



An tSeirbhís Chúirteanna
Courts Service



Learning & Development

ANNUAL REPORT 2021

Contents

1. Our Vision

1.1 Welcome

1.1.2 Year in Numbers

2. Delivering on the L&D Strategy

2.2 Support for the Modernisation Programme

2.2.1 Desktop Digitisation Modernisation Programme

2.2.2 Courtroom Video Technology

2.2.3 Online Appointment System

2.2.4 Workforce of the Future - Developing Your Career Pathway Programme

2.2.5 Workforce of the Future – Capability Review

2.2.6 Trauma Informed Practice Training

2.2.7 Innovation

2.2.8 JAM Card

2.2.9 JAM Card Champions

2.3 Professional Development

2.3.1 New to Grade

2.3.2 Clerical Officer Development

2.3.3. Corporate Induction

2.3.4. Judicial Assistant Induction

2.3.5 Video Link Assistant Training

2.3.6. Irish Language Training

2.3.7. Sponsorship of Fees

2.3.8 Other Self-Directed Personal Development Modules

2.4 Management & Leadership Development

2.4.1 Coaching for Performance

2.4.2 Team Coaching for Senior Management

2.4.3 Management Development Academy

2.4.4 Managing Probation & Performance

2.5. Technical Training

2.5.1. High Court Orders Management Tool

2.5.2 District Court Domestic Violence

2.5.3 Legal Diary

2.5.4 Courts Accounting System (CAS)

2.5.5 Circuit and District Court Registrar Induction

2.6. Compliance Training

2.6.1. GDPR

2.6.2 Manual Handling

2.6.4 Occupational First Aid Refresher

2.6.4 Covid 19

3. Expenditure

3.1. 2021 Expenditure Breakdown

4. Conclusion and Future Plan

4.1 Accessible Learning Opportunities

4.1.1 Support the Modernisation Programme

4.2 Workforce of the Future

4.2.1 Technical Training

4.2.2 Development Programmes

4.2.3 Digital Skills

4.2.4 Learning & Development Unit

5. Appendices



1. Our Vision

Create and support a culture of learning in the Courts Service that recognises and embraces a more dynamic and flexible approach, integrating more informal learning, coaching, mentoring, access to communities of practice and subject matter collaboration, e-learning and equally important – timely, effective performance feedback

1.1 Welcome

2021 was year of real change for L&D as we continue to support the delivery of the Courts Service Strategy. The year has been both challenging and rewarding in equal measure. The pandemic required staff, in particular frontline staff, to work and deliver services differently. L&D were pivotal in providing the necessary training needs to ensure staff felt capable and confident with these new ways of working.

As a support office, L&D would like to acknowledge the colossal effort operational offices made to ensure staff continued to attend training and their ongoing contribution as SME's or as committee members, to assist us in developing material and delivering training.

We will continue to support staff and judiciary to deliver services by aligning our efforts to the goals and strategy of the organisation. We will continue our policy of taking a blended approach (online/classroom) to all our training programmes. This will allow staff greater flexibility in accessing training based on their needs at a time suitable to them, while ensuring less time is spent away from the office to attend training.

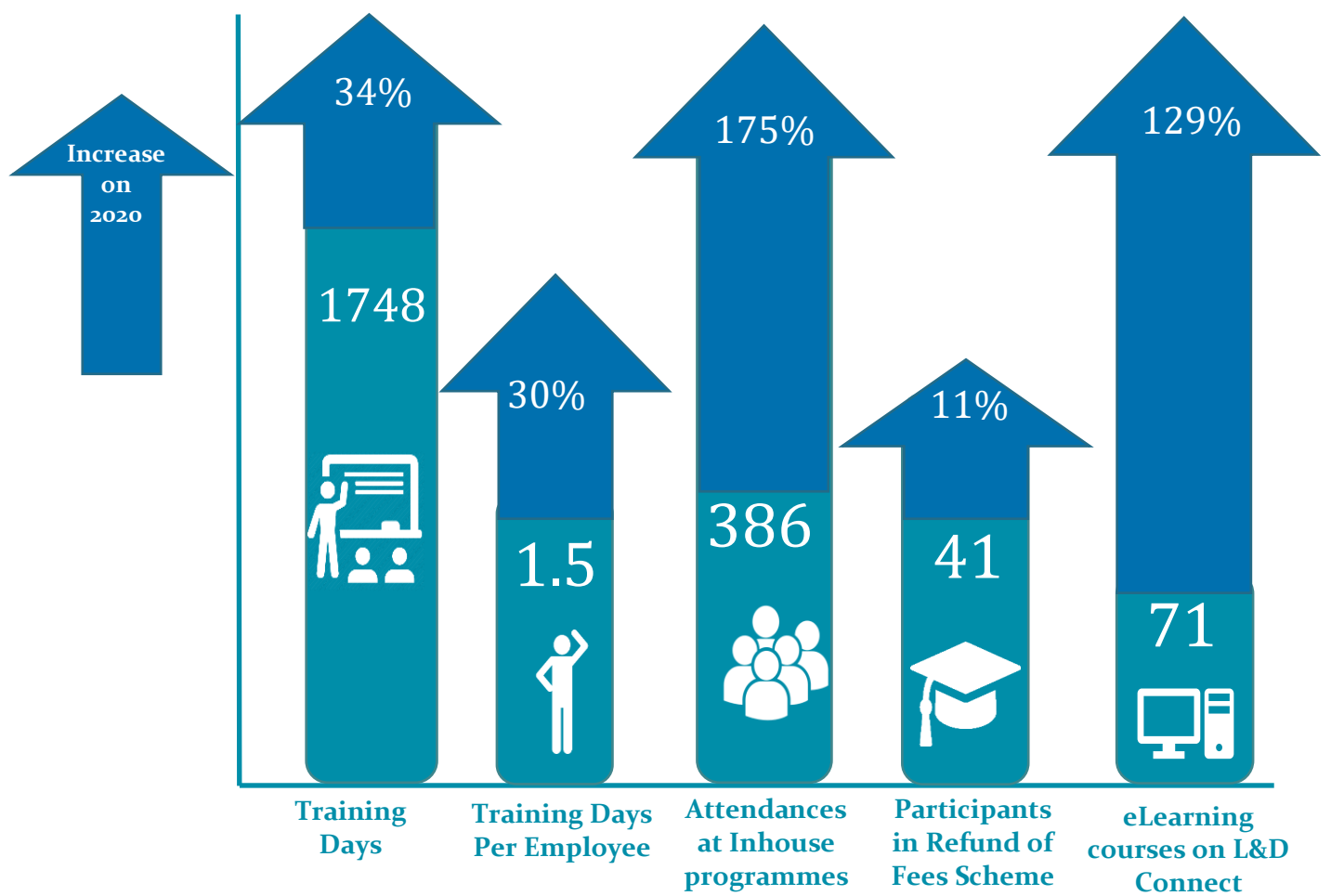
We are a very committed team and we will endeavour to produce high quality training content for all our staff, in both technical and self-development training in 2022.

