Learning and Development Strategy
2020 - 2023

An tSeirbhís Chúirteanna
Courts Service

CONTENTS

FOREWORD

I am delighted to introduce our Learning and Development Strategic plan 2020-2023 which is a plan of intent for all staff working in the Courts Service.

The organisation has embarked on a ten year modernisation programme which aims to better support access to justice in a modern digital Ireland. This strategy creates a picture of where the organisation wants to be in the future with Learning and Development to support the building of staff capability, capacity and commitment. The work of the Courts Service is complex and diverse and this plan speaks to that reality as it seeks to support the first three years of our modernisation programme.

The strategy was developed in very uncertain times when we undoubtedly face many future challenges. It is structured so as to support the organisation to be able to respond and continue to play our part in meeting those challenges. Resilience, agility and our capacity to develop and prosper are core strengths which each of us must develop in order to thrive in a constantly changing environment.

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 must 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. This necessarily involves learning from our failures as well as from our successes.

This plan also aims to consolidate what we have, build on good practice and anticipate changes to ways of working, thinking and behaviour. The strategy aims to support individual; team and organisational learning so that the Courts Service meets its objective to lead the modernisation of the court system.

Angela Denning

Angela Denning
Chief Executive Officer, The Courts Service

1.   CONTEXT

CONTEXT

The Courts Service has committed to the implementation of a ten year strategy (Strategic Long Term Vision 2030) aimed at building a modern, transparent and accessible courts system that is quicker, easier to access and more efficient.

The strategic objective of this strategy is to deliver a modernisation programme that will provide the broad range of services that are essential to the operation of the courts system; whilst also becoming more agile, innovative, driving the change and transformation. The strategic drivers for the modernisation programme are outlined below.

This Learning and development Strategy must ensure that the staff of the Courts Service will have the skills and capabilities to perform at the high level required for the implementation of this vision and to equip our people to carry out new and different ways of doing things.

CONTEXT

Strategic Drivers

Civil Service Reform

Our Public Service 2020 (OPS2020) is the framework for transformation and innovation in Ireland's public service. It proposes a range of new approaches to service delivery in order to make public services more transparent, accountable and effective.

Justice Reform

The Irish justice system is experiencing significant change in its operations. Courts Service modernisation is integral to an integrated transformation of the justice sector.

Best Practice

The Irish court system is well behind many international peers and Irish public sector agencies in delivering user-centred services and leveraging the full potential of digital technology. The Courts Service aims to work collaboratively with all stakeholders in seeking to bring about a world-class court system.

User Expectation

Accessing public services via digital online solutions is a minimum expectation for many Irish citizens and businesses. The Courts Service has a predominantly paper-driven, face-to-face service model and lags behind the majority of peer agencies and Departments in delivering online services.

Digital Public Services

The Government's Public Service Data Strategy 2019 - 2023 and Public Service ICT Strategy promotes the improved use of data as well as an ICT and digitally-enabled society so that more cost-effective, simplified and timely services can be provided to users.

The Open Data and Public Service Information Directive

This directive sets out guidelines which ensure that data needs to be available to support evidence-based decision and policy making and to aid transparency.

COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted on the day-to-day operations of the Courts Service. This has introduced new ways of innovative working and reinforced the need for digitisation and modernisation of the Courts Service's IT systems and applications.

## 2.	KEY OBJECTIVES

KEY OBJECTIVES

This Learning and Development Strategy will support the implementation of the Transition phase (2020-2022) of the long term strategic vision 2030 which lays the foundations needed to give effect to our vision of delivering excellent services to court users; working in partnership with the judiciary and others to enable a world class courts system.".

In order to support this phase this strategy has 3 key objectives.

1. Develop a comprehensive learning and development programme that identifies a blend of approaches to developing staff capabilities in areas as identified in the modernisation programme for the Courts Service.

2. Support staff to acquire the technical and legal skills and knowledge to deliver current business as usual services. Whilst we are preparing the foundations for delivery of 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.

3. Deliver a modular development curriculum, which supports staff in carrying out their current roles and in taking the next step in career progression. As recruitment, mobility, retirements, lateral moves and secondments create opportunities for engaging new talent and movement into a new role or a new grade, we must ensure that we have an accessible suite of learning opportunities and programmes which will support people in taking their next step.

