



Bold thinking for better health

Nexus

An immersive executive programme and alumni community for system-level change

Nexus participants,
London, March 2026

Applications open for 2027–28

kingsfund.org.uk/nexus



Lead systemic change in a fragmented world

Nexus is a nine-month, transformative executive programme for chief executives, managing directors, chairs and senior decision-makers across business, public services, government, charities, foundations and elected office. Participants from across the UK and Europe come together to explore, collectively, what it takes to build a healthy society.

Delivered by The King's Fund, in partnership with faculty from Harvard University, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and Suffolk University (USA), Nexus convenes leaders from across the public and private sector, including those from elected office, creating a rare space for cross-sector dialogue and reflection.

This protected space enables leaders to test assumptions, explore tensions, reconnect with purpose, and lead through complexity with confidence and humanity.

Graduates of Nexus join a thriving alumni community, convened by The King's Fund for ongoing learning through workshops, roundtables and other events.



Crisis is now the context. In a world of rapid and unpredictable change, leading change is no longer about managing parts, but about shaping the whole system. The skills leaders need to be effective need to meet this new reality.

Professor Christopher Peitroni, Director of the Birmingham Leadership Institute at the University of Birmingham, Nexus core faculty member

Duration: Nine months

Places available: We accept 24 leaders to join Nexus every cohort. All applicants must complete an interview. See '[Who is Nexus for?](#)' on page 5.

Includes:

- a five-day study visit to Boston, USA
- three immersive residentials in the UK
- faculty-guided workshops grounded in systems thinking, adaptive leadership and world-leading research
- dedicated 1:1 executive coaching
- peer challenge and support within a carefully curated cohort
- ongoing access to a thriving alumni community, convened by The King's Fund.

Cost: £15,500 – £24,500 + VAT

Start date: May 2027
Applications now open.

Delivered by: The King's Fund

Transform your leadership

Nexus is a deliberately stretching, deeply transformative experience that empowers leaders to meet the challenges of today.

Participants are encouraged to examine long-held assumptions, patterns of behaviour and leadership habits. This work goes beyond strategy and frameworks to explore identity, values and relational dynamics.

The environment is challenging yet supportive. Together, we create an incubator for testing difficult conversations, exploring tensions creatively whilst building the confidence to lead with greater clarity.



The programme was transformative across my life. I understood a great deal more about how I turned up in leadership situations and what baggage I was carrying, and found connection with other leaders that grounded my perspective.

