



# **Benefits & Success of the Transformation Academy Alumni Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> January 2026**

**Dr David Stokes**

**Enhancing | Validating | Empowering**

# Why Alumni Matter

Leadership development programmes often end when the funding ends.

What's different here is that the Academy has created an *ongoing platform*.

Alumni don't just leave with new skills, they leave connected to a trusted group of peers who understand the realities of leading VCSEF organisations.

In a sector where many CEOs and directors feel isolated, this ongoing connection is transformative.



# The Biggest Benefit: A Peer Network

The single biggest benefit consistently reported by alumni is the creation of a strong peer network.

This is a network of people:

- Facing similar pressures
- Making comparable strategic decisions
- Managing funding risk, staff wellbeing, governance and growth

Alumni now have people they can:

- Sense-check decisions with
- Talk honestly about challenges
- Share solutions without fear of judgement

That kind of trusted peer support is rare and incredibly valuable in this sector.



# Professional Development in Practice



A key tangible benefit for alumni is access to free one-to-one executive coaching, and delivered by experienced leaders from within the Academy itself.

This coaching supports:

- Analysis of complex leadership challenges
- Reflection on personal leadership style
- Practical action planning

It's peer-led, sector-aware and rooted in real experience — not abstract theory.

# Practical Benefits for Organisations

Through the Transformation Alliance, alumni organisations also benefit from practical, cost-saving services that directly strengthen sustainability.

These include:

- Discounted HR, payroll and DBS services
- Reduced-cost IT, data and payroll support
- Branding and design services
- Free IT training via MidKent College

By lowering core costs, more funding can be directed to frontline services where it matters most, whilst the money you do spend goes to supporting your peers.



# Sector-Wide Impact & Replication



The success of the Academy hasn't gone unnoticed. An online world **LEADERS NETWORK** has been delivered to NAVCA members, who expressed interest in replicating the model in other areas.

Narrative accounts have been developed to demonstrate the range and depth of value created, and further dissemination is planned through conference activity.

This shows the Academy isn't just supporting individuals, it's influencing the wider system.

# Sector-Wide Impact & Replication

Alumni are now actively shaping the next phase of development, including exploration of a standardised impact and evidencing tool to support better data collection and funding success across the sector, and work on volunteer sharing and development.

This reflects a shift from:

Individual development to Collective leadership and shared infrastructure

That's the real legacy of the Academy.



# Summary - A community, not a cohort



In summary, the Transformation Academy's greatest success is not just what people learned, it's what they became part of.

- A trusted peer network.
- A shared leadership community.
- And a growing alumni group that continues to support, challenge and strengthen the VCSEF sector long after the programme ends.

That is transformation in its truest sense.