An action plan which sets out the steps we will take to achieve these objectives can be seen at Appendix 3.

3.   APPROACH

APPROACH

Implementation of the previous strategy resulted in;

- Methodology established for the development and delivery of technical training

- Equipping managers with coaching skills to maximise their effectiveness

- Development and roll out of an Online Learning Management System – L&D connect

- Design and roll out of suite of development programmes, including accredited management and leadership development programmes

- Review and expansion of Induction programme

- Design and roll out of Registrar Induction programme

- First steps towards a blended delivery approach

Learning Culture

Building on the achievements of the previous strategy we will continue to embed a learning culture. The foundations of a learning culture are set out below. These six pillars will guide our implementation of this strategy.

Governance
- Outcomes based focus
- Data driven decision making
- Ongoing evaluation of programmes, demonstrating value and impacts achieved.

Formal learning
- Courts Service Curriculum
- Coaching and mentoring
- Increase blended delivery and flexible access

Informal learning
- Link learning to work
- Curated content
- Communities of Practice

Learning and Development
- Invest in L&D capability
- Learning enabler, facilitate and support learners to learn
- Collaborate to deliver, using agile approach

Individual
- Steer own learning
- Increase self-directed learning
- Focus on career development and continuous learning

Manager
- Support their teams to learn by integrating learning with work
- Coach and be coached
- Active in own development

Governance

Governance
- Outcomes based focus
- Data driven decision making
- Ongoing evaluation of programmes, demonstrating value and impacts achieved.

- The Learning and Development (L&D) unit have responsibility for the implementation of this strategy.

- Decisions concerning learning and development activities will be outcomes based, to ensure alignment with business goals and priorities. Having a clear idea of what needs to be learned and the outcomes that are expected provides a foundation to evaluate effectiveness and demonstrate the impact of L&D (as above)to the organisation.

- Learning priorities will be informed by various inputs; Strategic priorities, capability and skills audit, learning needs analysis, individual and office development plans.

- Activities will be evaluated to ensure they are achieving the outcomes required and programmes will be regularly reviewed and updated to ensure they remain relevant.

- Regular reporting on the implementation of the strategy will take place; Quarterly KPI reports to SMT, reporting to the Partnership committee and a yearly Annual Report.

Formal learning

Formal learning
- Courts Service Curriculum
- Coaching and mentoring
- Increase blended delivery and flexible access

We will develop a Courts Service curriculum, of bespoke programmes specifically developed for the needs of the organisation. This will be made up of technical/ business specific modules and a suite of development modules for all grades.

- The Courts Service "development curriculum" of modules can be seen at appendix 1. This outlines the modules which are currently (or soon to be) in place. These will be added to in response to business needs and priorities and staff can navigate their own learning path through this curriculum dependent on their own needs and needs of their specific role.

- It is our intention to seek to have an accredited suite of technical modules and over the course of this strategy we will investigate options to progress this.

- A key focus of this strategy is to maximise the transfer of learning to the workplace. This will be achieved through a number of measures;

  √ Pre and post course work, for classroom modules, ensuring that learners get the maximum benefit from attending training,

  √ Curated suite of content delivered via a blended learning approach, designed to support and embed learning

  √ Involvement of manager pre and post course, to set the context for learning and to facilitate and give feedback and support on application in the workplace.

  √ Provision of a learning support module, to support learners to get the maximum from their involvement in learning activities, and prepare them to undertake assignments/assessments

Informal learning

Informal learning
- Link learning to work
- Curated content
- Communities of Practice

We recognise that not all learning takes place in a structured formal classroom environment setting. Informal learning comes in many forms, including viewing videos, self-study, reading articles, participating in forums, performance support, and coaching conversations.

Informal learning gives control to the learners to choose the learning content from various sources, based on their interest, preferences, and relevance. These can be consumed at the learner's pace. Informal learning can happen any time of the day and includes interactions with colleagues, seniors, or coaches.

The L&D Unit will support learners by:

- Creating communities of practice, (such as new to grade networks) where staff in similar roles can share ideas and learn from each other.