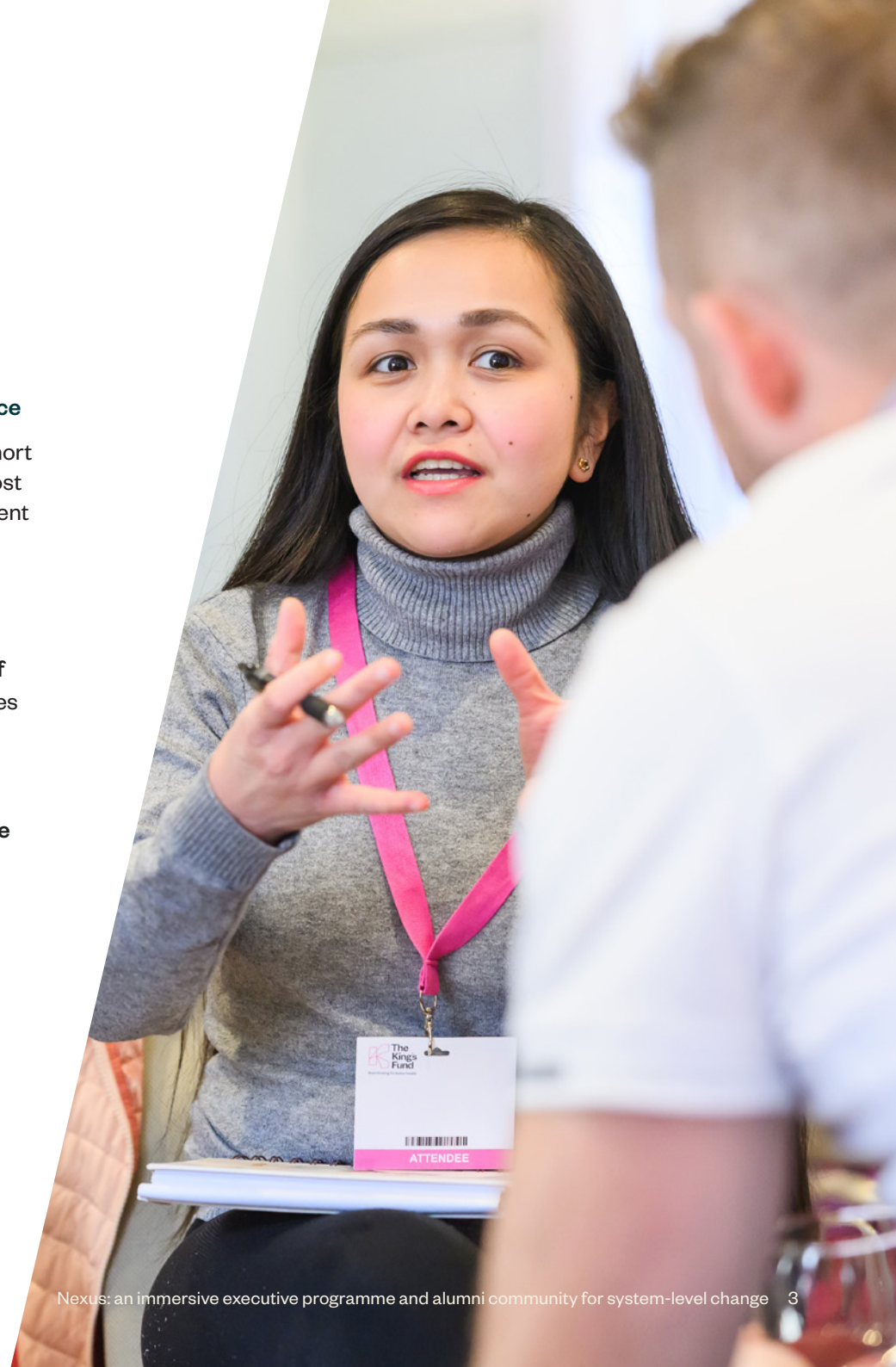
Managing partner, global consultancy

Nexus evolves with the realities leaders face

The programme is co-designed with the cohort at the outset, ensuring we respond to the most current and pressing issues of the time. Recent topics explored have included:

- **agentic AI systems** – implications for leadership, accountability, and ethics
- **geopolitics and the changing context of active conflict** – leading in polarised times
- **working across difference** – bridging divides in multi sector systems
- **navigating inter generational workplace cultures** – building connections and understanding to enable more inclusive progress
- **leading through uncertainty** – practical tools for adaptive and systemic change.

Nexus is for leaders who are committed to leading beyond boundaries – across government, business, civil society and global context – to address challenges that no single organisation can solve alone.





Nexus participants,
Boston, March 2026

Engagement and trust are eroding. **Only 27%¹ of managers globally are engaged at work** and 7 in 10² people are unwilling or hesitant to trust someone who is different from them.

- 1 [State of the Global Workplace 2026 | Employee Engagement Data & Trends - Gallup](#)
- 2 [2025 Edelman Trust Barometer | Edelman](#)

Step into the leadership this moment demands

Today's senior leaders are operating in conditions of sustained volatility. Accelerating artificial intelligence and technological advancements are transforming every corner of our lives. Instability and active conflict are reshaping global alliances. Economic uncertainty continues to constrain public and private institutions alike. For leaders today, crisis is the context.

But beyond the headlines this volatility is experienced in deeply human ways: in anxious teams, in tense senior leadership meetings, in difficult board conversations, in communities who feel unheard or unseen.

At a time when a systematic approach is needed more than ever, society is retreating inward. Deepening silos and growing insularity threaten societal progress, innovation and productivity.

If left unaddressed, these divisions will stall workplace productivity, undermine chief executive leadership, and harden resistance to innovation.

Answering the leadership imperative

The world today requires senior leaders that are adaptive, systemic and, above all, deeply human. Amid dwindling hope, senior leaders are uniquely placed to restore optimism, rebuild connection, and model what it means to lead with humanity and compassion.