On a final note, we would like to thank Deirdre Doyle for her immense contribution to the Learning & Development Unit. Deirdre has moved to the Office of the CEO and she takes all our respect and good wishes with her. She established the L&D structure we have today and has been a brilliant leader, colleague and friend to all who have worked with her. So, from all of us in L&D, past and present, many, many thanks.

Richard Kelly

LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

1.1.2 The Year in Numbers





2. Key Highlights

2.1 Delivering on the L&D Strategy

The L&D strategy (2021-2023) outlines three key objectives.

- Develop a comprehensive L&D programme that identifies a blend of approaches to developing capabilities identified from the Target Operating Model (TOM)
- Support staff to acquire the technical and legal skills and knowledge to deliver current business as usual services
- Courts Service modular development curriculum in place, which supports staff in carrying out their current roles and in taking the next step in career progression

The programme of work carried out in 2021 supported the delivery of the key objectives and the associated goals.

The 2020 pandemic saw an acceleration of a move to a blended delivery format for our learning programmes. The blended delivery format continued in 2021 and maximised accessibility of relevant learning to our staff, allowing them to access learning at their own desks and at a time that suits. Building our e-learning content was a priority for 2021, 71 programmes are available as full e-learning courses, 46 of those were developed and rolled out in 2021 as part of the upgrade of the Learning Management System.

The role of technology in supporting initiatives to develop training material online and hold virtual classroom sessions to support staff with the implementation and adoption of new ways of working has been recognized as a key support for the Modernisation Programme.

2.2 Support for the Modernisation Programme

Our Vision for 2030 is “To deliver excellent services to court users; work in partnership with the judiciary and others, to enable a world class courts system.”

To deliver that vision the organisation commits to support colleagues to develop their skills and capabilities as we transform and modernise. To support that career development and job satisfaction, Learning and Development worked with colleagues across the organisation to develop a number of self-development programmes.



2.2.1 Desktop Digitisation Modernisation Programme

The Desktop Digitisation Modernisation Programme (DDMP) will provide everyone in the Courts Service with a modern desktop with improved collaboration and communication functionality tools. L&D are a key member of the DDMP multi-disciplinary team delivering this project which commenced in Q3 2021 and is due to conclude in Q4 2022. The training was delivered using online self-directed learning and virtual classrooms. Virtual classrooms were delivered to 37 staff in 2021.

2.2.2 Courtroom Video Technology

During 2021 the use of remote courts continued to increase. The number of technical enabled courtrooms increased from 9 in 2020 to 48 in 2021. An investment of €2.6m in courtroom technology illustrates our commitment to improve accessibility to courts for all and to ensure the Courts can operate outside

of a physical courtroom setting. With new ways of working comes challenges for those working in courts with the immediacy and fast pace of work. Online training courses and forums were provided for all Court Registrars and Video Link Operators in the use of the virtual platform that hosts the online courts to ensure the competent operation of the court technology.

2.2.3 Online Appointment System

As part of the Modernisation programme an online appointment system was introduced in three pilot offices in 2021 to reduce the footfall and waiting times for customers at public counters and reduce the burden on staff to cope with the capacity restrictions during the pandemic. The pilot was a huge success in improving customer service and reduce waiting times at public offices. Due to the success of the pilot, the application will be rolled out in phased bases in 2022. 76 staff completed online training in 2021 on this new system.

2.2.4 Workforce of the Future - Developing Your Career Pathway Programme

As part of the organisations commitment to investing in our people, a new programme ‘Developing Your Career Pathway’ was rolled out in 2021. The aim of this programme is to support participants to develop a career plan, which will provide a focus for their development and career goals. This multi-modular programme is delivered in a blended learning format, to participants, who work through the programme in a self-directed manner with the support of a mentor.

The programme was rolled out to 46 Clerical Offices in 2021 and will then progress to our Executive Officer colleagues in 2022.

Staff were also invited to act as ‘Career Champion’ mentors to the groups of participants. A Career Champion may be at any grade from Executive Officer and above. The role of Career Champion is to help participants gain an understanding of career development, assist with career planning and goal setting and facilitate participants to develop self-awareness. We currently have 12 “Career Champions” who are actively participating in this programme.

2.2.5 Workforce of the Future – Capability Review

A Capability Assessment was carried out in July 2021 to assess our current staff capabilities and identify skills gaps. The assessment was carried out via survey, and looked at three areas:

- Professional capabilities such as collaboration, communication, problem solving, change, teamwork, user orientation, business and financial and leadership.
- Professional qualifications – our colleagues have qualifications across a wide range of areas such as leadership, innovation, management, finance, law and information technology.
- Digital capabilities – as we invest in new technology and take a digital first approach to service delivery, we'll need to work, share, collaborate and communicate in new ways online. Digital capabilities help us navigate the online digital world evolving around us. The European Digital Framework, also known as DigiComp, is the European Commission tool to improve citizens' digital competence. Courts Service staff responses to the digital capabilities questions were reviewed and their confidence in different Digital Competence Framework 2.0 (DigiComp 2.0) capability areas were assessed. We were the first Irish Civil Service organisation to benchmark our skills against the DigiComp framework.

2.2.6 Trauma Informed Practice Training

Working in the Courts Service means we often encounter people who have survived serious traumatic instances (both during childhood and/or adulthood) in their lives. Trauma Informed Practice training assists staff understand the needs and experiences of service users and be able to respond to them in the moment.

This programme was made available to staff in Q3 2021. Over 44 staff members participated, and the feedback was overwhelmingly positive. This programme will continue on a voluntary basis in 2022. The evaluation scores indicate that this programme was well received with the acknowledgement of the difficult environment in which staff work. (see Appendix 2).

“The design, content and flow of the course were all exceptional. I honestly don’t think I personally got so much out of a course for many years.”

2.2.7. Support for Innovation

Innovation has been defined as “*the creation of a new, viable offering that adds value*” and is deemed a critical requirement for all Public Service organisations to progress the development and delivery of services both today and for tomorrow. The Courts Service Innovation Strategy was launched in 2021. This strategy reflects the need to continuously improve, deliver best in class services and to tackle the major challenges facing both the Courts Service and Ireland in the years to come.

As part of the strategy, Innovation Advocates L&D workshops were organised for individual staff members to champion innovation across the organisation. 17 members of staff attended these workshops in 2021.

2.2.8 JAM Card

The Just A Minute (JAM) Card training was introduced in 2021 with the aim to become a JAM Card friendly organisation. It is a card and app that allows people with learning difficulties and communication barriers to ask for a minute of patience when they need it. This online module was completed by 792 staff in 2021, 69% of the organisation.

