

## **Discussion Paper Staff Training and Development**

**Meeting date: August/September MSMTM 23.09.2025**

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### **Introduction**

As part of OSIC's Workforce Strategy, staff training and development is a key priority. The following paper outlines a preliminary approach and is shared with SMT members to initiate discussion and gather input.

### **1. Identifying Diverse Staff Training Needs**

- Staff training and development needs arise from a variety of sources e.g. individual staff members seeking personal and professional growth, managers identifying skills gaps within their teams, outcomes from annual appraisals, feedback from staff surveys, OSIC wide strategic goals, and employer statutory or mandatory training requirements.
- It is important to recognise balancing development opportunities with workload pressures amongst staff, particularly given e.g. Project Blue is ongoing and there has been persistent under resourcing in the BST, therefore avoiding a one size fits all training approach while still providing meaningful learning and development that supports both individual staff aspirations and OSIC organisational goals is a priority.

### **2. Current Provision**

- To support staff development and training, OSIC has an annual training budget (£15,000 2025-26, £20,000 requested for 2026-27) that should be used effectively to deliver the greatest value.
- There appears to be a certain level of frustration and uncertainty with the current approach to rolling out staff training particularly the developmental training provision.
- Also, mandatory training is often seen as rushed and difficult to organise and sometimes challenging to deliver, which can impact both engagement and effectiveness.
- Training needs identified through appraisals are not always clearly documented or consistently followed up, leading to missed opportunities for development and dissatisfaction amongst staff.
- There appears to be a lack of clarity regarding who is responsible for sourcing training, selecting the most appropriate options, and ensuring completion. For example, the organisation's entire training provision has previously been managed by a single role holder, which is not necessarily good practice as it offers a limited perspective given the diverse skill requirements or professional development needs across teams.
- The absence of a centralised system for recording training completion also creates a significant administrative burden for the BST, making it difficult to track progress or provide accurate reporting on training undertaken.

### **3. Additional Training and Development Considerations**

- Alongside traditional training, there are other valuable opportunities to support staff development.
- Wellbeing initiatives and resources play an important role in staff development, particularly when they focus on building resilience, emotional intelligence, and stress management skills.
- In addition, team building activities are valuable for strengthening collaboration and communication within and across teams.
- Development opportunities through external engagement, such as attending conferences and seminars, provides staff with ongoing sector specific knowledge and the opportunity to expand their professional networks.
- Considering provision for the above under the umbrella of staff training and development would be considered good practice.

### **4. A Framework Approach**

- Rather than relying on an ad hoc approach to staff training and development provision, it would be beneficial to have a consistent and accessible framework in place that can be drawn upon as needed.
- An accessible platform would reduce the administrative burden of organising each training activity from scratch and ensure that key development needs are met efficiently.
- An accessible platform would give line managers greater autonomy and control in identifying training needs, reviewing training requests, and making and implementing decisions accordingly without unnecessary administration.
- Having reliable platforms to support ongoing training would mean we can maintain consistent access to high quality, flexible learning and development opportunities or all staff at all times.
- This approach also allows greater planning for use of the staff training budget with additional budget able to be used more strategically for other, tailored activities.

### **5. Proposal for Investment in a Digital Learning Platform: E.g. LinkedIn Learning**

- As part of a learning and development plan for OSIC, investing in a digital learning platform could present an opportunity to enhance our workforce capability by addressing staff learning and development needs quickly and comprehensively.
- One example of this kind of platform is LinkedIn Learning, which is already in use across various UK government departments as part of their staff development strategies and is available via an established and compliant procurement framework (CCS), which would reduce both an administrative burden and procurement risk.
- The platform offers a comprehensive library of over 20,000 courses developed by industry experts, covering technical, professional, and interpersonal skills. This enables staff to access high quality training on demand, supporting continuous professional development for a range of development areas.
- For smaller organisations like OSIC, the platform provides a cost effective solution to upskilling our staff.
- The self paced nature of the learning also aligns well with our organisation given staff have a range of work patterns and with varying workloads throughout the year. By

allowing staff to access training at a time that suits their role, responsibilities and workloads, we can ensure ongoing professional development without disrupting service delivery KPIs.