- Providing staff with a suite of online curated learning content, giving staff the choice to access content most relevant to them.

- Developing a coaching culture within the organisation, so that informal coaching conversations happen on a regular basis.

- Organising 'lunch and learn' sessions about relevant topics.

Learning and Development

Learning and Development
- Invest in L&D capability
- Learning enabler, facilitate and support learners to learn
- Collaborate to deliver, using agile approach

- We will invest in the resources necessary to implement this strategy, the target for investment is the equivalent to 4% of overall payroll spend (benchmarked best practice)

- 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 maximise the use of learning technologies to allow access to learning in a flexible way, as and when it is needed

RESOURCES   **TECHNOLOGY**   **PROGRAMMES**   **COMPLIANCE**
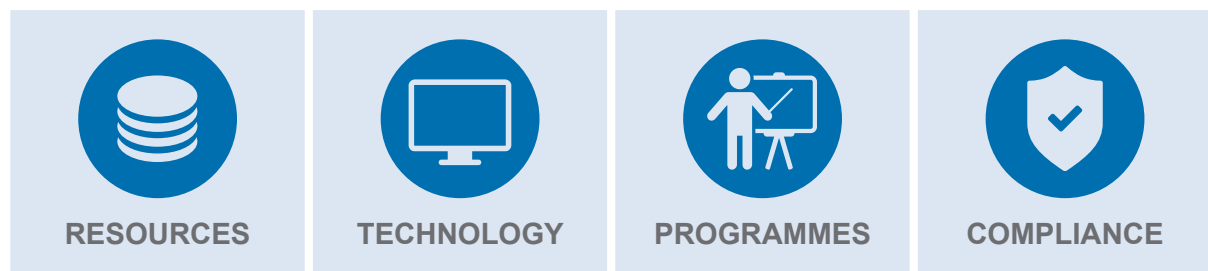
The L&D unit will;

- develop and deliver programmes using a collaborative approach with other business units

- act as an enabler of learning; supporting and facilitating individuals to take responsibility for their own learning

- Use an agile approach to development, outcome focused, people led, data driven and iterative

ANALYSE
ACCELERATE
ACTIVATE

Agile Mindset
Outcome focused
People led
Data driven
Iterative
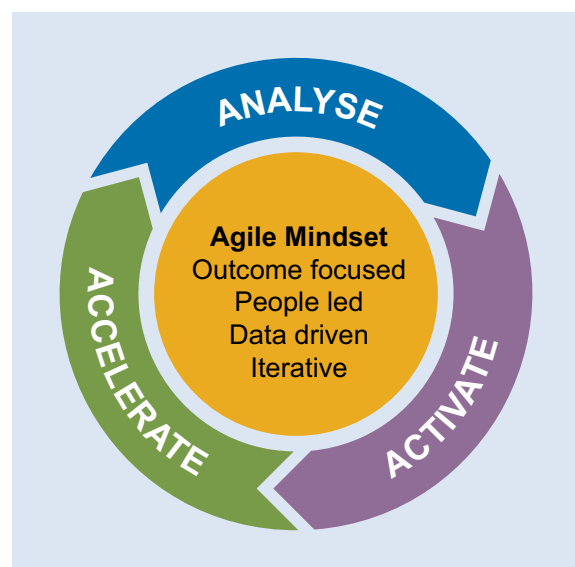
Individual

Individual
- Steer own learning
- Increase self-directed learning
- Focus on career development and continuous learning

In its broadest meaning, self-directed learning (SDL) describes a process in which individuals take the initiative, with or without the help of others, in diagnosing their learning needs, formulating learning goals, identifying human and material resources for learning, choosing and implementing appropriate learning strategies, and evaluating learning outcomes. It provides the opportunity to acquire the most essential skills in becoming a life- long learner; knowledge of how to learn. It's hallmarks are a sense of responsibility for own learning and the ability and desire to continue learning

- Self-knowledge and the ability to assess own performance critically and accurately, and

- An Understanding of how to apply knowledge and abilities in different contexts.