2.2.9 JAM Card Champions

JAM Card champion training was also developed and delivered in 2021. This programme trained advocates within the organisation to raise and keep up awareness of the JAM Card concept with staff and court users. It was delivered to 15 champions.

2.3 Professional Development

Tailored grade programmes are offered to allow staff to develop skills appropriate to their grades. These courses are supplemented and supported by Induction courses and specific role requirements courses. Other self-directed development courses are also available. All staff have access to request sponsorship of fees to enable them to upskill in specific roles as required. See 2.3.7.

2.3.1 New to Grade

New to Grade programmes are aimed at supporting staff in the first year of their promotion to a higher grade. These programmes were provided to newly promoted Executive Officers (48), Higher Executive Officers (22) and Assistant Principals (11) in 2021. The programmes comprised a number of elements including practical workshops, mentoring, coaching skills programme, and a Community of Practice - Peer Support Network. Some feedback received is highlighted below.

“I found that the workshops where we looked at different workplace scenarios around performance and probation to me be the most useful.”

“The Coaching for Performance module was very practical, and I have begun to use Coaching techniques in my workplace discussions with colleagues.”

“I found all the elements of the programme useful, in particular, the Personal Effectiveness course. I enjoyed getting to know my colleagues from other offices in the discussions we had in the breakout rooms.”

2.3.2 Clerical Officer Development

This 2-day classroom programme was transitioned to a blended online course in 2021. It was delivered to 76 Clerical Officers to provide them an opportunity to further develop the core competencies required so they can contribute effectively in their role as a CO in the organisation. This programme received very positive feedback and the evaluation scores indicate that this programme had a positive effect on the knowledge level of programme participants. (See Appendix 3)



2.4.3. Corporate Induction

The Courts Service Corporate Induction programme continued to be delivered online in 2021. With participants completing online learning modules followed by a short virtual classroom where they had the opportunity to meet other new starters and have a Q&A session with staff of L&D and HR. Induction was delivered to 74 new starters to the organisation in 2021.

2.3.4. Judicial Assistant Induction

L&D collaborated with colleagues in the Legal Research and Library Services Office to facilitate Corporate Induction for 45 Judicial Assistants who joined the organisation throughout 2021. The retention rate for JAs has improved considerably due to support and training provided.

2.3.5 Video Link Assistant Training

The video link assistant training was transitioned online in 2021. Participants complete the online Children First TUSLA training, they are then given access to the e-learning module on L&D Connect which covers the Video Link Assistant Courts Service Policy. 8 participants successfully completed this course in 2021.

2.3.6. Irish Language Training

The organisation continued to support the development of our staff in the use of Irish language. This course seeks to provide participants with the confidence and language skills necessary to communicate through Irish with the public in the context of their work. In 2021 L&D collaborated with One-Learning to facilitate this course for 8 participants.

2.3.7. Sponsorship of Fees

The purpose of the Sponsorship of Fees Scheme is to accommodate our staff by sponsoring fees in respect of courses of study for continuous professional development. This strategy is important to the Courts Service to ensure our staff are developing the necessary skills to support the organisation in specific roles.

The following courses were sponsored in 2021.

- Project Management
- Certificate in Audit Skills
- Train the Trainer
- FOI Decision Maker
- eLearning Essentials
- Social Media Strategy and Management for the Public Sector
- Change Management

2.3.8 Other Self-Directed Personal Development Modules

As part of the L&D Connect upgrade, a number of courses were made available to support staff in the area of Personal Development. While these courses are not accredited, the Courts Services recognizes the effort and commitment to the organisation to improve capability to delivery in service delivery

- Self-development 101 completed by 8 staff
- Mindset completed by 28 staff
- Developing Emotional Intelligence completed by 25 staff
- Resilience completed by 19 staff
- Time Management completed by 13 staff
- Competency based interview skills completed by 52 staff

2.4 Management & Leadership Development

Developing Management and Leadership skills for the future is critical to the success of the Courts Service. L&D have developed and delivered a number of bespoke programmes aimed at developing the future leaders of the organisation and enhancing the skills of those in a leadership role at present. These courses are aimed at existing managers and to members of staff recently promoted into a management or leadership role.

2.4.1 Coaching for Performance

Coaching for Performance continued to prove popular in 2021 with 49 participants attending the 3-day virtual classroom. This highly practical, interactive programme provides participants with enhanced communication skills which allows them to adopt a coaching approach with those they manage, with peers and with stakeholders. To keep those skills up to date, a refresher was also made available to 18 past participants.



2.4.2 Team Coaching for Senior Management

The Senior Management Team demonstrated the importance they place on continuous development by engaging in a Leadership Development programme of activities as a team in 2021.

2.4.3 Management Development Academy

The Management Development Academy was developed to both support and enhance key capabilities of managers who need to be capable of handling diverse projects, multiple tasks, competing and changing demands and to steer an effective course through the current Courts Service change agenda. It is a QQI accredited programme delivered in a blended format covering 8 modules over 11 virtual classrooms. It was delivered to 41 managers in 2021.

2.4.4 Managing Probation & Performance

Managing Probation & Performance training is delivered by our colleagues in HR, it has a very practical focus, to provide participants with the appropriate knowledge required to successfully manage probation and the performance of those reporting to them. In 2021, this course was delivered to 34 new managers.

2.5. Technical Training

Technical training was delivered to staff in various areas of the organization. The delivery of technical training was challenging as Covid significantly reduced access to staff who are Subject Matter Experts (SME's) and also to learners and as a result some updated technical training was not delivered. The areas of training that were delivered were delivered in a blended format and were very well received. L&D pivoted to online design and delivery by embracing new technology and re-designing courses to be delivered remotely with improved interaction to enhance the experience for learners.

2.5.1. High Court Orders Management Tool

A High Court Orders Management Tool was introduced to standardise how High Court Orders are recorded and accessed. L&D collaborated with the project team to create an e-learning module which was accessed by 65 registrars and staff of the High Court in 2021.

2.5.2 District Court Domestic Violence

The District Court Domestic Violence e-learning course is recommended for all District Court staff working in Family Law. This module covers legislation, jurisdiction, types of Orders that can be made, documentation and useful sources of information and other resources. It was completed by 69 staff in 2021. The evaluation scores indicate that this programme had a positive effect on the knowledge level of programme attendees. (See Appendix 4)

2.5.3 Legal Diary

The Circuit Court Legal Diary training is available as an e-learning module to provide staff of the Circuit Court guidance on how to create and upload court lists. In 2021, this was completed by 35 staff.

Legal Diary Format for Website is a short online course that provides participants with the skills to correctly format courts lists in MS Word and upload quickly to the Courts.ie website. 24 staff completed this in 2021.

2.5.4 Courts Accounting System (CAS)

CAS e-learning was completed by 34 staff in 2021. This module comprises of short 'How to' videos assisting new users to the CAS system.