In a world increasingly defined by fragmentation only leaders who understand the interconnected nature of the systems around them can unite multi-generational and diverse teams, turning complexity into collective progress.

To step into leadership now is to recognise the influence you hold, not only through strategy and authority, but through presence, behaviour and values. It is this philosophy that underpins the work we do within Nexus.

Who is Nexus for?

Professor Andrew Crespo (Harvard)
teaching on Nexus 2025–26

This programme is specifically designed for the most senior leaders whose roles require them to work across traditional boundaries to address complex, systemic challenges.

Each cohort is limited to 24 participants. When selecting applications, we ensure a rich mix of perspectives and genuine cross-sector representation. Within Nexus, we value sectoral, cultural, geographical and ideological diversity.

Past participants from the UK and Europe include:

- senior business executives
- non-executive directors of national bodies
- local government chief executives
- central government directors-general and equivalent
- integrated care board and NHS trust chief executives, chief operating officers, chief financial officers, chief medical officers, and chief nursing officers

- members of Parliament, police and crime commissioners, council leaders and other elected representatives
- charity and charitable foundation chief executives
- managing partners of businesses working with government
- chief officers in science and biomedical fields
- chiefs of emergency services and chief constables
- senior officials in security and defence.

Become part of the Nexus community

Nexus does not end after nine months.

Participants are invited to become part of an active alumni community convened and supported by The King's Fund through conferences, workshops and exclusive closed-session discussions throughout the year.

This network continues to provide challenge, support and cross-sector perspective long after the programme concludes.



Nexus participants, London, March 2026

Co-design
with the cohort

Residentials
and workshops

1:1 coaching

Five-day
USA study visit
(Boston, USA)

Nexus
community
events

An overview of the programme

Module 1 (residential)
**Co-design and introduction
to systems leadership**
**Wednesday 12 –
Thursday 13 May 2027**

- Cumberland Lodge,
Windsor Great Park
- 24 hours spread over
two days

Module 2 (residential)
**Public narrative and framing;
leading systemically; and
experimentation**
**Sunday 4 –
Wednesday 7 July 2027**

- Cumberland Lodge,
Windsor Great Park
- three days and three nights

Module 3 (online)
**The emerging future:
guest input shaped by
co-design**
**Wednesday 22 September
2027**

- online
- half-day (three hours)
in the morning

Module 4 (study visit)
**Adaptive leadership;
being human;
immunity to change**
**Saturday 17 –
Thursday 21 October 2027**

- Boston, USA
- designed and delivered in
collaboration with guest
faculty from MIT, Harvard
and Suffolk universities
- four-and-a-half days and
five nights

Module 5 (workshop)
Vulnerabilities in leadership
Wednesday 1 December 2027

- The King's Fund, London
- one day

Module 6 (online)
**Leading for/with future
generations: Guest input
shaped by co-design**
Wednesday 19 January 2028

- online
- half-day (three hours)
in the morning

Module 7 (Residential)
**Beginnings, transitions
and endings**
**Tuesday 7 –
Wednesday 8 March 2028**

- Cumberland Lodge,
Windsor Great Park
- twenty-seven hours spread
over two days

Learning environments to thrive

Boston, USA

Aside from two online workshops, the entirety of the Nexus experience takes place in-person in world-class centres of excellence, designed to foster collaboration, reflection, and bold thinking.



[Working with the international faculty] was life changing in many ways... There were elements of provocation about the role of a leader to ‘imagine the future and deliver the future’, which led to a significant mindset change on my return to my CEO role.

Chief executive, NHS trust

Boston, USA

Explore cutting-edge leadership and change practice during a five-day study visit built on long-standing collaborations between UK faculty and leading practitioners at Harvard, MIT, and Suffolk University.

Highlights include:

- tailored orientation tour of Boston
- facilitated sessions with world-renowned experts, including Professor Marshall Ganz (community organising and social movements), Professor Houman Harouni (adaptive leadership) and Professor Katrina Graham (conflict resolution)
- social events with esteemed guests across the city.