- In addition, usage data and learning analytics can support ongoing evaluation and continuous improvement of training impact which is something we have not had before.
- An online training platform such as LinkedIn Learning would directly support and address ongoing staff requests for training in key areas such as digital skills, which have been consistently highlighted through staff surveys and annual performance reviews.
- It is important to note that while LinkedIn Learning provides access to a wide range of high quality, on demand training content, it is not designed to fulfil all statutory or mandatory training requirements. Specifically, areas such as Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, Health and Safety, and other compliance related training and even if some content is available, it is not necessarily covered in a way that meets formal organisational or legal obligations. These elements of mandatory training could continue to be delivered through alternative providers, such as Breathe or WorkNest, both of which offer compliance ready training modules.
- LinkedIn Learning should therefore be viewed as resource to support staff professional development and skills enhancement, rather than as a replacement for core compliance training.
- Investing in a platform like LinkedIn Learning could also be promoted as a key component of the staff benefits scheme should we wish to broaden this out.

### Cost Benefit Analysis

Cost Considerations	Benefits
Annual subscription fees (£250 per user or organisational licence at reduced cost)	Unlimited access to thousands of courses without needing external trainers or bespoke course development to fulfil this purpose
Implementation/setup time (minimal)	Reduced reliance on external training providers, lowering long term L&D expenditure
Staff time for training (flexible/self-paced)	Improved productivity through targeted skill development and reduction of skills gaps
Potential need for internal communications to raise awareness of course availability	Enhanced employee engagement and retention through professional growth opportunities
Optional integration with HR/Learning Management systems	Real time learning analytics to measure uptake and impact of training, and to support strategic workforce planning

## Risks

LinkedIn Learning is a well established and widely used platform, particularly within the public sector, there are still some practical and operational risks that should be considered:

Risk	Mitigations
Low engagement with platform	Internal communications, integrate with annual performance reviews, team leads to initiate some team wide group training. Track usage metrics
Course content not aligning with specific roles	Develop specific learning pathways tailored to organisational priorities and specific job functions
Budget constraints	Could start with a pilot or phased rollout or smaller subscription and monitor value and adjust licence levels accordingly

## 5. Implementation Considerations

- Procurement route available through existing public sector procurement framework (e.g. CCS), which reduces lead time and ensures compliance.
- The platform is cloud based and requires minimal IT involvement. Can be accessed across devices, including mobile.
- Initial setup and user onboarding are supported by LinkedIn Learning. Custom onboarding materials can also be created to suit internal branding.
- Can integrate with common HR systems and Learning Management Systems if required.
- Built in analytics enable reporting on learner progress, completion rates, and skills development, which can inform ongoing staff development strategy.

## 6. Proposal for Investment in a Platform that Provides Mandatory Training

- In addition to a staff development platform, both Breathe and WorkNest are suppliers that OSIC is already familiar with, and each offers access to mandatory training courses that could support our compliance and staff training needs.
- I have recently reviewed some of the mandatory training requirements alongside demonstrations of the Breathe Learn module.
- The Breathe Learn platform is priced at £432 per year for all staff and offers a comprehensive solution for managing staff training, including tracking completion and storing associated documentation.
- In addition to these administrative benefits, the platform provides access to 40 courses, including several mandatory ones OSIC is required to implement. These courses are designed to be bitesize yet fully compliant, which is ideal for our busy staff. See VC for the courses included in the module: VC236381
- Given the urgent need to roll out harassment prevention training to all staff, this option appears sensible given the low cost and ease of rollout given it is an existing system. However, if approval for adding to that platform takes longer than expected,

we may need to temporarily use another supplier like Worknest, who can deliver an online version within approximately six weeks.

## **7. Summary**

- The adoption of a platform like LinkedIn Learning appears to offer a low risk but high impact opportunity to transform how OSIC supports staff training and development. The platform provides an accessible, high quality, and cost effective means of upskilling staff.
- The adoption of the Breathe Learn module appears to be a cost effective and practical solution to support some of our mandatory staff training needs. As a system we are already familiar with, Breathe offers a low cost annual add on that not only streamlines the administration of training through tracking, documentation, and reporting, but also provides access to a bank of 40 bitesize, compliant courses, including several key mandatory topics. This would enable us to roll out essential training quickly, reducing the administrative burden for the BST, and making better use of our existing budget.

## **8. Recommendations**

This paper presents an initial proposal for investing in staff training platforms to support our organisational training needs. As this is a starting point for discussion, SMT can explore it in more detail during the upcoming SMT away day. Key areas for further consideration include:

- Review the Workforce Strategy in more detail to ensure this approach aligns with it.
- Obtain accurate pricing for both the Breathe Learn module and LinkedIn Learning and other platforms to assess whether they are financially viable within our current budget.
- Arrange demonstrations of platforms to evaluate their functionality, ease of use, and suitability, particularly in relation to delivering mandatory compliance training.
- Obtain a detailed list of the training courses included with platforms to assess the course range and relevance of the content offered.

Once this information has been gathered, the options can be brought back to SMT for further discussion and to agree on the most practical and cost effective way forward.