2.5.5 Circuit and District Court Registrar Induction

The Circuit and District Court Registrar Induction is an e-learning course designed to provide newly appointed Circuit and District Court Registrars with an understanding of the basic rules, etiquette and procedures required to carry out their role as Court Registrar. The course was completed by 32 participants. The evaluation scores indicate that this programme had a positive effect on the knowledge level of programme attendees. (See Appendix 5)

2.6. Compliance Training

2.6.1. GDPR

The purpose of this online course is to explain what is expected of individuals who handle personal data. All employees of the Courts Service must complete it and it forms part of Induction, so that new entrants complete this on joining us. This e-learning course was undertaken by 156 staff members in 2021.

2.6.2 Manual Handling

38 staff participated in Manual Handling in 2021.

2.6.3 Occupational First Aid Refresher

Refresher training in Occupational First Aid was delivered to 29 staff in 2021.

2.6.4 Covid 19

There are four online courses relating to Covid 19, three of which must be completed by all staff:

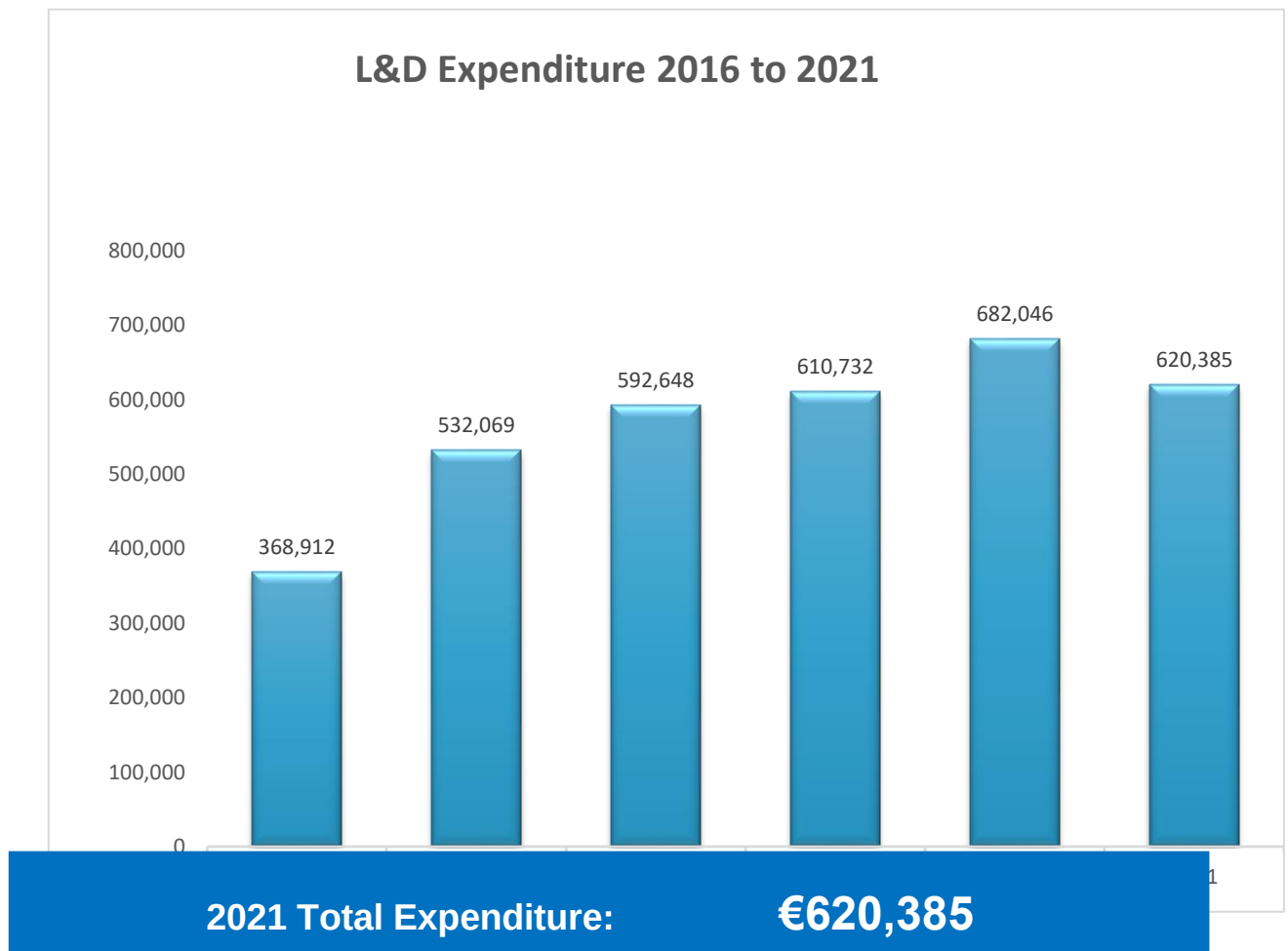
- COVID-19: Safety Training completed by 147 staff in 2021
- COVID-19: Fire Safety Refresher completed by 574 staff in 2021
- COVID-19: First Aid completed by 82 staff in 2021

Managers in certain areas must complete the following:

- COVID-19: Managers Health and Safety Guidance completed by 42 managers in 2021.

3. Expenditure

The Learning and Development budget for 2021 decreased from €710,000 to €670,000 from the previous year. L&D expenditure in 2021 was €620,385, a 93% spend of the overall budget. This included expenditure on travel and subsistence, refund of fees, e-learning and other expenses. The decrease was mainly due to a reduction in our Conference and T&S requirement due to the pandemic.



 T&S €1,880	 Refund of Fees €82,367	 Membership & Subscriptions €28,970
 Learning Management System / E-Learning €95,718	 Management & Leadership Development €197,714	 Health & Safety €7,875
 Professional Development €189,417	 Refreshments €1,604	 Pre-Retirement Courses €862.00
 Irish Language €8,915	 Stationery €979.00	 Conferences €4,084



4. Conclusion and Future Plans

4.1 Accessible Learning Opportunities

In order to make learning more accessible, we plan to continue to deliver programmes in a blended format. We will continue to provide valuable training material both through online learning and classroom training where appropriate and where the demand requires. We will continue to sponsor training in specific skill sets and encourage those to upskill independently by providing refund of fees.

4.1.1 Support the Modernisation Programme

The Learning and Development Strategy 2020-2023 will continue to support the projects and initiatives as the Modernisation Programme through the Transition phase (2020-2022) and the Transform Phase (2023-2025).

4.2 Workforce of the Future

4.2.1 Technical Training

Whilst we are progressing the Modernisation Programme, we also need to continue to deliver our current services and must ensure that we are continuing to support staff in doing so. We will support staff to acquire the technical and legal skills and knowledge to deliver current *business as usual* services. We will continue to collaborate with our colleagues in the Operational Directorates in the design and delivery of their technical training programmes.

