Colleague Development Strategy

2025 - 2028

whg

Strategic context

Our 2030 Plan outlines ambitious strategic goals aimed at driving transformational change by 2030, addressing both current and future challenges in the social housing sector. We identified six transformational projects in collaboration with customers and colleagues that form an ambitious programme of change.

Our **People Strategy** was developed with colleagues to support and underpin the delivery of the transformational projects detailed in Our 2030 Plan and will fulfil the strategic ambitions of one project particularly:

- **"Work and workplace of the future:** because a strong, stable and skilled workforce is essential for us to deliver high-quality services for our customers."

As part of this project's ambitions, we have made the commitment to:

- "Promote the value of **development and learning** to create personal and professional **opportunities for growth.**"

whg has not previously had a Colleague Development (or Learning and Development) Strategy and so this strategy's launch is evidence of the organisation's commitment to developing our people, creating meaningful career opportunities and preparing our colleagues for the future of work.

Changes to the operating environment, legislation and the labour market have caused skills challenges across the sector. This strategy responds to these and future challenges to improve our organisational preparedness and capability. We also know that the demographics of our workforce and the labour market are changing, and we will respond by delivering a service and learning solutions that support the work and workplace of the future, prioritising organisational agility and skills development.

Strategic context (cont.)

A key focus of our People Strategy is to develop **organisational capability,** including ambitions to enhance leadership capability and development; grow an agile, skilled and professional workforce; and drive colleague engagement and our Employee Value Proposition. The **Colleague Development Strategy** will play a significant role in realising these strategic ambitions, in addition to several complementary strategies and whg's organisational culture.

The success of this strategy will be in improving talent attraction, retention and growth, in addition to colleague engagement, progression and productivity which support an enhanced customer experience.

Our 2030 Plan

People Strategy

Colleague Development Strategy

Diversity and Inclusion Strategy

Colleague Wellbeing Strategy

Organisational culture, behaviours and values

Foundations for success

The successful delivery of this strategy requires a solid foundation to ensure the effective operational delivery of our Learning and Development service. These foundations underpin the strategy and are fundamental to maintaining service effectiveness and enabling the achievement of Our 2030 Plan. Supported by our Learning and Development Policy, the offer is underpinned by good governance and risk management, budget control and value for money, compliance with regulation and legislation and decisions based on equity and business need.

Compliance

We will be an enabler for compliance, collaborating with subject matter experts to mitigate risk to colleagues and customers. We will work with our leaders to meet legislative standards and promote professionalism, accountability and positive behaviours amongst colleagues.

Diversity and inclusion

Diverse teams bring a wealth of perspectives, experiences and ideas. Our colleague development offer must be agile and provide fair and equitable access to learning. Learning opportunities must be diverse both in content and delivery method.

Collaboration and partnerships

We will continue to leverage our position within whg and in the sector to influence best working practice and service improvements. We will continue to strengthen our relationships with subject matter experts, educational institutions, training providers and partners to ensure value for money learning opportunities and support the development of future talent pipelines.

Enhancing customer experience

The Learning and Development team will provide a best-in-class service to our internal stakeholders. And our learning interventions will ensure our colleagues are equipped to provide excellent service to our customers, demonstrating professionalism and our behaviours and values.

Tools to do the job

New colleagues will have a positive onboarding and induction experience which enables them to fulfil their role effectively. We recognise that role requirements change, and that colleagues will need to develop new skills and knowledge to be effective; our offer will respond to these needs and complement the Performance Management Framework (PMF).

Behaviours and values

All our decisions and actions are led by our behaviours and values. This ensures all our operational and strategic work is underpinned by our organisational culture.

Colleague Development Strategy 2025 - 2028

The Colleague Development Strategy will enable change and growth in the organisation to unlock the capabilities required to deliver Our 2030 Plan.

It will be underpinned by a culture of continuous and agile learning and where data-led decisions enable effective future planning and organisational preparedness.

We recognise that, to achieve the ambitions of Our 2030 Plan and People Strategy, we will need to work in different ways, using novel approaches, harnessing emerging skills and digital solutions to develop and deploy our resources strategically and effectively. We want to be a destination workplace where colleagues are developed and take ownership of their own career progression.

The Colleague Development Strategy will also enable the business to execute its core purpose as a social landlord. We will listen to our customers and use their feedback to help shape our learning and development offer, ensuring our colleagues are equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to complete their roles competently, confidently and professionally. And will be prepared for future challenges, skills needs and technological developments.

