Social housing skills report and toolkit
Introduction

Every day, housing professionals create opportunities for people to find a home from which they can build the rest of their lives. The work we do is so important, which is why everyone working in the sector must demonstrate the right knowledge, skills and behaviours to drive positive culture, meet regulatory requirements and comply with new government legislation.

At the Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH), professionalism is at the heart of everything we do, supporting members to champion the role that housing professionals play in making a difference to people’s lives and uniting us as a sector. We want everyone from within and out of the sector to look upon housing with the same recognition as other distinguished professions, some of which we work very closely with.

We have already made it very clear what we think professionalism means in a housing context. This goes beyond the need for a qualification, and includes the need to display the right behaviours, attitudes and empathy, in addition to operating within an ethical framework.

That’s why, alongside the learning and guidance we provide, all CIH members must also adhere to our code of conduct and code of ethics, and have access to our well-regarded professional standards for housing. This set of seven characteristics comprehensively reflects our collective identity as a profession; an understanding of what’s important, what we stand for and what we’re trying to achieve.
Social housing skills report

This report captures the principles and advice around social housing skills collected from the series of masterclasses delivered by Bailes Partners Consulting and CIH. It supports professionalism and it is complementary to the full set of qualifications, knowledge, behaviours, attitudes, values and ethics that we think are required to be the best modern housing professional.

A key ingredient for successfully achieving your organisation’s vision and corporate strategy is to have the right skills to deliver your short and long-term objectives. Yet strategic skills-planning is all too often crowded out by immediate pressures needing the attention of leaders. In the past this hasn't caused too much trouble as alternative mechanisms of obtaining skills have been available. However, most of the traditional mechanisms for filling these skills gaps present a bigger challenge in a post-COVID and Brexit landscape. Arguably, it has never been more important to devote time and space to think about how skills gaps will be filled and how to develop the potential that is already present within our organisations.

Housing providers must start with the right foundations, ensuring you have a good picture of your current skills. The CIH professional standards self-assessment tool is a key resource to assess and understand current skills, professional development gaps and how you can contribute to the professionalism of your organisation and the wider sector.

Business improvement and increased professionalism is being driven by technology, regulation, a stronger customer voice, as well as many other factors. As a result, we need to anticipate different skill requirements for a changing landscape earlier so that we can prepare effectively.

We are all seeking certain skills such as building safety, green space management, biodiversity, and data analysis. We are therefore inevitably competing for these limited skills in the market. Instead of responding to immediate needs, we believe more debate is needed on skills. We need a longer term, broader view of skills requirements, recognising that we will not be able to recruit our way out of this problem. Skills don’t grow overnight and given it’s unlikely that Government intervention is going to solve national skills shortages, we need to focus on developing long-term skills pipelines to provide us with the skills we need.

Over the course of five chapters this report and toolkit provides the essential components for you to successfully manage your organisation’s skills requirements during your current and future business planning periods. It follows the series of masterclasses in 2022, condensing the key take-aways and tips.

We hope you find it useful.

Bailes Partners Consulting and Chartered Institute of Housing.

With thanks to speakers from:

• Moat
• M&S
• Berwick Partners
• Ground Control
• Langley Housing Trust
• Adecco
• Futures Housing
• Southern
• Longhurst Group
• Network Homes
• Flagship
• Women’s Pioneer Housing
• Coherent Cities
CHAPTER ONE
Tomorrow’s skills matter today

Building the case for developing skills in your organisation

- The traditional model of purchasing skills in the market has become much more difficult for housing organisations since Brexit, Covid and associated factors that are affecting the supply of skills and talent.

- We face challenges in purchasing skills through recruitment and we have seen significant changes in expectations of employees. Candidates are demanding more and if we want to successfully recruit the skills we require, we will need to be quicker and more agile.

- Greater competition for skills in the market is increasing pressure on the employee value proposition - the offer to employees. In a financially constrained environment, you need to be clear about the benefits to working for your organisation.

- Contributing to the skills challenge is increased staff turnover rates. We know that people leave managers not companies - low engaged teams typically endure staff turnover rates of 18 per cent - 43 per cent more than highly engaged teams. Gallup’s State of the Workplace: 2021 report found that it takes more than a 20 per cent pay rise to lure most employees away from a manager who engages them, yet almost nothing to poach the most disengaged workers. The ‘great resignation’ is in fact the ‘great discontent’.