4.2.2 Development Programmes

The Courts Service aspires to be a learning organisation. Development opportunities should therefore be available to all staff based on role, individual needs, and the results of performance review and development discussions with their managers. We will continue to promote and support continuous learning, encourage self-development and better plan for investment in people. The vision is for learning to be an integral part of our core business so that we deliver quality services to court users through the continuous improvement of the organisation and the people working within it. We will continue to develop and rollout relevant development programmes to support our staff and their career development.

4.2.3 Digital Skills

An area for focus in 2022 for L&D is building digital capability, to allow us work, communicate, collaborate in new and enhanced ways as new digital tools become available.

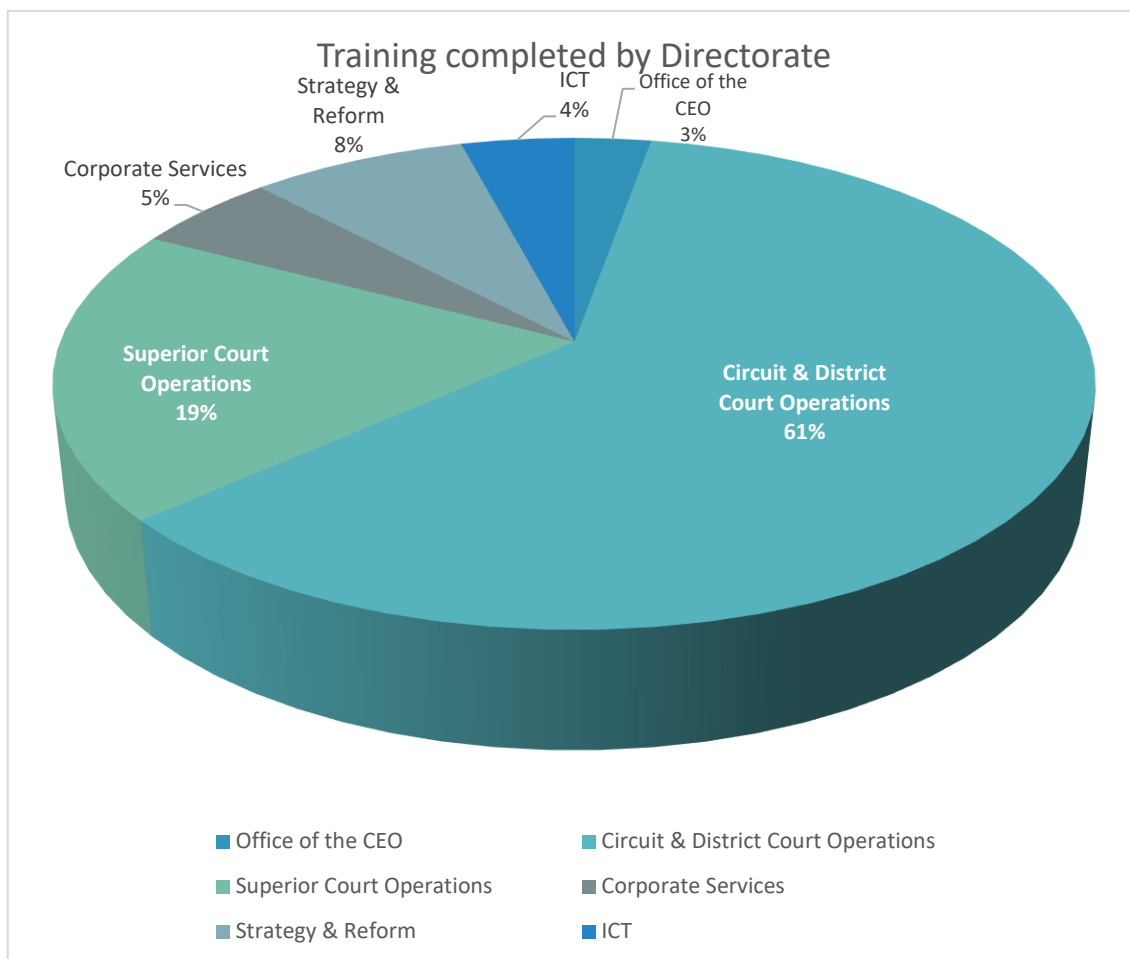
4.2.4 Learning & Development Unit

We will continue to invest in the capability of the L&D unit and our trainers, to ensure their ability to develop and deliver best in class learning interventions. We will also maximise the use of learning technologies to allow access to learning in a flexible way, as and when it is needed.

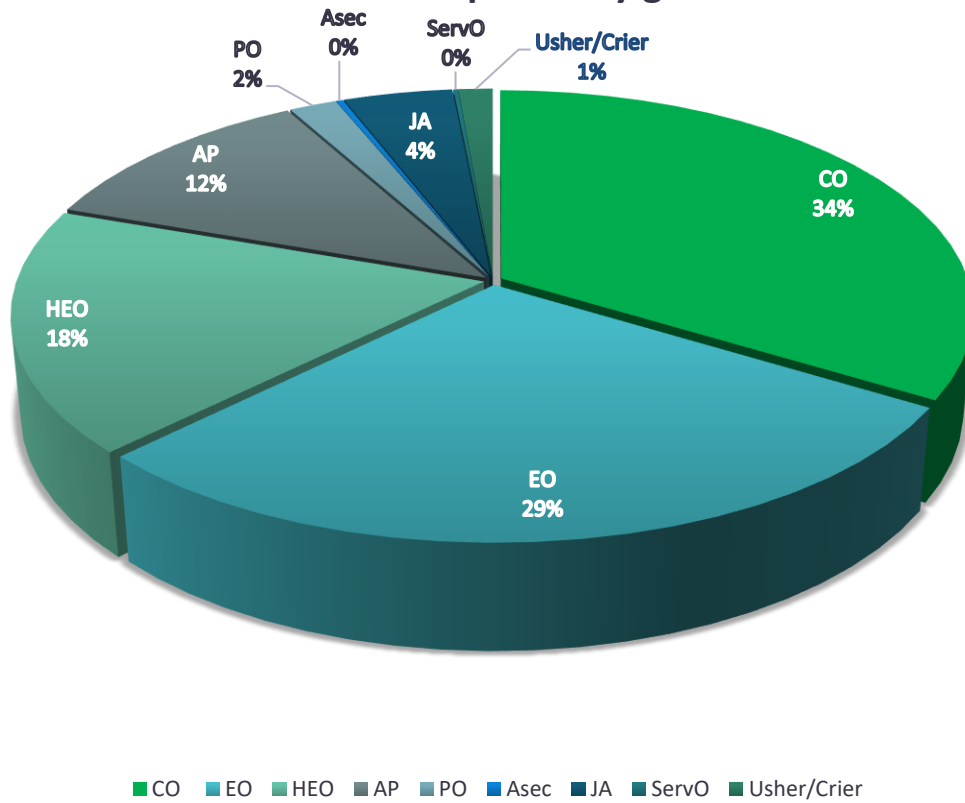
We will develop and deliver programmes using a collaborative approach with other business units and act as an enabler of learning; supporting and facilitating individuals to take responsibility for their own learning.