The L&D unit will support learners by;

- letting learners know what resources are available: subscriptions, access to libraries, curated suite of content via L&D connect, which can be accessed by the learner at their own pace and to suit their own learning goals

- facilitating the Refund of Fees scheme

- enabling and supporting self-reliance, building a culture of continuous, self-directed learning utilising coaching and mentoring
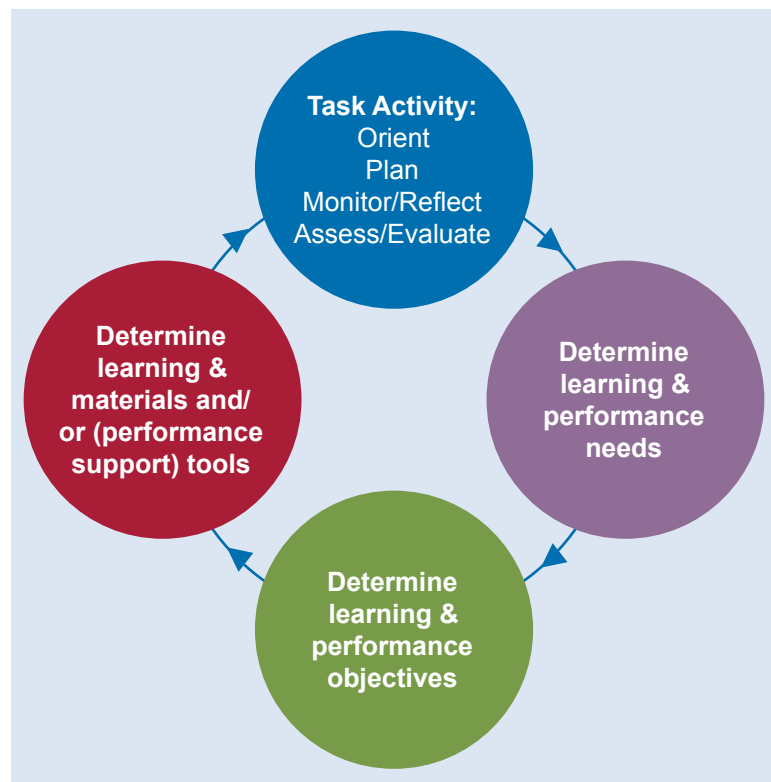
Manager

	Manager
	• Support their teams to learn by integrating learning with work
	• Coach and be coached
	• Active in own development

Manager

- We will establish accredited development programmes that ensure that managers have the skills, tools, and mindset to provide solid operational and strategic leadership and progress in their careers.

- We will further support management and leaders to develop their effectiveness, through the provision of Executive Coaching and Mentoring.

- We will embed a "manager as coach", culture, through the provision of coaching skills training, ensuring that managers have the key skills to support the development of their team members and effectively support learning in the workplace.

- Staff learning and development will be included as a key result area for all managers in their performance plans

- Managers will develop and maintain a skills matrix for all staff in their area

- Managers will support the transfer of learning to the workplace by;

    √ Engaging with team member prior to any learning activity to set the context and establish current competency level

    √ Supporting the team member after the activity by creating opportunities to utilise new skills and knowledge and by giving ongoing feedback on progress

    √ Establishing post activity competency level and monitoring of that level over time

