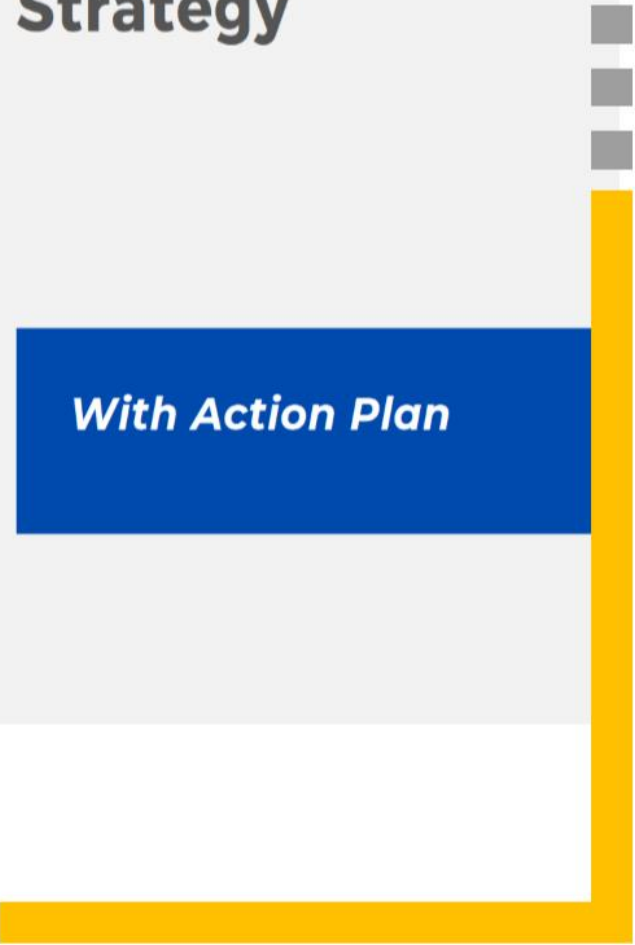


**Northern Ireland
Assembly
Commission's
Learning and
Development
Strategy**

With Action Plan



Introduction

1. The Northern Ireland Assembly Commission ('the Assembly Commission') has a Corporate Plan in place for 2019-23 which provides the detail of the key projects and priorities the Assembly Commission intends to deliver in order to achieve the [Corporate Strategy](#) 2018-23.
2. The 'People' pillar within the Corporate Plan outlines the commitment to investing in the development, expertise and well-being of our people, with a longer term focus on learning and development including the implementation of a Learning and Development Strategy ('the Strategy').
3. This document sets out the Strategy and its' associated Action Plan and focuses on enabling all staff to maximise their potential, enjoy their work and feel valued, encouraged and inspired to achieve professional goals. The Strategy aims to collectively deliver the Assembly Commission's vision and purpose of *'excellence, expertise and innovation in support of the Northern Ireland Assembly as a legislature which is accessible to the public it represents'*.
4. This Strategy has been developed after consultation with a wide range of internal and external stakeholders, and on the findings of a staff survey of learning needs and preferences (*'the Learning Needs Analysis'*). The success of the Strategy will be dependent upon the commitment and engagement of staff and, to enable this, the Assembly Commission is committed to delivering relevant learning enhanced by strong relationships, knowledge sharing and collaboration across the whole organisation. To help communicate the future direction of learning and development, an overall Vision for learning and development has been developed:

VISION STATEMENT

We will achieve parliamentary excellence by creating a workplace where learning is integral to everything we do. Our culture will be shaped by confident leaders, cohesive teams and capable individuals across business areas who share knowledge, create innovative learning practices, collaborate and participate in meaningful conversations every day

5. The Assembly Commission believes that this Strategy will help staff to strengthen their connection with each other, strengthen the support they provide to Members and strengthen engagement of the Assembly with the public.

Strategic Learning Priorities

6. The following three areas have been identified as strategic learning priorities to support the delivery of the Corporate Plan (2019-23).

| LEADERSHIP AND TEAMS | CAPABILITY, SKILLS AND TALENT | CONNECTION AND INNOVATION |
|--|--|--|
| Leaders and teams work together towards a shared purpose, creating a caring and inclusive culture, nurturing talent and inspiring innovation and excellence. | Leaders and teams are clear about roles and responsibilities. Learning and development is prioritised to ensure we have the expertise and capability at individual and team levels to professionally deliver everything we do. | Networks are established to improve personal experiences, professional expertise and innovation. A digital culture and workforce is enabled through the development of digital skills and integration of existing systems. |

Principles of a Learning Organisation

7. The Assembly Commission is committed to becoming a learning organisation that embraces change and seeks continuous improvement. This will be achieved by working in partnership with business areas, staff and Trade Union Side and guided by the four principles outlined below. The approach adopted also seeks commitment from all staff to take personal responsibility for their own personal development.

