



**SPRING 2026  
NEWSLETTER**

## **Welcome to this celebration edition of the Leadership Lab.**

In recent months, our community has gathered to celebrate key milestones across the Developing Diverse Senior Leaders (DDSL) and Developing Diverse Leaders (DDL) programmes. January saw the DDSL Celebration Event, while March marked the graduation of our latest DDL cohort. Both celebrations serve as powerful reminders of what is possible when talent is nurtured, potential is recognised, and individuals are supported to lead with confidence. (See if you can spot yourself in our photo reel and video)

This bumper edition of our Newsletter shines a light on leadership growth and progression with a focus on self-belief and determination. Encouraging you to be brave, support others, and be willing to say “yes” to stretch opportunities.

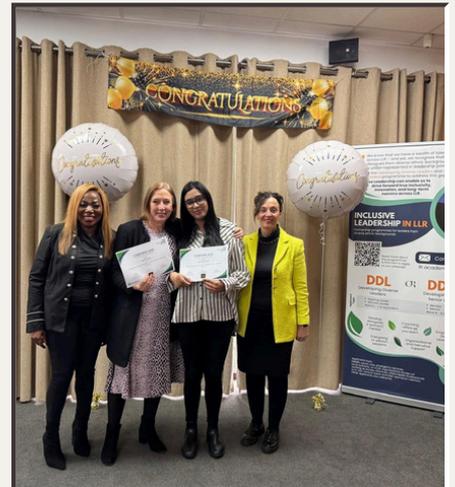
Leadership is not about having all the answers, but about believing you are capable of learning, growing, and rising to the challenge.

As always, The Leadership Lab is about keeping you connected and in this edition, we invite you to pause and reflect on your own leadership journey, to celebrate how far you’ve come, and to consider what might help you take your next step. Keep reading and you’ll find a micro self-belief challenge and guided reflection prompts designed to support you to turn insight into action.  
One small, intentional step at a time.

Together, we continue to learn from one another, lift one another as we climb, and move forward with purpose, confidence, and determination.

## **Issue 4: Celebrating Self-belief and Determination**

# DDSL

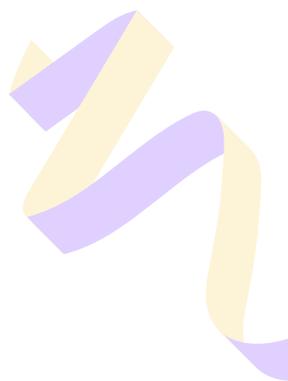


Congratulations!

Celebration Event  
January 2026

# DDL

# 2026



# DDL



Watch the highlights reel here : <https://youtu.be/eaxWpkOlglkU>

# Spotlight Session

Let us introduce Bineetha Jiju - Mentee on the LLR Developing Diverse Senior Leaders Programme.

This is her a story of how self belief fuelled her leadership journey

"Whatever you do always give 100% unless you are donating blood."



## **The Power Within: How Self-Belief Fuels Bineetha's Leadership**

Before I stepped into formal leadership, I qualified as a nurse in India and migrated to the UK in 2004. I built my foundation in surgical and critical care, learning to adapt quickly and work collaboratively under pressure. Those early experiences shaped my clinical judgement and gave me the confidence to take on more responsibility, leading to a Deputy Sister role at Kettering General Hospital.

Whilst balancing a busy work and home life, I completed a Bachelor's degree at DMU Leicester and this led me to pursue a leadership pathway. It wasn't a simple decision; the next level felt more challenging than anything I had faced. But I learned how to approach it through guidance, reflection, and the power of networking.

In 2021, I became a Ward Sister. In 2022, I was promoted to Practice Development Matron and have since held multiple Matron roles across Cardiology, Older Adults, Quality, and Specialist Outpatient Services. Each role has asked me to show up fully, lead by example, and give my energy and commitment to my teams. One quote has grounded me throughout:

"Whatever you do always give 100% unless you are donating blood."

Great leaders give 100%, they do the right thing even when it's difficult or inconvenient. But I've learned that giving everything away doesn't help anyone, including yourself. Leadership is not about burnout or exhaustion; it's about sustainable effort. Leadership isn't about emptying the tank, it's about using my energy wisely.





