



Information sheet for prospective participants

What is the LEANS Champions training programme?

LEANS stands for Learning About Neurodiversity at School. It is a free, downloadable programme to introduce pupils aged 8-11 to the concept of neurodiversity, and help them explore how it impacts school experiences. It is designed to be delivered by teachers to the whole class. *You may already be familiar with the LEANS programme and resources, but if not, we'd encourage you to review the information on the project website: <https://www.ed.ac.uk/salvesen-research/leans/about/resources>*

The LEANS Teacher Handbook provides guidance on teaching about neurodiversity with this age group, even for teachers who are new to the topic. It's intended to be a "training course in a book". Our new **LEANS Champions programme** aims to create local educator experts who understand LEANS in depth, and can provide advice and support for other educational professionals to embed LEANS into practice. It is an opportunity for professional learning/professional development around neurodiversity, a topic with deep links to inclusion, pupil wellbeing, and human rights.

LEANS Champions have four roles:

1. Awareness: To raise awareness of the LEANS programme and importance of neurodiversity education among other education professionals.
2. Adoption: To encourage considered, ethical choices about adopting LEANS.
3. Support: To provide local advice and model good practice in LEANS delivery.
4. Connection: To help connect educators using LEANS with each other.

Find out more about these roles on page 5.

The LEANS Champions training programme (2022) is a professional learning/professional development opportunity that will help you become a local LEANS expert, allowing you to share your knowledge with other educators. It is for current primary education professionals working in any UK nation, or the Republic of Ireland (*see full eligibility criteria on page 3*). All places are fully funded—no cost to you or your school.

Course content, format, and dates

The Champions training programme has three parts:

- Pre-course preparation (individual study and tasks with provided materials)
- Course participation (live online workshop sessions) over two weeks of twilight sessions.
- Post-course reflection and follow-up with the LEANS-C team (individual calls/meetings in Spring 2023).

The course workshops and follow-up activities will be led by LEANS researchers and experienced trainers from our charity partner, the Salvesen Mindroom Centre.

The goals of the training programme are...

- Supporting educators' professional development/learning in neurodiversity education. This will be achieved by developing LEANS content and delivery expertise through discussion and problem-solving exercises. There will also be a strong focus on ethics and safety issues around neurodiversity teaching.
- Identifying strategies for cascading LEANS knowledge within schools: Explore a "toolkit" of available materials and strategies to inform other educators about LEANS, and support them to adopt it.
- Connecting and exchanging practice with other members of the Champions cohort.

Course dates

All live sessions are online evening sessions (aka "twilight" sessions, exact start and end times TBC), all scheduled on weekdays. There are two sets of dates:

Cohort 1, four twilight sessions on November 7-8 and November 14-15.

Cohort 2, four twilight sessions on November 9-10 and November 16-17.

In order to be credited as a LEANS Champion, you are required to complete the pre-course preparation and participate in at least three of your cohort's four scheduled sessions. On the application form, you are able to indicate which cohort's schedule you prefer (if either).

If you know you are not able to make these dates, we would ask you to please not apply to this round of training. We hope to offer more training in the future.

Does the course have a cost?

We are very happy to say that **all places on the 2022 LEANS Champions training course are fully-funded**, thanks to ESRC Impact Acceleration grant funding awarded to the LEANS-C team. There is no cost to attend. *Please note there may be optional costs associated with printing out course materials, for those who want physical copies.*

What happens after Champions training?

Champions as a cascading scheme

LEANS Champions initially trained by the LEANS team will "**cascade**" programme information to other education professionals, for example by running information sessions or offering individual advice about adopting or troubleshooting LEANS. We will ask Champions to set personal commitments about the type of cascading and support activity they would like to



undertake during the rest of the 2022-2023 school year. There will not be a requirement to undertake a certain number of hours of Champions activity.

We will additionally ask you to **reflect** on whether or how the training has supported your professional development/learning and practice, and will follow up to ask about this.

