

## Appendix 2

### Annual Report of Learning and Development activity and 'Grow Our Own'.



#### 1.1 Learning and Development Activity

This section summarises learning activity across the organisation during 2025/26, including participation levels, compliance with mandatory learning and priority areas for the year ahead.

As reported last year, the Council moved to a new e-learning system with improved reporting and flexibility. This has enabled better analysis of participation, compliance and completion levels.

#### 1.2 Headline Figures

##### 1.2.1 Face to Face Training

During 2025/26, the Council delivered **27** face-to-face training sessions with a total of **300 attendees**, compared with **32** sessions and **508 attendees** in the previous year. This is the first full year in which training activity has been managed by the current People Development team, reflecting a revised approach and renewed oversight

Attendance patterns suggest that work demands and double-booking continue to affect take-up, with many sessions not reaching full capacity.

The quality and value for money of on-site training remains strong, but under-filled sessions reduce overall value. To improve accessibility, providers have been asked to offer more half-day sessions rather than full-day courses. Early indications from the 2026/27 programme suggest this is improving participation, and the programme is now commissioned in stages so future bookings can better reflect demand and organisational need.

Manager compliance with mandatory management training remains an area of concern and is reflected in some case management activity. A report is being prepared for the Executive Leadership Team on manager training compliance and the actions needed to improve it, including a briefing video, a dedicated resource hub, automatic enrolment and stronger monitoring.

##### 1.2.2 Mandatory e-learning

The updated e-learning system has also improved reporting on mandatory training compliance and confirmed that completion levels were below the expected standard.

In August 2025, the mandatory training compliance rate reported to ELT was **67.25%**. A number of actions were introduced to improve this, with an internal target of **90%**. The 10% tolerance recognises employees on long-term sickness absence, maternity or shared parental leave, or sabbatical.

Automated reminders were introduced for employees and copied to managers so that teams' compliance could be monitored more effectively. Compliance increased to **82.53%** in November but then reduced when new mandatory courses were added in response to new employer duties and audit recommendations. A further cyber awareness course was introduced in February 2026, and stress management training changed from a one-off requirement at induction to a refresher every two years. These changes reduced the headline compliance rate temporarily, although the underlying position has improved.

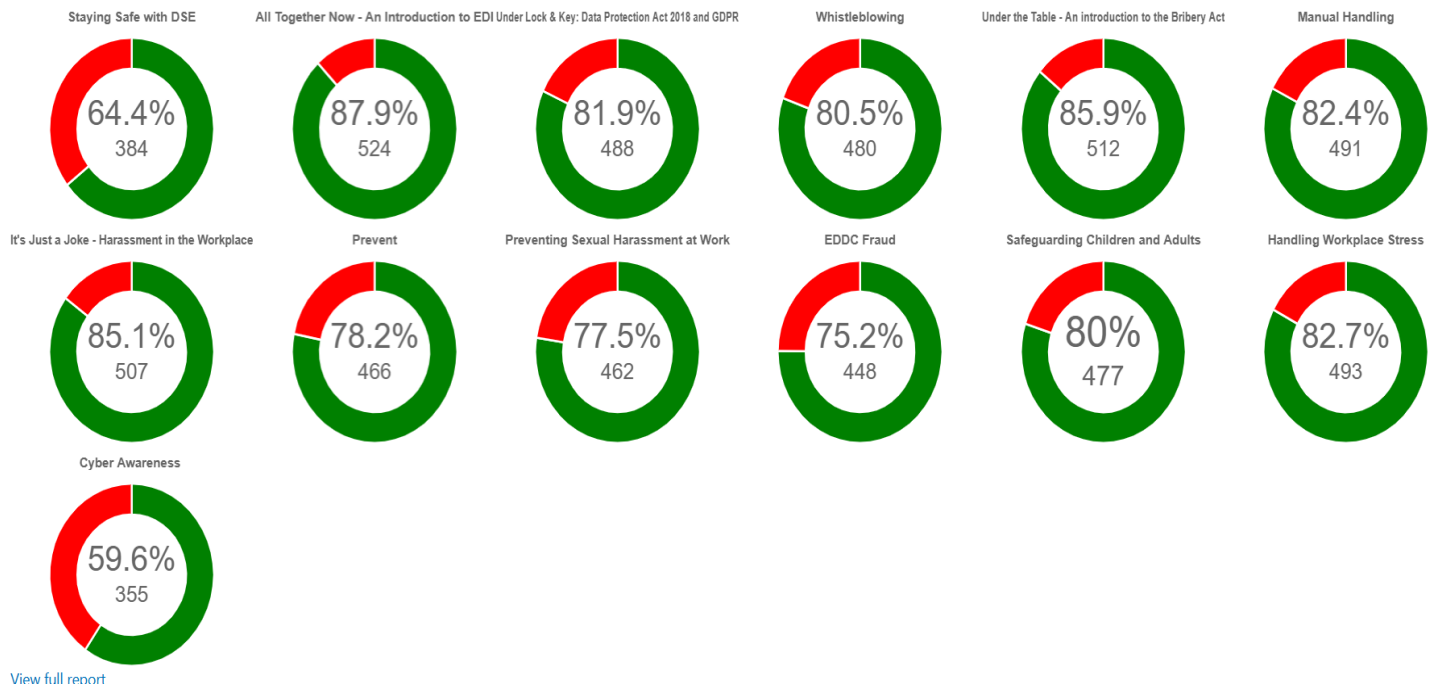
The mandatory training suite has been reviewed and reduced where possible, and modules have been refreshed to make them more engaging. Employees are now also given clearer information about the time required to complete each module so they can plan this more effectively.