A Learning Organisation

| PRINCIPLE 1 | PRINCIPLE 2 | PRINCIPLE 3 | PRINCIPLE 4 |
|---|---|--|---|
| <p>Learning and Development will be integral to our work</p> | <p>Learning and Development will be inclusive</p> | <p>Learning and Development will be innovative</p> | <p>Learning and Development will be inspired by Leaders</p> |
| <p>Leaders and teams feel connected to the Assembly Commission's Corporate Strategy through learning that is clearly linked to them.</p> <p>The learning needs of staff are continually reviewed so that they are supported to achieve high performance, identify future roles and prepare for long-term success.</p> | <p>Learning and development is available and accessible to all staff.</p> <p>Opportunities for learning and development are flexible to meet staff needs, learning styles and work demands.</p> <p>Staff have ownership of and personal responsibility for their own development.</p> | <p>Staff continually learn by collaborating across our organisation and with other organisations to create and share solutions and ideas.</p> <p>The Assembly Commission optimises technology to create and offer a range of learning and development opportunities and resources to make learning easy.</p> | <p>Leaders and staff proactively discuss learning and development and take action to resolve any learning and development needs.</p> <p>Leaders provide time and opportunity for staff to learn and develop.</p> <p>Staff feel safe and empowered to create innovative solutions and ideas.</p> |

Delivery Approach

8. The Assembly Commission recognises that most learning happens on an informal basis, is learner centred and self-directed.
9. In the delivery of this Strategy and its Action Plan, the Assembly Commission will advocate the 70-20-10 Model for Learning and Development; a framework to describe the optimal sources of learning which holds that staff obtain 70 percent of their knowledge from on-the-job experiences, 20 percent from social interactions with others, and 10 percent from formal learning events.

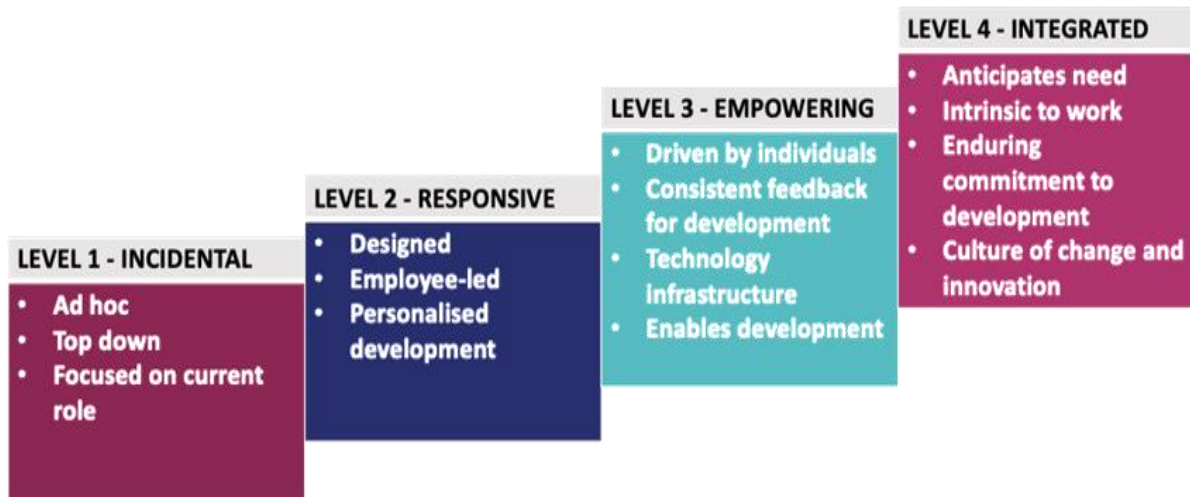


Achieving long term success

10. The Assembly Commission's Learning and Development Team will lead the implementation of the Strategy working in partnership with SMG, Heads of Business, and any relevant Secretariat working groups. The activities shown in the Action Plan will be prioritised with SMG and timelines agreed.
11. The successful and sustainable implementation of this Strategy will require leaders across the Secretariat to collaborate and a Learning and Development Task Force has been established to support this process. The terms of reference for this Task Force are attached at Appendix 2.
12. Staff will be responsible and accountable for their own development and take action to meet any learning and development need.