5. Appendices

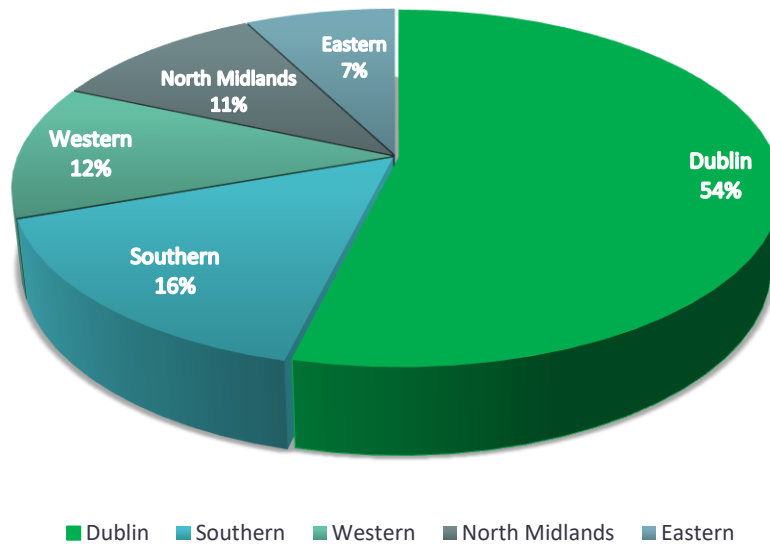
Appendix 1 – Analysis of training accessed



Courses completed by grade

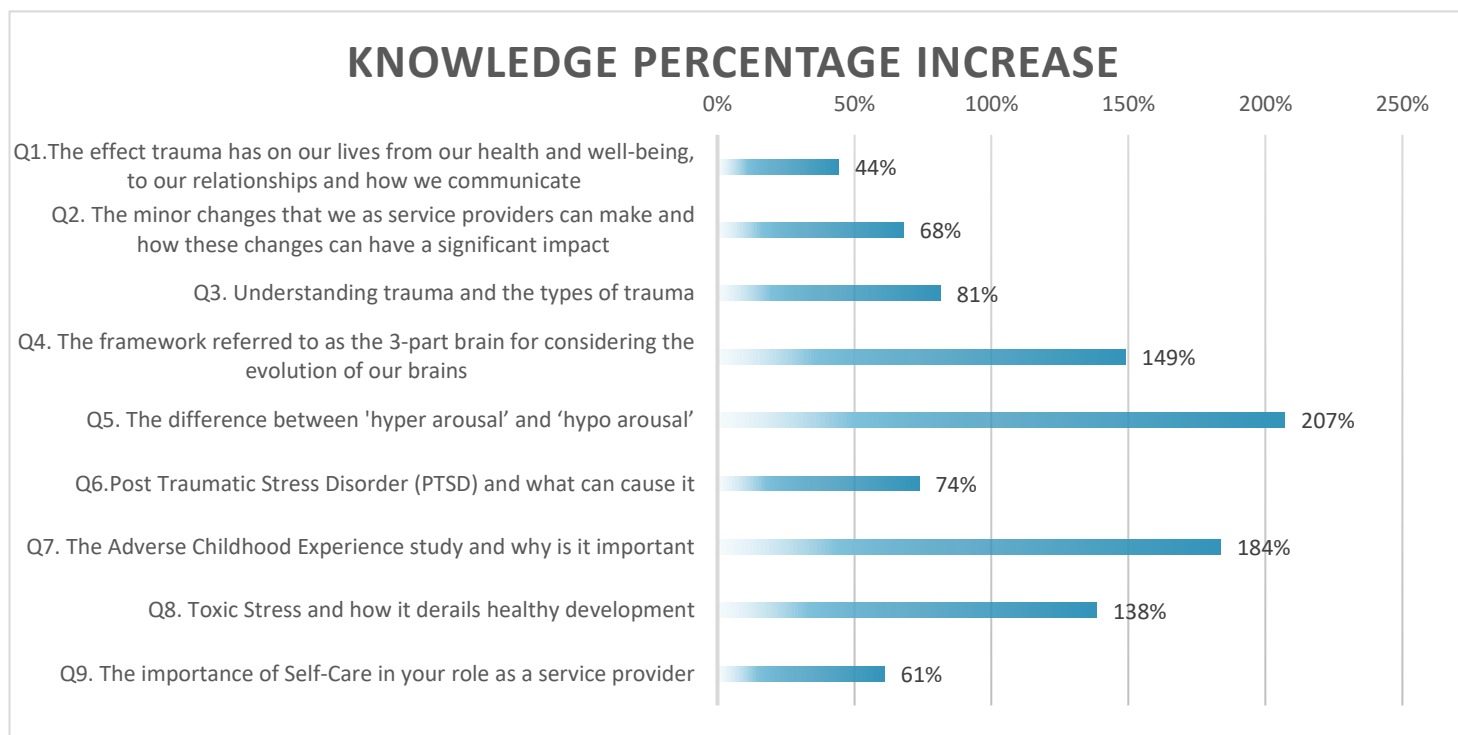
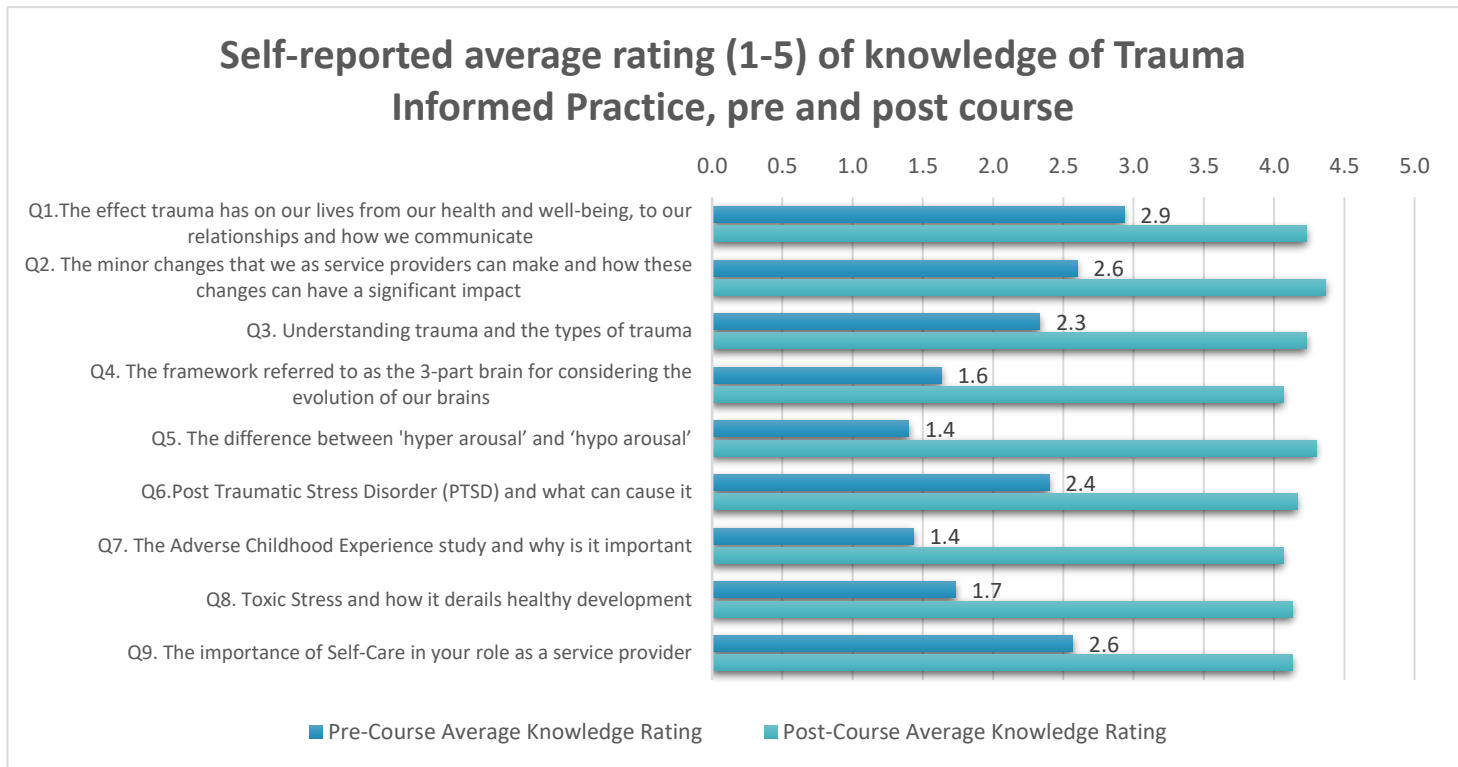