Refresh frequencies have also been adjusted so that mandatory learning is spread more evenly across the cycle. This is intended to reduce peaks in workload and make completion more manageable for employees.

A manager dashboard has been introduced so that managers can monitor and discuss their teams' training compliance and compare completion levels across the organisation.

The dashboard below shows that compliance is strongest in long-established mandatory modules and lowest in newer or recently refreshed courses, including cyber awareness and preventing sexual harassment. This reflects the time needed for employees to complete new requirements and highlights where further follow-up is needed.

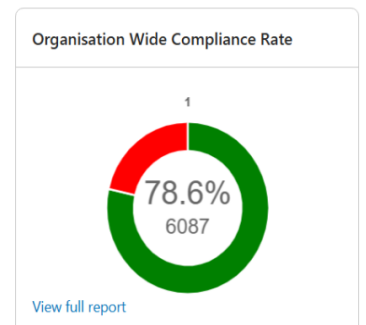
Mandatory Training Compliance by Course (EDDC)



Training Requiring Action (My Team)

User's Fullname	Certification Name	Status
[Redacted]	Staying Safe with DSE	Overdue since 8 Feb 2025
[Redacted]	Under Lock & Key: Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR	Expired since 17 May 2026
[Redacted]	Handling Workplace Stress	Expired since 8 Feb 2026

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While compliance was the main objective, the introduction of automated e-learning reminders has also improved value for money from the Council's training investment. Increased completion volumes mean the annual licence cost is being spread across a higher number of course completions, reducing the average cost per course from **£5.83** to **£2.26** after implementation.

Mandatory Staff Training	Number of Courses accessed	Number of employees Completed	Number of course completions	Average cost per course (Annual Fee/number of course completions)

2024/25	16	342	1929	£5.08 per course
2025/26	13	455	2751	£3.56 per course
learning volume before reminder functionality in November 26	10	129	980	£5.83 per course
Learning volumes post reminder functionality implemented	13	451	1799	£2.26 per course

The table below shows the training events that were hosted at the Council during the year. (Mandatory for Managers is indicated by\*)

<b>Learning and Development events 2025/26</b>		
Absence Management for Managers *	Assertiveness, Self-confidence & Communications Training	PER Skills for Managers *
Disciplinary, Performance & *Grievance Issues	Positive Steps to Mental Health	Pre-retirement planning
Neurodiversity	Managing Poor Performance and giving feedback	Presentation Skills
Mental Capacity act Training	Stress Management for Staff	Recruitment & Selection *
Safeguarding Level 3	Stress Management for Managers	Thinking Differently
Welcome Morning	Change and Resilience	6 wellbeing webinars

We also entered one team of aspiring managers into the Southwest Council Challenge and plan to enter another team this year. Post-training evaluation feedback continues to be positive.

### 1.3 Next Steps / Areas of focus.

The focus for 2026/27 will be mandatory manager training. Because the Council does not currently have a full learning management system, it has not been possible to identify accurately which manager modules remain outstanding. An interim reporting approach has now been developed to give better oversight and help ensure managers are equipped with the people management skills needed to lead teams confidently and address issues such as absence management.

The positive impact of reminder communications on e-learning engagement suggests that further promotional activity for face-to-face learning may also help increase participation and maximise value from the wider learning and development programme.

Recent Government changes to apprenticeship funding will affect access to Level 5 and Level 7 management apprenticeships. In response, the Council is piloting a new programme for aspiring or new managers and a separate programme for experienced managers, while also exploring other ways to fill the gap left by the Senior Leader apprenticeship route.

A revised approach to evaluating training will also be introduced, using pre-course and post-course assessment to better understand the impact of learning, based on the Kirkpatrick evaluation model.

The refreshed PER and one-to-one process will be launched shortly and will support a more structured training needs assessment, helping ensure that the right development is provided at the right time, including in preparation for local government reorganisation.

### 1.4 Apprenticeship Activity

Apprenticeships are nationally recognised qualifications available to both new and current employees and are funded through the Council's Apprenticeship Levy. The Council contributes 0.5% of its annual payroll to this Levy.

