Service Excellence in Health

Professional Development Programme

Transform insight into fairer access, better outcomes and stronger operational performance.

Fully-funded by the Growth & Skills Levy

Build practical improvement capability from within

Health equity is embedded throughout this programme. It is the lens through which participants interpret evidence, involve communities, redesign services and measure improvement, turning learning into action on real health and care priorities.

The case for service improvement

7.37m[1]

cases waiting for planned treatment, around 6.24 million patients.

£2.7bn[2]

a year lost to delayed discharges, with 13,000 fit patients stuck daily.

2%[3]

productivity gain every trust must find each year to 2029/30.

The programme

16-month apprenticeship programme

Level 6 Service Designer Standard, with 3-month End-Point Assessment

Built by sector experts

Course content designed and delivered by health and improvement specialists

CMI Level 6 Diploma

Every learner graduates with a CMI Level 6 Diploma in Professional Management & Leadership

What will participants do?

Redesign services
Service design and systems thinking on real service challenges

Understand needs
Data, user insight and stakeholder engagement

Lead live projects
Inequality, access, efficiency, patient experience, variation

Test and scale
Prototype, evaluate, scale what delivers measurable impact

Collaborate
Skills, confidence and influence across teams and systems

Apply an equity lens
Fairer access, experiences and outcomes for diverse populations

Who is it for?

- Middle and service managers
- Clinical and operational leads
- Transformation, improvement and change leads
- Programme, pathway and project leaders
- Inequalities leads and champions

What will your organisation gain?

- Capability to design inclusive services and reduce unwarranted variation, waste and avoidable demand
- Stronger collaboration across teams, communities and neighbourhoods
- Outcomes tied to your priorities, measured on access, patient experience
- An improvement-focused culture that supports trusts to thrive

Why learn with ioda?

78%
distinction rate across leadership programmes

Professional coaches
Health-experienced coaches support learners though 1-1 sessions throughout

Sector expertise
52 health and social care clients, 12 of them NHS, with NHS-experienced facilitators

Group learning
Improvement Pods on live priorities and a six-monthly Community of Practice

Ready to turn ambition into action?

1. **Attend** an information session to find out about the opportunity
2. **Discuss** the programme with your line manager
3. **Apply** for the programme at the link below

Register for an information session and apply here →

Sources: [1] NHS England, Referral to Treatment waiting times, August 2026 (BMA analysis). [2] The King's Fund, analysis of NHS England data, 2025/26. [3] NHS England, NHS productivity, May 2024.