4. SHARED RESPONSIBILTY FOR LEARNING & CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

SHARED RESPONSIBILITY FOR LEARNING

This strategy will see all in the organisation sharing responsibility for how we learn, and how we equip ourselves for continual growth and change.
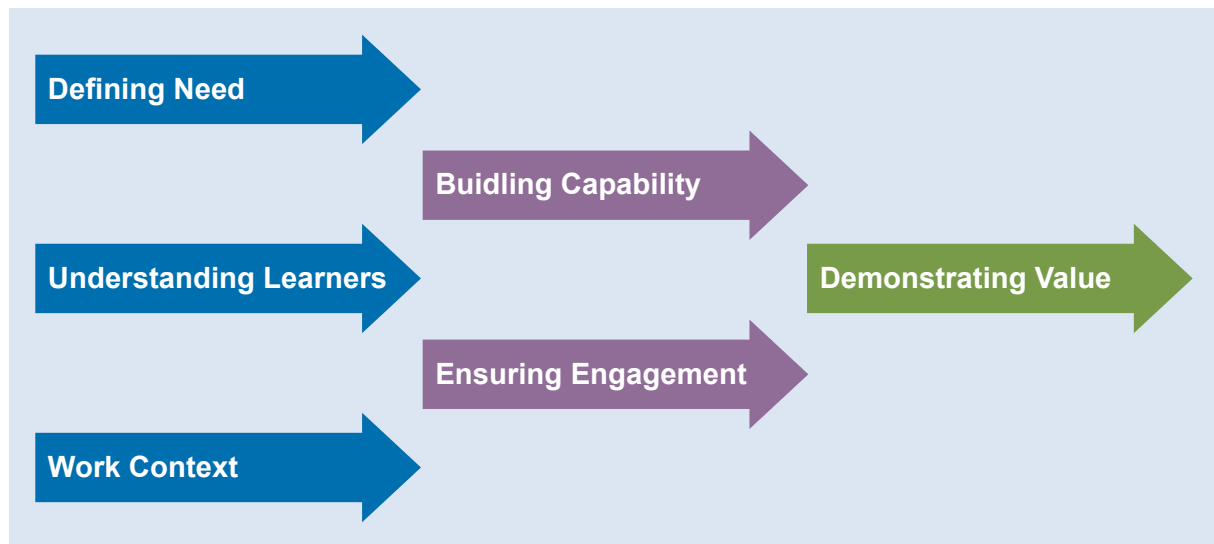
Clarity of purpose

Shared purpose sits at the heart of this strategy, full alignment of shared goals will be our guiding principal.

Use analytics to inform and fine-tune

Decisions concerning outcomes and priorities will be made in an evidenced way using relevant data. The evaluation of L&D outputs will continue, this data will be used to fine-tune programmes to ensure they achieve the desired business outcomes. To ensure accountability and transparency, regular reporting on L&D activities will continue.

Mutual accountability

Only individuals can learn, and only they can choose to apply their new skills in the work they perform. However, the Courts Service as an organisation has a responsibility to set out the aims and purposes of learning, and to give support via investment in time and resources to allow learning to happen.

Role of managers

Line managers have a critical role to play in the implementation of this strategy. They are the gatekeepers to individual learning and development and they also need support for their own development.

Line managers are the key to successful learning, both formal and informal learning. They identify skill and competency gaps with their teams and agree development plans with individuals. They set the context for formal learning and consolidate the transfer of learning once the individual is back doing their job, providing opportunities to use newly learned skills and providing ongoing quality feedback and coaching to embed the learning.   They facilitate informal learning and drive collaboration and knowledge sharing in the workplace.

In order to be successful line managers must continuously develop their own skills and competencies, the implementation of this strategy will see the continued roll out of coaching, mentoring and leadership and management development programmes. A suite of curated content aimed at managers will be developed and rolled out, designed to facilitate self-directed learning for managers when and where they need it.

Critical Success Factors

Adequate resourcing, we will seek to increase resourcing to 4% of overall payroll budget over the course of this strategy	Line managers being supported to; facilitate and embed learning, coach team provide performance feedback	Effective management of competing priorities; Business needs v time allocated to learning activities	Availability of Subject matter experts to input into development and delivery of programmes	Effective ICT infrastructure; Less technical restrictions

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

Courts Service Development Curriculum – These are indicative modules only, prioritised modules will be developed over the course of the strategy