In 2024, I completed a Master's in Leadership & Management, which expanded my strategic thinking and sharpened my improvement skills. My current focus is quality improvement in the Medicine Division, where I lead multiple initiatives to enhance patient care. I am especially passionate about leading the Parkinson's Time Critical Medicine Project across UHN, driving improvements in the safe and timely administration of critical medicines.

My journey continues because I believe in myself.

As I reflect, I know my goals aren't quite within reach yet, and that's okay. The next step is tougher than before, but mentors and networking have shown me how to move forward. I remember hesitating early in my career to apply for a role because I thought I wasn't ready. A mentor told me that growth happens outside your comfort zone. That advice changes everything, it means that I actively seek opportunities instead of waiting for them to come to me. Barriers don't discourage me, I treat them as chances to learn and grow. Opportunities rarely knock on the door, so I go out and find them. Every step forward is fuelled by one constant belief: I believe in myself.

The DDSL Programme has expanded my professional network and created space for purposeful conversations, opening doors and giving me the confidence to keep moving. Looking ahead, I'm setting my sights on progression to Head of Nursing, and ultimately, Chief Nurse. I'm proud of how far I've come, and I'm excited about what's next.

**To anyone considering a leadership path:**

**Believe in yourself, seek out opportunities, and remember - sustainable effort is the key to lasting impact.**



Also in the spotlight in this bumper newsletter, we have the pleasure of introducing Judy Egget. Judy originally attended the DDL programme as an Aspiring Leader and is now a Sponsor Leader – demonstrating true leadership in action

## Finding my voice, owning my story, and leading with purpose.

Before joining the first cohort of Developing Diverse Leaders, I was working as a Senior Care Co-ordinator at Band 6. While I felt some uncertainty about taking on new challenges, I was motivated to grow beyond my role and explore new opportunities.

After completing the programme, I was proud to step into a Clinical Team Leader role at Band 7. More recently, I have secured a further promotion and will soon move into the role of Community Matron, marking another significant milestone in my leadership journey. Not only have I changed roles, but I feel there has been a transformation in how I see myself and lead others.

When I first heard about the DDL programme, I wasn't actively looking for development opportunities. Quite the opposite in fact, I was deflated and disheartened having experienced an incident at work where I felt racially discriminated against. But I'm so glad that my sponsor leader encouraged me to put myself forward for the programme.

As someone who has faced discrimination, I've always led with inclusivity. My lived experiences have shaped how I support and uplift others. I never want anyone under my leadership to feel excluded or devalued.

The DDL programme gave me the space to reflect on that, to understand how my identity and background are not just part of my story, but powerful tools for leadership.

One of the most impactful moments for me was learning about my personal brand. I began to ask myself: Who am I? What do people associate with my name? What do I stand for?



That self-inquiry was eye-opening. I also realised that I had been my own biggest barrier. I had the experience, the skills, the passion, but I hadn't always believed in my own potential. That changed when I mapped out my career journey and saw, clearly, how much I had to offer.

I gained a lot from the Action Learning sets. Working in these groups, I discovered the power of collective problem-solving and shifted my mindset from dwelling on obstacles to focusing on solutions. These sessions created a supportive environment where we could bring our challenges, break them down, and explore ways forward together.

This not only built my confidence but also helped me develop practical strategies for overcoming barriers, both my own and those faced by my colleagues. The programme created a safe, inclusive space where we all agreed on ground rules that fostered psychological safety. That environment allowed me to be open, to reflect deeply, and to grow.

Since completing the programme, my confidence has soared. I've taken on new leadership roles, including Co-chairing the Race Equality and Cultural Heritage (REACH) staff network, a role that expanded my network and opened doors across the organisation. I've also been honoured with the Queen's Nurse title, lead a Service User Forum, support a BAME staff group, and am currently working on a Zero Tolerance Campaign project. It's a lot, but it's exciting, and I do it all alongside my substantive role.

I've also paid it forward. I supported a colleague in accessing the programme and she has been promoted from a Band 6 role and is now a Band 7. Through REACH, I've contributed to improving equity and inclusion across the organisation, whether it's sitting on stakeholder panels, advising managers on EDI issues, or encouraging colleagues to speak up, I've used my voice and experience to help shape a more inclusive culture.