Training days accessed by Region



Appendix 2: Trauma Informed Practice

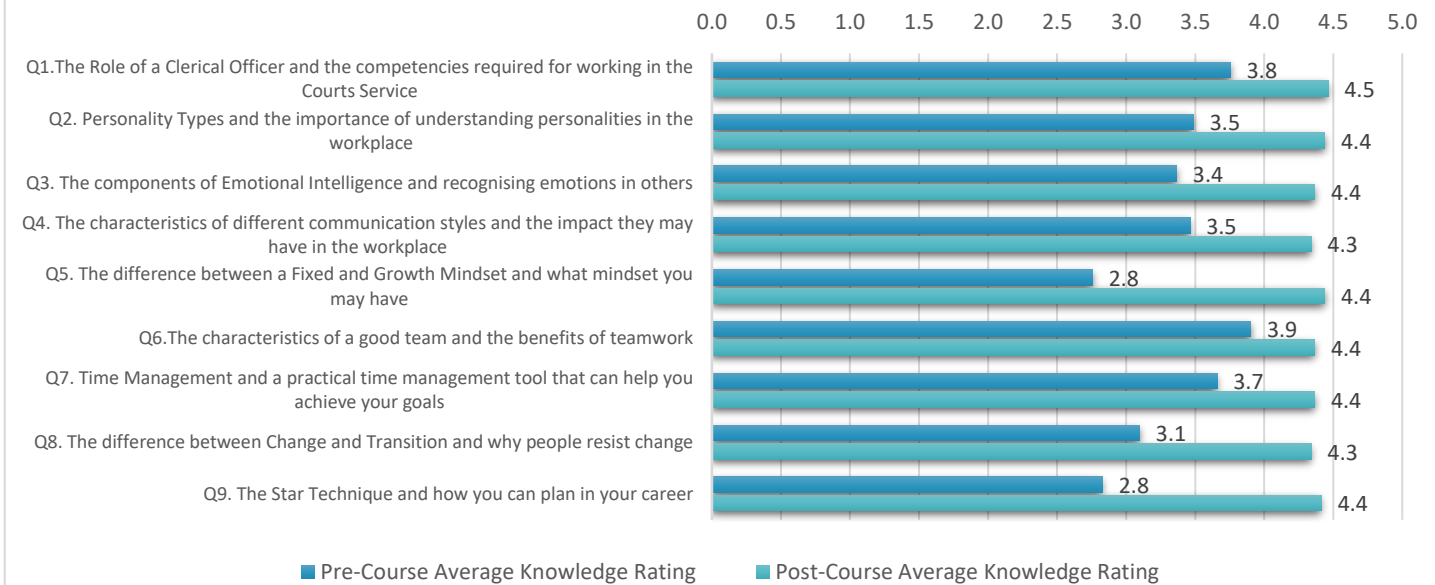
The overall average of knowledge increased from 2.1 to 4.2 after the course, this is an overall percentage knowledge increase of 112%. Participants were asked pre and post course to rate their knowledge on a scale of 1 to 5, (1 no knowledge - 5 expert) in the following areas:



Appendix 3: Clerical Officer Development Programme

The overall average of knowledge increased from 3.4 to 4.4 after the course, this is an overall percentage knowledge increase of 32%. Participants were asked pre and post course to rate their knowledge on a scale of 1 to 5, (1 no knowledge - 5 expert) in the following areas:

Self-reported average rating (1-5) of knowledge of CO Development, pre and post course