The strategy has three strategic priorities: career advancement, dynamic learning, and future readiness. These strategic priorities have been developed through consultation with colleagues and leaders and will ensure we develop a resilient, skilled, and adaptable workforce capable of responding to a changing environment. They build upon our foundations to deliver an agile and future-focused service.
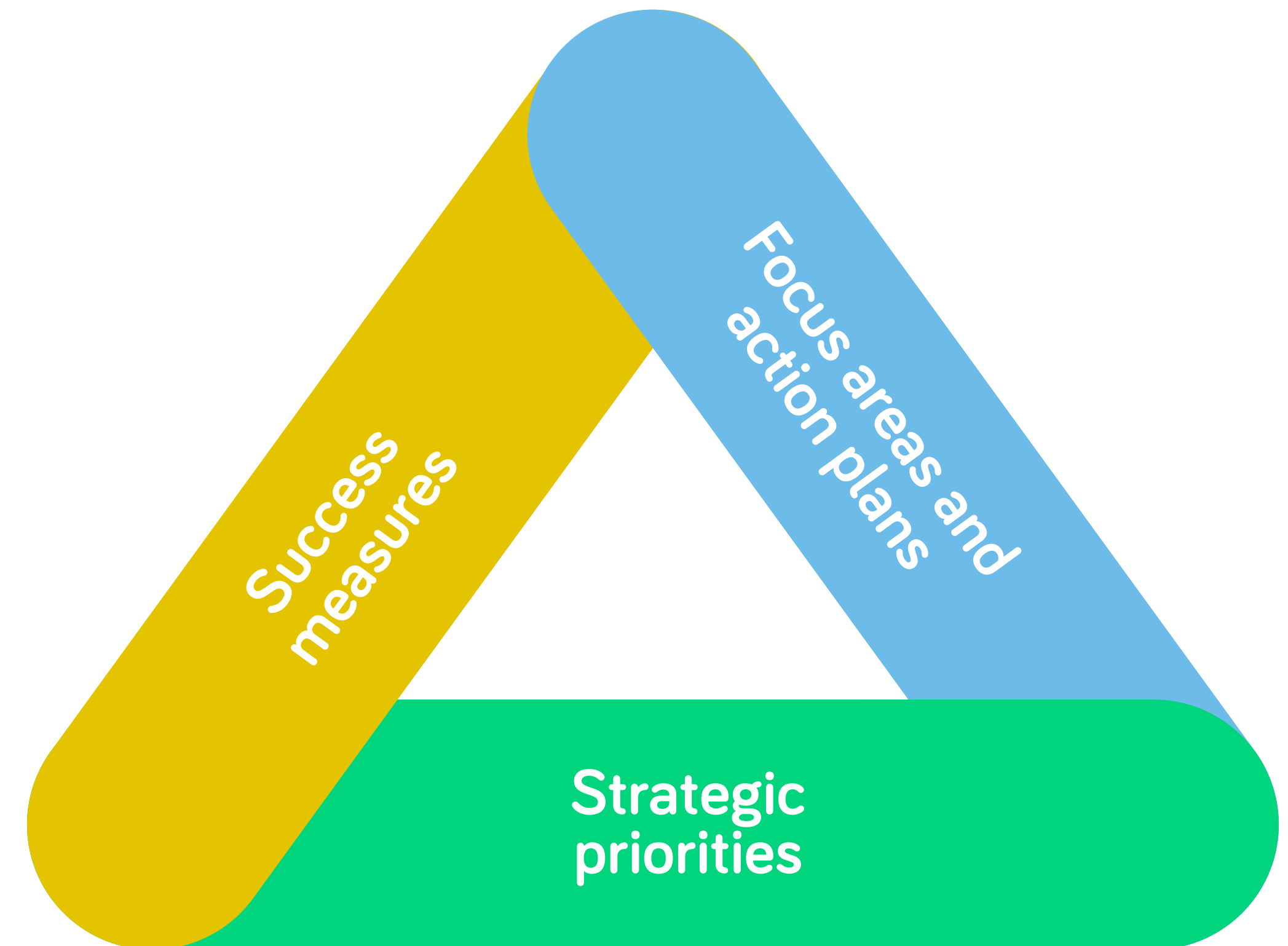
Colleague Development Strategy 2025 - 2028 (cont.)

Each of the strategic priorities has several focus areas and is supported by an action plan. The action plans are intended to be dynamic, leaving some space for accommodating additional initiatives or reviewing delivery dates, particularly in year 3, but also recognising that several key actions/objectives must be sequenced correctly to ensure they have maximum value and support the overall direction and outcomes of the strategy.

Success measures, underpinned by Key Performance Indicators, will also provide assurance on progress against the strategic priorities, focus areas and overall impact of the Colleague Development Strategy.