Courts Service Development Curriculum Learning Path

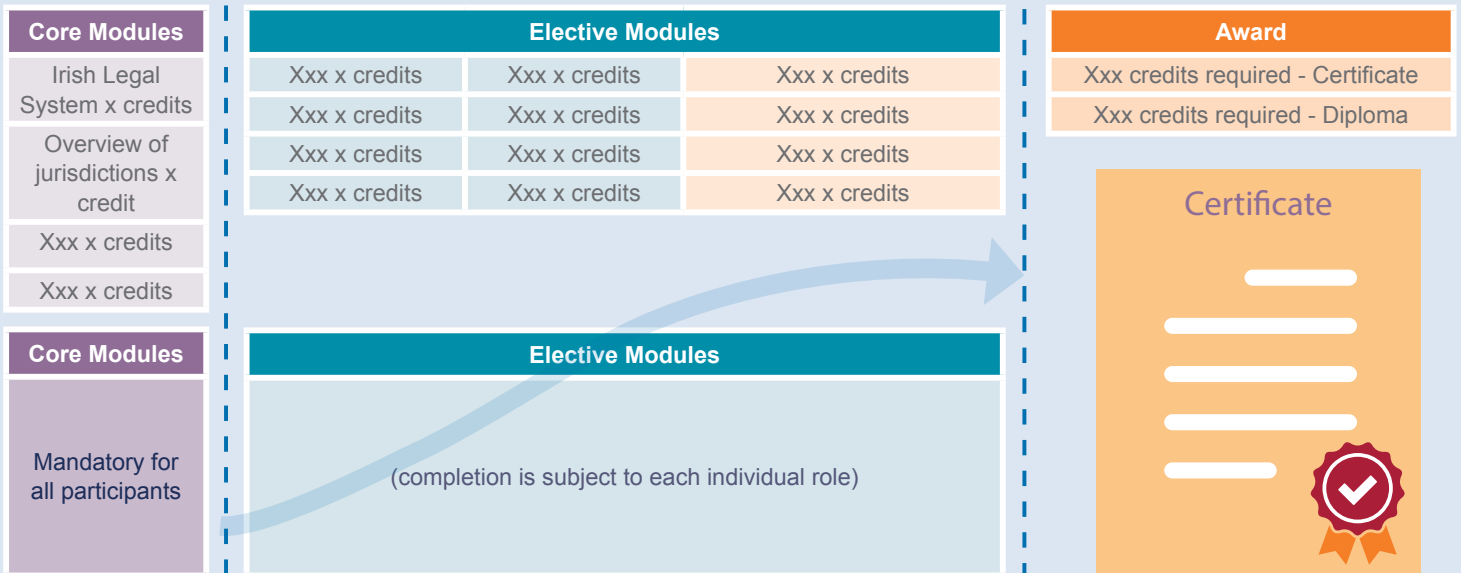| Recommended Tier 1 modules for all staff	Tier 2 Functional Training Modules	Tier 3 Further Development	Tier 4 Management Development Academy	Tier 5 Leadership Development
Corporate Induction	**Recommended**	**Consider undertaking**	Managing drive & Performance and managing challenging Performance	Executive Coaching and relevant psychometrics
MS Office Skills	Coaching for Performance	Executive Coaching	Strategic thinking and culture	In house Executive Leadership programme
Health & Safety/ Manual Handling	Managing performance & probation	Mentoring	Strategic Customer focus and service design	SPS development programme (subject to place numbers and application process)
Self-Care	New to Grade programme	Refund of Fees	Managerial decision making and bias in decision making	Criminal Justice Sector Leadership programme (subject to place numbers and application process)
Customer Service	**Role dependent**	Young Ireland Programme	Optimising team performance	
Disability and Diversity Awareness	Procurement	**Role Specific**	Leading through times of uncertainty and change management	
Personal effectiveness	Budget management	Professional CPD	Personal Leadership, time/energy management	
Communication	Interviewer skills	Professional Qualification for specialist roles	Innovation, collaboration and agile ways of working	
Time Management and goal setting	Project Management		Governance	
Emotional intelligence	Train the trainer		Business Cases	
Personality Types	FOI decision maker		Benefits realisation, vfm reporting	
Career Planning	Court Registrar Induction		Risk Management	
FOI awareness			Presentation skills	
Data protection/ GDPR				
ICT fundamentals				
Business writing/ plain English				
Business process improvement				

Core Modules

(completion is subject to each individual person's skills gaps and training needs)

● The red dot symbol indicates modules to be developed

APPENDIX 2

Courts Service Technical Curriculum

Courts Service Accredited Technical Curriculum Learning Path

Core Modules
Irish Legal System x credits
Overview of jurisdictions x credit
Xxx x credits
Xxx x credits

Elective Modules		
Xxx x credits	Xxx x credits	Xxx x credits
Xxx x credits	Xxx x credits	Xxx x credits
Xxx x credits	Xxx x credits	Xxx x credits
Xxx x credits	Xxx x credits	Xxx x credits

Award
Xxx credits required - Certificate
Xxx credits required - Diploma

Core Modules
Mandatory for all participants

Elective Modules
(completion is subject to each individual role)

Certificate

APPENDIX 3

ACTION PLAN

This strategy has three key objectives which are set out below. Steps we need to take and how we will measure progress are also identified.