Cumberland Lodge, Windsor

The King's Fund, London

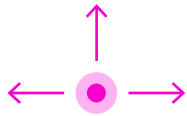
Cumberland Lodge, Windsor

Set in a Grade II-listed former royal residence in Windsor Great Park, Cumberland Lodge combines heritage, tranquillity, and modernity. For over 75 years, it has hosted dialogue and debate across sectors. You'll work and stay in a historic building tackling contemporary challenges – one conversation at a time.

The King's Fund, London

For over a century, The King's Fund has worked to improve people's health and care. Our London headquarters, a Grade II-listed townhouse in the heart of the city, has been home to The King's Fund since 1995. It provides a dynamic, world-class space for innovation, research, and policy leadership in health and care, and for learning and exchange with some of the world's leading thinkers.

What will I learn?

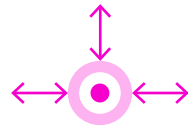


Inside-out: strengthening your inner leadership

True leadership starts from within.

Nexus will help you cultivate the awareness needed to lead effectively in complexity by:

- **making sense of uncertainty** – recognising patterns, connecting the dots, and integrating different perspectives.
- **stepping back to see the bigger picture** – moving beyond immediate concerns to embrace a broader, more strategic view that spans beyond the boundaries of your specialism and sector.
- **understanding how you process new challenges** – noticing your habits, assumptions and emotional responses to change.
- **working with contradictions and tensions** – staying engaged with ‘sticky’ dilemmas rather than rushing to easy solutions.

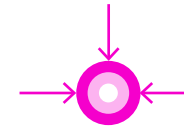


In between: mastering interpersonal leadership

Leadership is about people.

This part of the programme helps you **inspire, engage** and **lead** those around you by:

- developing **stronger communication and influencing skills** beyond a reliance on your positional authority
- learning to **navigate polarised conversations** with more subtlety and confidence
- practising skills to **motivate, challenge** and **align cross-organisational teams** towards a shared purpose.



Outside-in: expanding your systemic impact

Leadership doesn't happen in isolation.

We help you work across boundaries and sectors by:

- applying **systems thinking** to complex global challenges
- engaging with **political, economic and environmental forces** shaping our world
- learning from **practitioners, experts and changemakers** from diverse fields and from across the globe.

How to apply

Applications for the Nexus programme 2027–28 are now open. Successful applicants will be invited for interview to assess their suitability for the next cohort.

Apply now: kingsfund.org.uk/nexus

To nominate a potential participant, express an interest in the Nexus programme, or organise a call to discuss, please email Judith Osorio, Programme Co-ordinator, j.osorio@kingsfund.org.uk

For-profit organisations

£24,500 + VAT

Applicable to all private companies and organisations that are for profit of its owners and shareholders.

Public sector and large charities

£15,500 + VAT

Applicable to local government officers, NHS, emergency services, central government departments, combined authorities and all other branches of the UK public sector.

Also includes registered charities based and working in the UK, with a turnover above £3 million.

Additional financial support may be available

We recognise that some leaders may wish to participate in Nexus but face funding challenges. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss this with you directly. We especially welcome applications from individuals and organisations that are historically underrepresented in senior leadership development initiatives of this nature. Please email j.osorio@kingsfund.org.uk to arrange a confidential conversation.

What's included?

Included:

- all teaching sessions and materials (residentials, workshops, coaching, USA study visit and virtual workshops)
- residential accommodation, meals and refreshments for all residentials and the five-day USA study visit (Boston, USA)
- an evening reception in central Boston, USA, with senior leaders from across the city
- transport within the city of Boston for all elements of the five-day USA study visit.

Excluded, and the responsibility of each participant:

- travel to and from the residentials and the five-day USA study visit (including return flights to the USA)
- USA visa (or visa waiver), as applicable
- international travel insurance.

Meet the team

Core faculty



Axelle Bagot

Axelle is the Chief Executive of Leadership Lab International, based in Boston, USA. She has worked with UNICEF, the World Bank, and civic programmes, including the Obama Fellowship and Paris Peace Forum. In the private sector, Axelle partners with boards and C-suite executives in tech, health care and the arts.



Kathryn Perera

Kathryn leads Nexus on behalf of The King's Fund, following a decade in senior roles in NHS England and as Director of NHS Horizons. A practising barrister by background, Kathryn is a US-UK Fulbright Scholar. She is a trustee of the Leading Change Network and Act Build Change.