Strategic priorities and focus areas

Career advancement	Dynamic learning	Future readiness
Career pathways **Coaching and mentoring** **Continuous learning opportunities**	**Digital learning environments** **On-demand learning resources** **Inclusive learning**	**Sustainable skills and technologies** **Professional services** **Organisational preparedness**
• A culture of learning and improved ownership of development and progression. • Targeted development programmes that facilitate career progression and enhancement. • Enhanced organisational capabilities through agile skills development and deployment. • Improved career progression and knowledge retention through establishing clear career pathways. • Effective coaching and mentoring embedded into organisational culture and practices. • Through external partnerships, develop a range of learning and development opportunities outside of traditional methods, enhancing our intellectual capital.	• Agile learning solutions, focused on customer impact, return on investment and colleague experience. • Equitable access to learning for all colleagues, enhanced through digital technologies. • Digital learning destinations for colleagues with relevant and effective on-demand content. • Learning experiences that embrace neurodiversity, lived experience and cultural diversity. • Strategic business partnering to enhance our offer, shifting to a future-focused approach.	• Identification and development of critical skills for the future. • Innovate learning solutions for emerging workforce needs. • Effective, skilled and professional customer-facing services where colleagues uphold our behaviours and values. • Right-sized apprentice, trainee and graduate programmes to support workforce strategies. • Learning initiatives which support the build, buy, borrow and bot approach. • Organisational and leadership development solutions to meet the future needs of the organisation.

Our organisational culture is inclusive and values-led, supporting customer-focused outcomes in an agile way, creating a high-performing workforce.

High level outcomes

Career advancement

- Develop clear professional career pathways, linked to the Performance Management Framework and Talent Management.
- Work with colleagues and managers to create personal Individual Development Plans (IDPs).
- Develop a Talent Management Framework that identifies and develops future leaders.
- Establish a mentorship programme, pairing employees with experienced mentors and exploring reverse mentoring.
- Through Strategic Workforce Planning, deliver re-skilling and knowledge sharing initiatives to enhance workforce agility.
- Promote a range of learning opportunities outside of traditional methods, including enhanced job placement, secondment / shadowing.
- Facilitate access to external courses, certifications, and conferences.
- Introduce Action Learning Sets, knowledge drops and learning circles.

Dynamic learning

- Build and sustain relationships with external partners to identify new practices and benchmark our approach.
- Expand our digital learning platform with diverse, bespoke content.
- Leverage technology such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Augmented Reality.
- Develop a digital store for recorded training sessions, webinars, and tutorials.
- Curate a selection of eBooks, articles, and other digital resources.
- Offer microlearning modules for quick, focused learning on specific topics.
- Provide options supporting different learning needs and ensure our offer meets Web Content Accessibility Guidelines
- Foster an inclusive learning environment by addressing diverse cultural perspectives and examples in training content.
- Implement training programmes focused on digital agility, critical thinking, and innovation to prepare for future challenges.

Future readiness

- Through Strategic Workforce Planning, identify, plan and respond to the critical skills needs of the future.
- Deliver initiatives to support multigenerational working, such as reverse mentoring and job / skill sharing.
- Integrate sustainability and environmental awareness into our learning offer.
- Expand the 'Professionalising Housing Management' model into other customer-facing services.
- Launch a refreshed Apprenticeship Programme, focused on future skills need.
- Develop a 'work placement' offer, supporting local schools and a potential talent pipeline.
- Define a Leadership Competency Framework and launch an accredited Leadership Development Programme.
- Partner with educational institutions to create pathways for future colleagues.

Our organisational culture is inclusive and values-led, supporting customer-focused outcomes in an agile way, creating a high-performing workforce.

Success measures

- The ultimate success of this Colleague Development Strategy will be in the effective delivery of the People Strategy and Our 2030 Plan. The effective and sustained delivery of this strategy will also result in the organic growth of new leaders and subject matter experts across the organisation and the retention of key skills and knowledge, because of the enriched learning culture and investment deployed.

- We will measure quarterly and annual progress against key performance indicators (KPIs) via the People and Culture Dashboard to provide assurance on progress against the strategic priorities. These KPIs will provide

assurance that our development offer to colleagues is impactful, appropriate and drives the values, behaviours and skills needed for the success of Our 2030 Plan.

- We will ensure our offer provides good value for money, enhances our Employer Value Proposition and organisational capability and that our performance data is accurate and representative of colleagues' experiences.

- Our data and reporting will improve significantly and will enable data-led decisions to shape our offer moving forward; identifying areas for action and ensuring colleagues are equipped with the right skills at the right time.

A dynamic action plan will further provide assurance on progress and to ensure accountability for the delivery of key initiatives and programmes.

- Additionally, the impact of this strategy will be evidenced through an enhanced customer experience, strong Tenant Satisfaction Measures and broader organisational performance. Ultimately, a more effective, agile and skilled workforce will create positive outcomes for our customers.

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