LeadersPlus

Guide to Securing Funding for the Leaders Plus Fellowship

Investing in your leadership development benefits both you **and** your organisation.
Funding is often more possible than it first appears, especially if you approach it strategically.

1 Start by Asking (Really!)

Research from Vanessa Bohns shows people are **twice as likely to say yes as we expect**.

- Ask - even if it feels uncomfortable
- If you hear no, ask again
- Keep reasons to one or two and don't be afraid to leave a silence after you ask

Practical action:

Book a 20-minute conversation with your manager this week titled: *'Professional Development Discussion.'*

2 Ask the Right Way

How you ask makes a difference. Keep your ask clear: cost, dates, outcomes and benefits.

- **Best** - In person
- **Next best:** Phone or video call
- **Then:** Follow up by email with a short summary

Practical action:

Prepare a 3-sentence summary covering: what it is, cost, and organisational benefit and practice saying it out loud before the meeting.

3 Look Beyond One Budget

Funding doesn't always sit where you expect. Explore:

- Learning & Development budget
- Your manager's discretionary budget
- Inclusion or workforce strategy budgets
- Return-to-work funding (if applicable)
- End-of-year surplus funds
- Next financial year allocation
- Charities or grants related to your role, demographic or sector

Practical action:

Make a quick list of 3 possible budget holders and ask each one: *"Where would development funding like this usually sit?"*

4 Use Your Network

People often know more than you think.

- Ask Finance where development funding usually sits
- Speak to colleagues who've secured funding before
- Ask your manager (or their manager) for advice on where to apply

Practical action:

Message one colleague today who has done external training and ask how they funded it.

Continued...

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5 Make the Organisational Case

Frame your request around business value, not just personal growth. Make it easy for them to say yes. You can find the impact reports from the Leaders Plus Fellowship here which can strengthen your case.

Highlight:

- **Skill impact:** How this strengthens your performance
- **Strategic alignment:** Links to current priorities
- **Knowledge sharing:** Offer to share learning with your team
- **Retention & progression:** Investment supports long-term contribution

Practical action:

Write down 3 specific business outcomes this programme would support (e.g. leading a project, improving a metric, retaining certain talent).

6 Align with Current Priorities

Before asking, check and connect your request directly to your organisation's priorities.

- Is leadership development a focus?
- Is retention or workforce development a priority?
- Are there goals around representation or talent pipelines?

Practical action:

Review your organisation's latest strategy document and highlight one priority you can explicitly reference in your request.

7 Be Flexible

If full funding isn't possible, propose options:

- Part-funding between you and your organisation
- Instalment payments (in some circumstances we may be able to split the cost over 2 financial years)
- Shared cost across departments

Practical action:

Go into the conversation prepared with at least two flexible funding options you would be comfortable with.

8 Follow Up Thoughtfully

If the answer isn't immediate. Persistence often works.

- Send a short follow-up summary
- Offer additional information
- Revisit when budgets refresh

Practical action:

If you haven't heard back within 7–10 days, send a brief follow-up asking: *"Is there any further information that would help move this forward?"*

Self Investment

If employer funding isn't possible right now, self-investment can still be a powerful step, though organisational funding is always the preferred route. Choosing to invest in your own development can accelerate your growth, increase your confidence, and expand your future options. Read this blog for details the long term impact the programme had on a previous participant.

We offer instalment payments for self funders and can be flexible if needed.

We understand that self funding is not an option for everybody. We do have hardship fund places available - more details on these can be found here.