- We are seeing the alternative method of developing skills internally as an increasingly popular way of mitigating labour market difficulties.

- We recommend adding skills considerations to corporate objectives, risk registers, projects, restructures, and any business activity that you can. Skills considerations are relevant in all contexts and are crucial to delivering your organisation’s objectives. The CIH self-assessment tool provides a crucial opportunity to recognise gaps in skills, helps identifying key knowledge and skills required in the role (in addition to key values, knowledge and behaviours). Furthermore, it provides basis for identifying professional/career development opportunities, a benchmark against which to measure current competence and future development, and where escalation or further research is required.
Promoting the right narrative for skills in your organisation

• Understanding your skills needs is an important starting point. Your skills planning should have a short and long-term focus over the course of your current and future business plan. Taking a two-pronged approach allows you to deal with immediate priorities and a long-term view which will allow you time to obtain and/or develop the skills you need to deliver your corporate objectives.

• Your approach to skills planning will need a successful narrative to build a compelling argument for focusing on what skills you need to deliver objectives and how you will obtain these. A persuasive case for investing in skills needs to offer a vision for the organisation and employees to get behind and support.

• Explore how much importance is placed on the quality of recruiting skills into your organisation and what people think about developing skills internally. This will help to frame the messages that you will need to influence stakeholders around you.

• To develop a plan to acquire the skills needed, you will need to fully understand your organisation’s direction of travel, its future objectives, what skills are required to meet these and the risks around skills deficits. This forms the core of your narrative for skills planning.

• It is essential that skills development is seen as a core enabler of your corporate strategy and equally a significant risk if you are unable to obtain the right skills.

Taking a long-term approach for skills

• Skills development is a long-term game, and it needs investment now for future years. It is prudent therefore to plan for skills development in strategies and budgets.

• Consider the external and internal challenges to obtaining the right skills. Amongst other things, national skills shortages, an ageing population, and variations in migration patterns will affect the labour market, as will regulatory/legislative changes. Internally, you need to consider factors such as your team/workforce demographics to see where you have pressure points due to age, diversity or behavioural trends. Once you have a view of the internal and external landscape you can then plan to overcome these challenges.

• Skills development should not be confused with day to day or annual learning and development planning. Emerging skills needs and how to develop scarce skills can take years of work to build resilience into your workforce. Regular refreshes to your long-term plans keep them relevant and will support business continuity.

• Consider how you can upskill existing staff over a period of time to meet your skills requirements so that development and retention of skills are in balance with recruiting new employees.

• At the same time consider partnerships and initiatives that can support a recruitment pipeline, such as partnerships with education institutions and employment charities.

• Above all, get everyone thinking and talking about skills and how crucial it is to delivery of your services and strategies.
CHAPTER TWO
Identifying skills gaps and building organisational resilience

Focus skills development on areas that have the greatest impact on your business. To do this you need a clear picture of three key areas:

• Where you have skills gaps and how critical these are to your organisation

• Where resilience can be built to develop stronger teams and to build organisational strength against challenges and shocks

• What emerging skills you need to be planning for so that you can maintain depth of skills within your teams.

• Alongside understanding what skills you should be investing in, it is important to consider the culture of your organisation. The CIH professional standards can provide a framework to develop and/or match and align your organisational values. As you begin to identify your skills gaps by using the CIH self-assessment tool, consider the behaviours and cultural factors that will expediate or hinder progress. This information will be crucial in your planning later and the effectiveness of how you develop and adopt new skills for your business. This summary of the book ‘World Class’ by Will Greenwood and Ben Fennell sets out the importance of focusing on team development.

How to identify skills gaps

• Think carefully about what skills you require to successfully deliver your corporate objectives and what skills will be necessary in your workforce in the next five years. This horizon-scanning is a crucial part of identifying future skills that should start to be developed now.