Measuring Success

13. Maturity models help us understand how learning and development can impact performance and set a direction of travel. A maturity model has been developed to provide a roadmap to success going forward with an aim to achieve Level 3 across the Secretariat when the Action Plan associated with this Strategy is implemented.



14. Within this maturity model, the three strategic learning priorities, namely Leadership and Teams; Capability, Skills and Talent; and Connection and Innovation are clearly set out in the attached Action Plan as a framework for achievement of individual and team objectives and can be mapped against each level of the maturity model as measures of success for the term of this strategy.

Northern Ireland Assembly Commission Learning and Development Strategy Action Plan

Priority 1: Leadership & Teams

Leaders and teams work together towards a shared purpose, creating a caring and inclusive culture, nurturing talent and inspiring innovation and excellence.

| High Level Objective | Outcome | Actions/Milestones |
|---|---|--|
| Enhance the development of leaders using a redefined People Manager Programme | Enhanced existing leadership standards and practices | <p>Review the current People Manager Programme content and delivery mechanisms. Include content relating to leadership behaviour and leadership styles.</p> <p>Support the roll out of the People Manager Programme with a communications plan that increases participation from managers.</p> <p>Facilitate coaching/mentoring/peer support relationships for managers (including senior managers).</p> |
| Enhance the coaching skills of managers | An organisational culture which is based on open and transparent communication supported through a coaching style of management | <p>Develop and deliver a range of bespoke coaching courses.</p> <p>Develop and support a group of in-house training facilitators to deliver coaching courses.</p> <p>Support the roll out of the coaching courses with a communications plan that increases participation from staff and which promotes coaching as an effective communication skill.</p> |

| High Level Objective | Outcome | Actions/Milestones |
|--|--|--|
| Support leaders to nurture and build cohesive, high performing teams | High performing teams which collaborate and innovate to produce work at the highest level | <p>Develop and facilitate opportunities for teams to come together to build trust and cohesion.</p> <p>Facilitate social groups for inter-team activities.</p> |
| Enhance inter-team collaboration and communication | Increased team collaboration and communication | Offer further learning on the MS Teams application to increase understanding of all collaborative aspects of the platform. |
| Develop a range of on-line leadership resources featuring leaders within the Secretariat, e.g. videos, on line master-classes and podcasts | Flexible and accessible leadership development opportunities for all | <p>Work with internal leaders, and from other organisations, to develop on-line resources.</p> <p>Record future on-line master classes to share on Assist (with permission).</p> <p>Align resources with modules in People Manager Programme and future leadership programmes.</p> |
| Sustain a culture of health and wellbeing by supporting the delivery of the Wellbeing Framework | An organisation that recognises and promotes the benefits of positive health and wellbeing | <p>Create a structured and themed health and wellbeing calendar and plan including alignment with national wellness campaigns.</p> <p>Support the roll out of health and wellbeing initiatives with a communications plan that increases participation from staff and which promotes the benefits of participating in health and wellbeing activities.</p> |

Northern Ireland Assembly Commission Learning and Development Strategy Action Plan

Priority 2: Capability, Skills and Talent

Leaders and teams are clear about roles and responsibilities. Learning and development is prioritised to ensure we have the expertise and capability at individual and team levels to confidently deliver everything we do.

| High Level Objective | Outcome | Actions/Milestones |
|--|---|--|
| Ensure technical, professional and parliamentary knowledge and skills meet future service requirements | Professional and highly skilled staff who perform their work with confidence and competence | Design learning interventions based on prioritised skills needs identified from the Learning Needs Analysis and work with Heads of Business to deliver learning solutions. |
| Optimise and share Continuous Professional Development (CPD) opportunities for all staff | Professional knowledge is shared and delivered across the Secretariat to support corporate work | Develop ideas to utilise professional knowledge across the Secretariat Optimise CPD opportunities for staff. |
| Fully utilise performance conversations to support the learning and development of staff | Increased focus on learning and development in performance conversations | Support performance conversations with a communications plan that promotes the benefits of such conversations and which encourages proactive discussion around staff learning and development needs. |
| Identify what 'success' looks like and continuously review and improve | Clarity on the path to a learning culture and a high performing organisation | Develop the Maturity Model as a continuous improvement tool. Monitor and report progress on a yearly basis to SMG. |

| High Level Objective | Outcome | Actions/Milestones |
|---|---|--|
| Ensure mandatory training requirements are met and that such training is delivered in a way that suits the needs of staff | Staff engage with mandatory training that meets their needs The Assembly Commission meets with its compliance requirements | Consider the volume of mandatory training that needs delivered and develop proposals as to how it might be delivered differently, including frequency. |