Christopher Pietroni

Christopher is the Director of the Birmingham Leadership Institute at the University of Birmingham. His work integrates systems thinking, leadership studies and development, and he is known for combining narrative, storytelling, adaptive leadership and movement building.

Other faculty



Marshall Ganz

Marshall is the Rita E Hauser Senior Lecturer in Leadership, Organizing and Civil Society at the Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University. Through the Leading Change Network, the organisation he founded, Marshall has trained thousands of activists in public narrative, strategy and action. He is regarded as among the most prominent social movement practitioners teaching today.



Houman Harouni

Houman is a Lecturer on Leadership and Education at Harvard University. His practice-based courses push mid-career students to sharpen their thinking and resilience, with a focus on navigating complex public service challenges with skill and agility. Houman holds advisory positions to various governments, international organisations and nonprofits in the USA and globally.



Katrina Graham

Katrina is Associate Professor of Management and Entrepreneurship, and the Director of Management and Organizational Leadership at Suffolk University, Boston, USA. Katrina's research and practice are at the intersection of leadership, ethical decision-making, and conflict in the workplace. She is widely published and serves on the editorial review board of the Journal of Organizational Behavior.



Steve Whittaker

Steve is the Programme Director of the Industrial Liaison Program at MIT. Before joining MIT, Steve was responsible for British Telecom's partnerships with US research universities and business schools. Steve convenes learning experiences for Nexus with other MIT contributors, based on his interests in emerging technologies and their impact on individuals, organisations and society.

Coaches



Kiran Chauhan

Kiran is an organisational consultant with deep experience of working with people across the health and care sector. He combines his experience from working in senior public sector roles alongside complexity, psychodynamic and critical theory to support his clients to explore and develop their leadership practice.



Naja Felter

Naja leads work in organisational development, leadership development and coaching. Her professional experience includes senior roles in the UK government, and working with international organisations including the OECD and EU. Naja is Programme Director for The King's Fund's CIRCLES programme for women.



Mark Patterson

Mark is a coach and leadership development practitioner, with extensive experience across the health and social care system. He has held senior roles in the NHS, UK civil service and local government. Mark is Programme Director for the Top Manager programme, The King's Fund's longest-running senior leadership programme.

Programme sponsor



Sarah Woolnough

Sarah is Chief Executive of The King's Fund. She joined the Fund in 2024, having spent more than 15 years at Cancer Research UK in a range of senior policy and executive board roles, alongside non-executive and trustee roles. Sarah is passionate about improving health and has led several national campaigns to deliver social change, including the plain packaging of tobacco and for bolder clean air laws. She has a particular interest in prevention, early diagnosis and community care, and the adoption and spread of innovation across the health and care system.



The full year of working with the faculty team (Christopher, Kathryn and Axelle) had a profound impact on my leadership and how I have continued to work confidently, and with impact, across different sectors. The breadth of leaders from across different sectors is important and those relationships are sustained many years on.

Police chief constable

The King's Fund

The King's Fund is an independent charity working to improve people's health. Our vision is a world where everyone can live a healthy life, and our mission is to inspire hope and build confidence for positive change. We achieve this through expert insights and original research, developing leaders and their organisations, convening, and strategic, collaborative partnerships.

We deliver world-class research that tackles the thorniest questions facing our health and care system. We challenge the status quo courageously, boldly reimagining the systems that shape the reality of our society. Our thinking and research have directly influenced and shaped public policy, improving the health and lives of thousands.

We understand the challenges today's leaders face – not only because of our decades of experience training and working alongside them, but through our team's own lived experiences as senior leaders.

Our faculty consists of former chief executives, directors and board members from the NHS, local government, national charities, the civil service, regulatory bodies and leading consultancies. Our team also includes leading academics, published authors and clinical psychologists – all of whom contribute to world-leading research into leadership and organisational development.

Alongside designing and delivering our programmes, our faculty provides world-class organisational development consultancy for organisations across the public, private and voluntary sector, including key NHS trusts.

We believe that leaders are the thread that connects purpose to meaningful change. Together, we can centre humanity in the face of relentless pressure, work across boundaries and make space for innovation. We know how hard this is, but also how rewarding it can be – and we are here to walk alongside leaders on this journey.

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