OBJECTIVE 1		
Develop comprehensive L&D programme that identifies a blend of approaches to developing capabilities identified from the Target Operating Model (TOM)		
Goals	**Strategies**	**Measures**
1. Identify organisations baseline level for the capabilities identified in the modernisation programme by Q3 2021	1. Carry out skills audit survey 2. Analyse data on qualifications gained via Refund of Fees scheme 3. Carry out gap analysis	Data analysis completed and skills register created by July 2021 Capability and skills deficit identified by end August 2021
2. Agree which capabilities will be developed internally as opposed to recruited.	1. Collaborate with Human Resources to agree which particular capabilities should be developed, rather than procured or recruited	Profile of capabilities to be developed in place by end Q3 2021
3. Develop draft L&D plan which sets out options for developing agreed capabilities end October 2021	1. Research market for training solutions 2. Investigate appropriate channels for training delivery, leveraging e-learning and digital delivery where possible 3. Set out cost and resource implications for identified delivery methods	Draft plan presented to SMT for consideration end October 2021

OBJECTIVE 2

Support staff to acquire the technical and legal skills and knowledge to deliver current business as usual services

Goals	Strategies	Measures
1. Level of skills and knowledge required to deliver agreed services identified through the development of skills matrices for all offices by end Q4 2021	1. Carry out evaluation of the use of skills matrices in Circuit and District court offices and document lessons learned 2. L&D unit and operational directorates will collaborate to produce skills matrices for offices 3. L&D unit to provide training to office managers in the use of skills matrices	Skills matrices in use in all offices by end Q4 2021
2. Develop office and individual development requirements based on skills matrices following gap analysis by individual units	1. Office managers assess individual skill levels and agree gaps and development requirements with team members 2. The use of skills matrices adopted as part of business planning for offices and kept updated as service delivery or staffing changes occur	Up to date office and individual development plans in place and updated from Q4 2021 onwards
3. Modular formal technical training programme plan of work put in place Q1 each year	1. Priority learning needs to be met via formal learning programmes to be identified by Operational Directorates 2. Project plan for each programme drafted by L&D unit for agreement with operational directorates 3. Subject matter expert and L&D resources identified and assigned to project for development and delivery of programmes	1. Yearly priorities established by end January each year 2. Project plans drafted by L&D unit by end February yearly 3. Sufficient resources allocated to each project

OBJECTIVE 2 (continued)

Goals	Strategies	Measures

4. Structured on the job training provided in operational offices	1. Priority leaning needs to be met via on the job training identified 2. Project established by operational directorates to review current methods and materials to establish "as is" delivery 3. Review of "as is" materials and methods carried out, followed by recommendations for improvements in content and structure of delivery 4. Project teams assigned to action agreed improvements in content and delivery 5. Project team rolls out revised structure to operational offices	Review of current methods and materials complete in each directorate by target to be agreed Project teams established to action recommendations target to be agreed

OBJECTIVE 3		
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		
Goals	**Strategies**	**Measures**
1. L&D unit to evaluate current modules and establish if they are meeting learning objectives and continue monthly analysis of evaluation data	1. Analysis of evaluation data 2. Production of annual report on previous years L&D delivery	1. Annual report produced by end Q1 yearly 2. Monthly evaluation reports produced and analysed first week of following month
2. Investigate whether staff feel the development curriculum supports their career progression Q4 each year	1. Survey newly recruited, promoted officers on taking up new grade and at end of first year in grade to establish their view on how effectively the curriculum has supported them 2. Build an element into the evaluation methodology of modules which captures whether participants feel the module has supported effectiveness and career progression	1. Begin routine surveying with staff promoted from Q2 2021 onwards 2. Evaluation methodology updated Q2 2021
OBJECTIVE 3 (continued)		
Goals	**Strategies**	**Measures**