Something I am particularly proud of is facilitating EDI training sessions in collaboration with our BAME staff group. These sessions have addressed topics such as unconscious bias, neurodiversity, and mental health, grounded in personal experiences. This initiative has enhanced team awareness and mutual support, contributing to improved patient care outcomes.



To find out more about  
the DDL Contact us at  
[llr.academy@nhs.net](mailto:llr.academy@nhs.net)

# Self-belief Micro-challenge



Week 1

**Week 1:** Say yes to one small stretch commitment (a meeting contribution, a new connection, a mini project).

Week 2

**Week 2:** Ask for one piece of feedback you've been avoiding.

Week 3

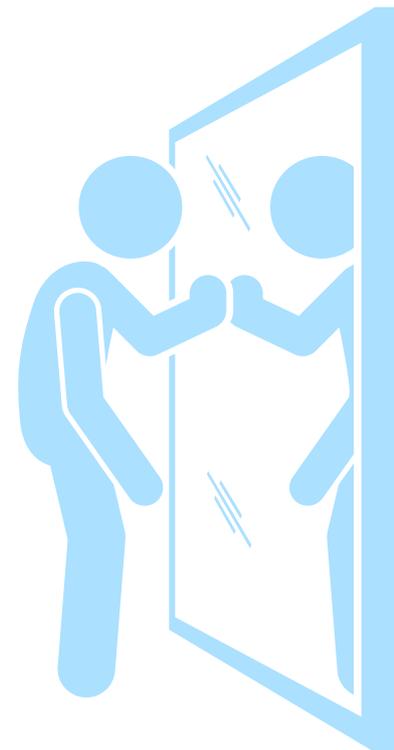
**Week 3:** Share one small piece of learning with a colleague (2 minutes is enough).

Week 4

**Week 4:** Do one thing that signals "I'm ready" (update your CV, speak to a mentor, explore a secondment).

## Self-reflection Time to Think

- Think of one moment of clarity or a turning point where you felt your confidence grow.
- Consider a mentor or sponsor action that made a difference for you.
- Where might privilege (such as role, background, confidence, access, or networks) have helped you and how could you use that awareness to open doors for others?
- What would you tell your "past self" before applying for a stretch role?
- What would be your one tip for anyone who's ready to rise?





Contact us at

[llr.academy@nhs.net](mailto:llr.academy@nhs.net)

## Brain Teasers



Brain Teasers

**(Answers from last time)**

A leadership programme starts on Monday and runs for 100 days.

**Which day does it end?**

**A Wednesday**

You're in a room with two doors. One leads to success, the other to failure.

Each door has a guard:

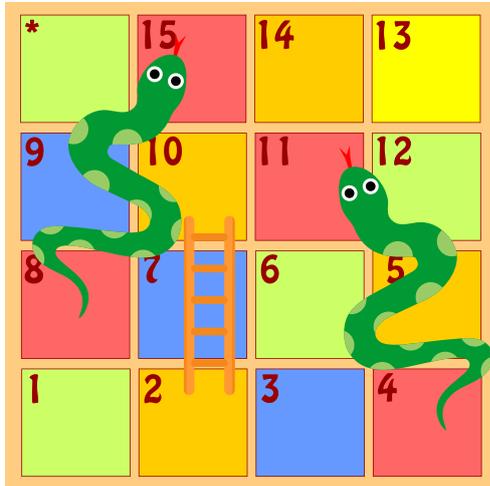
- One always tells the truth.
- One always lies.

You can ask one question to one guard.

**What do you ask?**

**Q. "If I were to ask the other guard which door leads to success, which door would they point to?"**  
**Then, you choose the opposite door.**

## Leadership is like a game of snakes and ladders...



**What are your snakes?**

**What are your ladders?**

**How much of it comes down to the roll of the dice?**



### Chick Maths Mindbender:

If 3 chicks lay 6 eggs in 3 days, how many eggs will 6 chicks lay in 6 days?



### EVENTS CALENDAR:

24th June 2026 – Next Leadership Lab Alumni meeting