Being a Champion includes being contacted by other professionals and schools who are seeking information and help. To do that, people need to know who their local LEANS Champion is. We will ask to list you as a Champion on the [LEANS website](#), who could be contacted by colleagues in a particular geographic area. In all public information about Champions, we will manage expectations by highlighting that this is a voluntary role. *If this does not sound like something that you are comfortable with, this role may not be suitable. Please contact us by e-mail (LEANS@ed.ac.uk) if you would like to discuss it in more detail.*

Will I need to train other educators to be Champions?

Champions-training-champions is an eventual goal for the programme, but not a required commitment associated with this role. We intend to initiate this stage after the first group of Champions are established, and we have a clearer idea of what types of support are needed (and where). In 2023, we will follow up with participants from this programme to find out who may be interested in taking on an added training role. We anticipate running additional, shorter training specifically about training new Champions.

Eligibility criteria

The November 2022 training course is open to education professionals who meet all of the following criteria:

1. Work in any UK nation or the Republic of Ireland.
2. Have 3+ years' experience working in mainstream education (*could be across roles*).
3. Work in a mainstream primary school during the 2022-2023 school year, or across multiple settings that include mainstream primaries. *For example, you might be a classroom teacher, school leader, EP, SENCO, or in an inclusion-focused role.*
4. Have experience working with 8-11 year old pupils, the LEANS target age range.
5. Demonstrate positive, accepting attitudes about neurodiversity and neurodivergent people.
6. Are enthusiastic about supporting fellow professionals to understand, adopt, and deliver the LEANS curriculum.

If you do not meet eligibility criteria 1 – 4, but are still interested, we may be able to offer future courses with wider eligibility. To learn more, please contact: LEANS@ed.ac.uk

Application process

If you would like to apply for place on this course, please complete the short online **application form**: https://edinburgh.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_9tO8o1D507Htfim

This form will ask about your professional and lived experience, and reasons for wishing to join the course. Given that the Champions programme is all about providing de-centralised, local support to as many schools as we can, we will also ask about your location.

Please note that we have already had a large number of people register interest in course information, and we expect similarly high demand for places. Not every qualified person can



be offered a place. We are keeping our cohorts small to allow for an interactive course, and a higher level of support from the LEANS team and SMC both during and after the course.

Key dates and course timeline

Applications open: Late August 2022

Applications close: ~~23:59, Monday September 26th~~

Noon, Monday September 26th

Applicants notified: By end October 7th (TBC)

Pre-course preparation tasks assigned: mid-October

Course delivery:

Cohort 1, four "Twilight sessions" on November 7-8 and November 14-15.

Cohort 2, four "Twilight sessions" on November 9-10, and November 16-17

Course feedback requested from participants: mid-November 2022

Individual follow-up with course participants: Spring 2023

Questions about the programme

If you have any questions about the application process or the course, accessibility, or anything else, please do get in touch by e-mail (LEANS@ed.ac.uk) with subject line "LEANS Champions course question".

Please don't submit questions by Twitter/social media. Thank you.

A description of the LEANS Champion role is on the next page →



The four roles of a LEANS Champion

This information is provisional, as of August 2022

Role	Short role description	Possible cascading activities for Champions
Awareness	Raise colleagues' awareness of LEANS resources, and the profile of neurodiversity in the primary curriculum.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> --Host LEANS information sessions --"Advertise" LEANS to colleagues e.g. e-mail, leaflets/posters --Encourage inclusion of neurodiversity content across the curriculum
Adoption	<p>Help colleagues make informed decisions about adopting LEANS using the self-evaluation tools.</p> <p>Offer guidance on delivery decisions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> --Lead group sessions or have individual discussions about the self-evaluation process. --Encourage schools to understand the delivery decisions recommended in LEANS, and support their delivery planning
Delivery support	<p>Provide local advice and guidance to fellow educators.</p> <p>Encourage good practice.</p> <p>Support a focus on safety planning.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> --Liaise with schools/educators about LEANS planning and troubleshooting --With school contacts, promote the importance of safety planning prior to, during, and after LEANS is delivered
Connection	Connect educators to one another and to organisations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> --Share info about the LEANS online network. <i>This will launch before the end of 2022</i> --Connect local educators interested in neurodiversity, or specifically in LEANS