The total levy paid into the Digital Apprenticeship account in 2025/26 was **£100,543**, with total expenditure of **£94,651**.

Any remaining funds will be carried forward to the next financial year. For the second year running, no funds expired during the year, demonstrating that the Levy is being fully utilised.

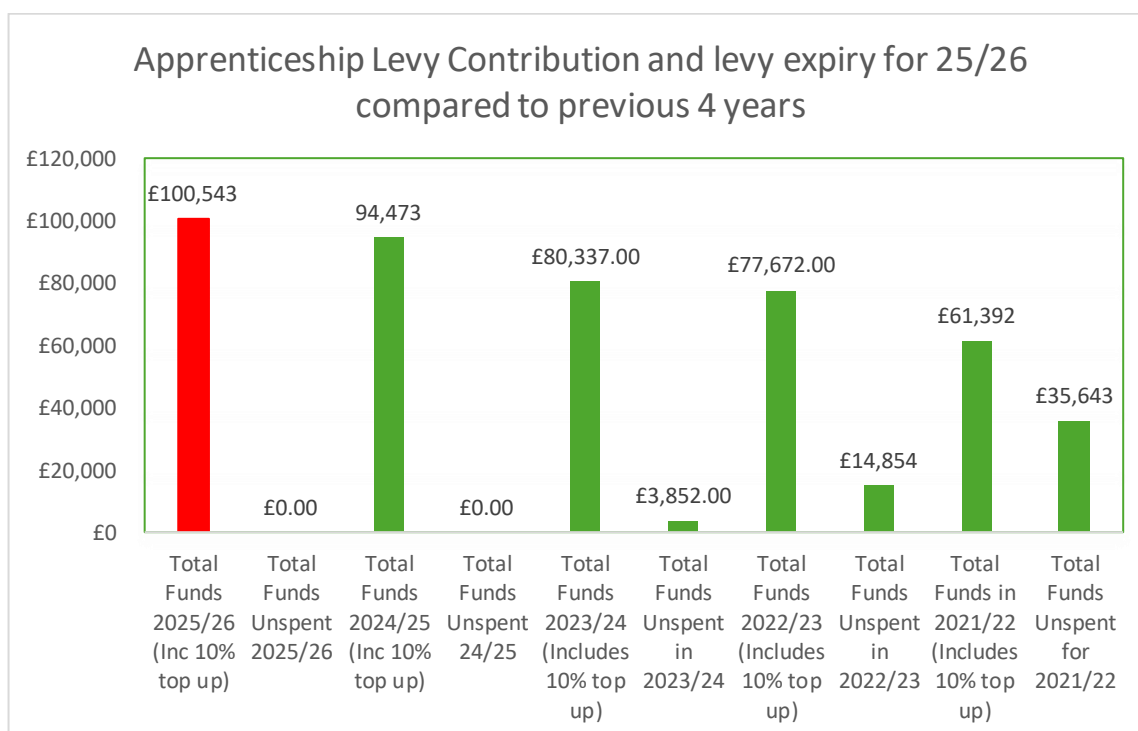
Financial Year	Apprenticeships supported through the Levy
2025/26	22
2024/25	21
2023/24	17
2022/23	11

The number of new apprenticeships starts in 2025/26 was **9**, compared with an average of **7** as cited by LGA.

Apprenticeships started this year were Senior Leader Level 7 (3), Town Planning Level 7 (1), Business Administrator Level 3 (4) and Payroll Administrator Level 3 (1). Of these nine starts, four were external appointments new to the organisation.

22 Apprenticeships were being supported through the levy overall in 25/26, depending on the level some of these will have commenced apprenticeship training in previous years and are continuing into 2025/26, 9 apprenticeships were successfully completed in this period. This is a significant achievement, reflecting the commitment required to balance work and study. It also recognises the important role of managers in supporting apprentices to gain the skills, knowledge and behaviours needed to complete their programme successfully.

The Government's Levy funding rules mean that funds expire and are returned if they are not used within 24 months of entering the account. Monitoring Levy spend therefore remains important. The graph below shows total Levy funding and the amount that expired. The reduction of expired Levy funds to zero in both 2024/25 and 2025/26 demonstrates continued progress in maximising Levy use through the Council's grow our own approach.



The Council also continues to engage with schools through careers fairs and work-related activities and is hosting eight students from schools across East Devon through this year's corporate work experience programme.

The Pathways to Planning initiative also started in September. This programme is designed to help address staffing shortages in planning teams by offering graduates a fast-track entry route into a career in local government. Following the success of the management trainee placement, the Council is also exploring a further two placements through the LGA programme within Place services.

Building Control is also working with LABC to support a seconded placement in response to skills shortages in the sector. Following the success of the management trainee placement, the Council is also exploring a further two placements through the LGA programme within Place services.