Northern Ireland Assembly Commission Learning and Development Strategy Action Plan

Priority 3: Connection and Innovation

Networks are established to improve personal experiences, professional expertise and innovation. A digital culture and workforce is enabled through the development of digital skills and the integration of existing systems.

| High Level Objective | Outcome | Actions/Milestones |
|---|--|---|
| Connect with the public and communities that we serve | Enhanced community impact and improve the Health and Wellbeing for staff | <p>Work with Business in the Community to identify volunteering opportunities for staff.</p> <p>Monitor the benefits of volunteering opportunities for staff and the organisation.</p> |
| Create a knowledge sharing culture | Increased collaboration, engagement and innovation | <p>Develop a programme of events delivered through intranet, 'lunch and learns', inviting 'guests' from other Business Areas to join team meetings and share experience.</p> <p>Collate resources in a 'knowledge hub' that's easy to access.</p> <p>Create 'forums' using social network technology focussing on specific areas of interest, skills and knowledge.</p> <p>Create a range of development opportunities, including networking events, master classes, and/ or shared development opportunities</p> |

| High Level Objective | Outcome | Actions/Milestones |
|---|--|---|
| Increase interaction with other parliamentary bodies at national and international levels | Enhanced working relationships with other parliamentary bodies to consider new ways of working which are mutually beneficial | Work with Head of Businesses to identify new or to enhance established inter-parliamentary relationships. Work to create opportunities for national and international collaboration. |
| Develop a digital workforce skills programme | Increased digital skills of staff to support the delivery of corporate work | Enhance digital skills development to ensure staff feel confident in the use of digital platforms and to maximise the use of such platforms in the delivery of work objectives. |
| Identify technology tools and platforms that are driving innovation in learning and development | Increased innovative, accessible and engaging approaches to learning and development | Research the technology, tools and platforms that are driving innovation in learning and development and consider their relevance for use in the Secretariat. |

Appendix 1: Learning and Development Task Force

Purpose and Aims

The L&D Task Force (the Task Force) has been formed as a key component of the Assembly Commission's Learning and Development Strategy. The Strategy aims to enhance the organisation's culture through the personal growth and professional development of colleagues.

The Task Force will play a role in the implementation of the Learning and Development Strategy by acting as an **informal forum** that represents and encourages colleagues across the organisation to engage in and take ownership of learning and development across the Secretariat.

The aims of the Task Force will be to –

- monitor the implementation of the Assembly Commission's Learning and Development Strategy and associated Action Plan;
- seek and represent the views of colleagues and teams about learning and development and health and wellbeing identifying new and innovative opportunities; and
- act as a reference group for the Learning and Development Manager.

The Task Force is not a forum for formal consultation nor is it intended to replace or undermine existing methods and channels of communication, but rather to enhance them. It will offer a safe place for views and opinions to be raised, discussed and respected. Discussions will focus on the organisation as a whole and not on individual concerns or priorities.

All Task Force members will have responsibility for developing a relationship with a Head of Business (who is not their own and can be from a different Directorate). The Learning and Development Manager will be responsible for working with the Chairs of the Corporate Strategy Steering Groups (SSGs) to update meetings.

Membership

The Task Force strives to have a diverse group of representatives who are passionate about learning and development and have a willingness and capacity to participate in meetings and activities. Task Force membership as a whole should be representative of Directorates and grades across the Assembly Commission.

The rules around membership are:

- Minimum of 8 members on the Task Force;
- Task Force members will meet to discuss and consult quarterly;

- Membership is voluntary and nomination of new members will take place every two years, or as opportunities arise; and
- All colleagues are welcome to nominate themselves as opportunities arise, and nominations should indicate that line management approval has been sought.

Composition

- Chair – Senior HR Manager
- Secretary - Learning and Development Manager
- Directorate and grade representation
- Internal Communications Officer
- Trade Union Representative

Agenda Items

The Secretary, in consultation with members of the Task Force, will agree agenda items.