.”

Conservative councillor

“I am delighted to have met such wonderful like-minded people who I intend to keep in touch with and I feel very privileged to have been given this opportunity.”

Independent councillor

“Thank you for the opportunity to participate. I appreciate the time speakers and tutors gave us on their weekends. I'm glad to have had the opportunity to meet councillors both from my region and across the country and look forward to the opportunities to continue to practice what I've learnt and learn new things from my new networks.”

Labour councillor

“Thank you so much for running this course. I literally can't wait to see what Next Generation Cohort 13 achieves!”

Liberal Democrat

Annex A: Questionnaire

The questions in this section ask for your views of the overall Next Generation programme. There will be an opportunity later in the survey to provide any feedback you might have on any of the three specific modules.

1. Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied were you with Next Generation?

Very satisfied
Fairly satisfied
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
Fairly dissatisfied
Very dissatisfied
Don't know

2. To what extent, if at all, do you feel more confident in your ability to carry out your role, having participated in Next Generation?

To a great extent
To a moderate extent
To a small extent
Not at all
Don't know

3. What were your objectives in taking part in Next Generation?

Please tick all that apply

To develop my capacity to lead
To explore different styles and approaches to political leadership
To define my personal and political leadership vision for my council/ward/group
To refresh or sharpen my communication and media skills
To learn more about my own personal strengths and weaknesses as a community and political leader
To network and learn from other councillors within my own political group or as an independent councillor
To better understand my party's distinctive approach to policy and governance
To work with others on the big issues facing local government
To take the opportunity to raise my profile at a local and national level
To increase my understanding of the practical strategies to policy making and best practice
To take advantage of alumni opportunities after completing the programme
To explore and test new ways of working
Other (please specify)
Don't know

To everyone apart from those who selected 'don't know':

4. Were the objectives that you had for taking part in Next Generation achieved?

- Fully achieved (met all goals)
- Largely achieved (met most goals)
- Partially achieved (met some goals)
- Not achieved (met none of the goals)
- Don't know

To all:

5. To what extent, if at all, did you learn practical tools you can put to use in your role as a councillor?

- To a great extent
- To a moderate extent
- To a small extent
- Not at all
- Don't know

6. How would you rate the following?

Please tick one option for each row

	Very good	Fairly good	Not very good	Not good at all	Don't know
The overall knowledge and expertise of the tutors					
The overall agenda and content of the programme					
The venue(s)					

7. If you have comments on any of the above, please use the space below:

8. How well did the programme meet your access needs and/or special requirements?

- Very well
- Fairly well
- Not very well (please give details)
- Not at all well (please give details)
- Don't know
- Not applicable

9. What aspects of the overall Next Generation programme did you find most useful?

10. What could have been different or improved, and how?

11. If you have any specific comments about any of the modules, please use the space below:

	Comments
Module 1	

Module 2	
Module 3	

12. Taking everything in to consideration, how likely would you be to recommend Next Generation to fellow councillors if asked about it?

- Very likely
- Fairly likely
- Not very likely
- Not at all likely
- Don't know

13. We would welcome any comments that we could use to help promote Next Generation to future participants. Please use the space below.

14. Please indicate below whether you would like your comment to be used anonymously, whether you would be happy for us to include your name alongside it, or whether you'd be happy for us to also include your photograph (either from the council website or the one you provided to us for the booklet).

- I would like my quote to be anonymised
- I am happy for my quote to be used alongside my name
- I am happy for my photograph to also be included

15. Finally, if you have any further comments about Next Generation, please use the space below.

Many thanks for taking the time to complete this survey. Your feedback will be used to improve and develop the programme.

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