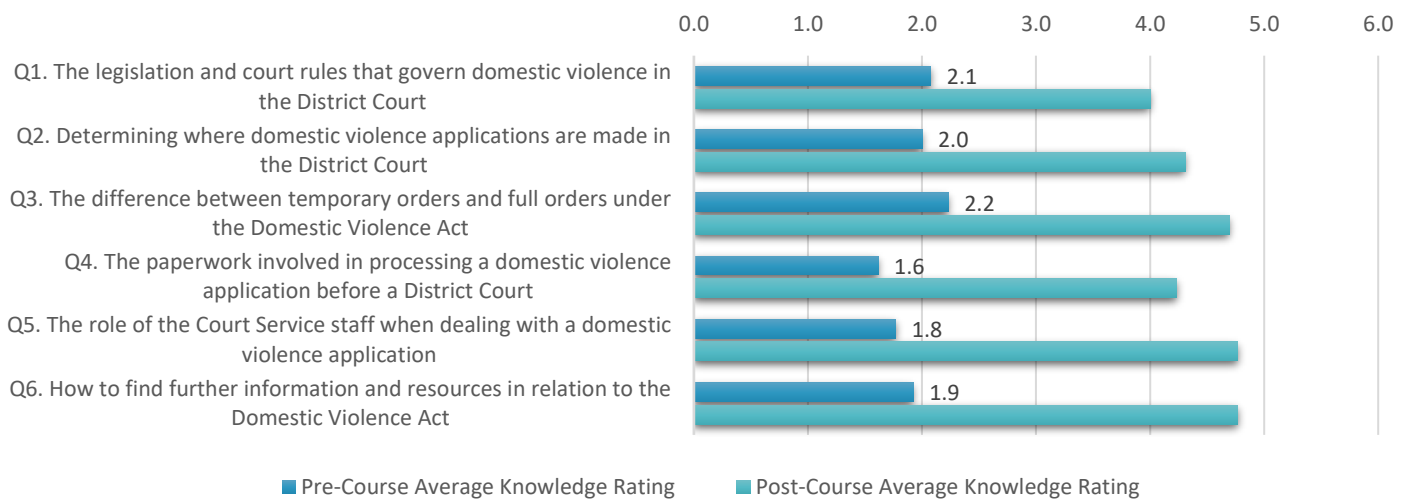
KNOWLEDGE PERCENTAGE INCREASE



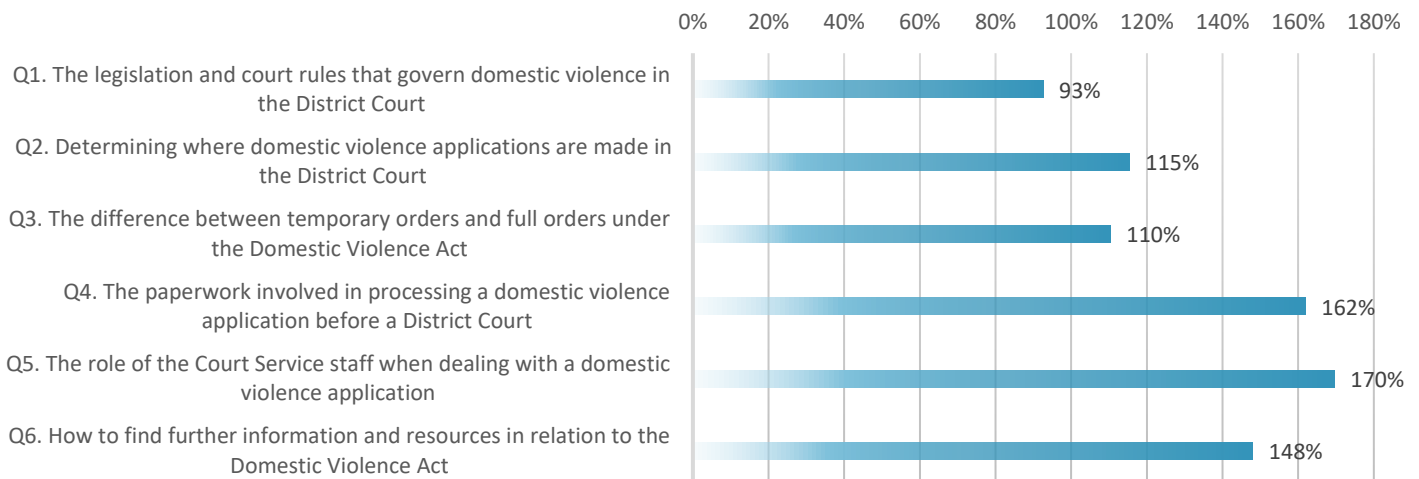
Appendix 4: District Court Domestic Violence eLearning

The overall average of knowledge increased from 1.9 to 4.5 after the course, this is an overall percentage knowledge increase of 133%. Participants were asked pre and post course to rate their knowledge on a scale of 1 to 5, (1 no knowledge - 5 expert) in the following areas:

Self-reported average rating (1-5) of knowledge of District Court Domestic Violence, pre and post course



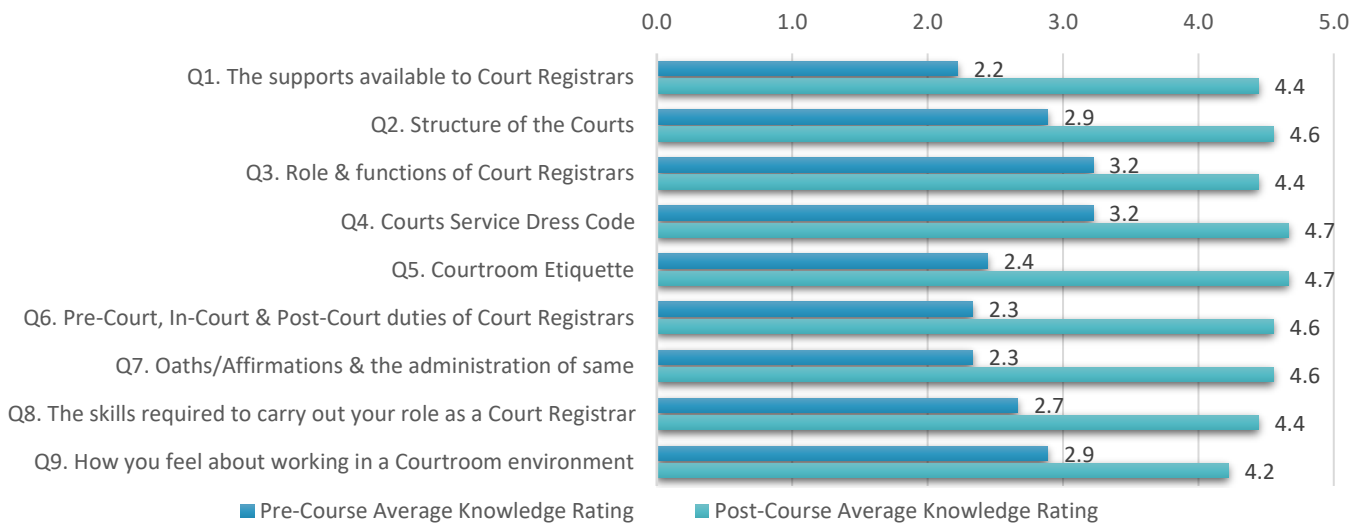
KNOWLEDGE PERCENTAGE INCREASE



Appendix 5: Circuit and District Court Registrar Induction

The overall average of knowledge increased from 2.7 to 4.5 after the course, this is an overall percentage knowledge increase of 71%. Participants were asked pre and post course to rate their knowledge on a scale of 1 to 5, (1 no knowledge - 5 expert) in the following areas:

Self-reported average rating (1-5) of knowledge of Court Registrar Induction, pre and post course



KNOWLEDGE PERCENTAGE INCREASE