• Identify your short-, medium- and long-term skills requirements. You can’t do this on your own – resource planning and building organisational resilience is a leadership responsibility. The leaders across your organisation need to be thinking about skills requirements in the context of desired performance levels, pressures facing the sector, potential legislative/regulatory changes as well as shifts in business activity and service levels.

• Maintain a focus on outcomes sought rather than learning programmes which stakeholders may have experienced in the past. There is a danger that people will jump to the ‘how?’ to develop skills and recommend training programmes before thinking carefully about the ‘what?’ and ‘why?’ first.

• Seek clarity on whether the skills requested will drive behaviours or activities. This will ensure you plan for the right intervention and manage expectations. Once you have a clear view of the skills needs, you then need to understand what skills are in your workforce now. You may know some, but you shouldn’t assume that individuals’ skills are limited to the role they currently undertake. A good team manager will have sought to understand the skills in their team, and these can be collated. When the CIH self-assessment has been completed and you have identified gaps in skills and what areas need improvement within your staff members, the CIH eLearning modules support you address those gaps, with an exclusive module for each of the CIH professional standards, as well as with an introductory module on professionalism. With your CIH membership you can access a rich offer of skills development not only with the professional standards and eLearning modules, but also with the knowledge hub, qualifications, training, mentoring platform, publications and more.

Alternatively, you could undertake a skills audit. Lastly, you put the two together - what you need and what you have. You can then see the skills gaps.
How to build organisational resilience

• We all have to prioritise where we spend our energy and investment. It's unlikely that you will be able to develop the skills in all of the areas where you have gaps. Focus your effort on skills that will have the greatest impact to your organisation.

• It is important that decisions are not made in isolation. The measuring impact template in the toolkit will help you to prioritise, explain your rationale to key stakeholders and secure approval.

• Your first step should be to identify business critical roles – these are the roles that represent a greater risk if you don’t have the right skills filling them. Ask yourself whether you have a pipeline of talent waiting to fill these business-critical roles and how much of a risk do they present? Once you have this ‘critical role profile’ you will have a better understanding of how resilient you are against shocks and flight risks.

• Create succession plans for your critical roles. Don’t jump to replacing like for like. Instead, review how roles may need to evolve to meet future demands. A diverse pool for succession will help with this, as will a resourcing strategy that supports bringing people with potential into your organisation.

• As well as targeted planning for business-critical roles, you should also be developing the diversity within teams as part of a broader skills development activity to create depth in your teams. You want to avoid having a small number of highly skilled individuals which increases your risk. We can learn a lot from team sports about the importance of depth within teams.

• Ensure skills development goes hand in hand with increased opportunities/responsibilities so that these skills are utilised and recognised. This will help you to retain skills.

• Overlaying your critical roles, talent pipelines and skills development plans will highlight how resilient each role is and how agile you can be in responding to workforce changes. Ensure you consider factors such as historical attrition, retirement age and career aspirations as these may increase your risks.

The skills toolkit by Bailes Partners Consulting

Use part two of the toolkit for a template on how to gain a picture of business-critical roles in your organisation.

Sector-wide emerging skills needs

• When you are recruiting new skills, think about future needs as much as the current one. It takes more investment, but recruiting and promoting based on potential means that people can grow and learn.

• We know that the skills requirements for the sector will evolve and change as we respond to changes in legislative, regulatory, financial, and other social-economic pressures. It can be difficult to pinpoint precisely what emerging skills we may need, but we can see trends and the big challenges facing us. We already know that we need to:

  o Get better at our basic housing management, using data and predictive analysis to be on the front foot for good asset and service management.

  o Understand more about how to get net zero and build environmental sustainability into our ways of operating.

  o Continue to invest in leadership and management which underpin improvements in our operating model, decision-making structures, and high-performance culture

• These are just a few examples. Our LinkedIn poll showed that people realised we need to be thinking hard about data (33 per cent of votes), customer service (26 per cent), asset management (22 per cent) and environmental (20 per cent) skills. In reality we need all of these as they are intertwined in our ability to provide decent homes and services.
CHAPTER THREE
Finding the skills we need

Having identified the skills that are required within an organisation, the challenge turns to finding them. In this chapter we look at current trends in the labour market, brand effectiveness and responding to candidate expectations.

Challenges in the labour market

• Alain Dehaze, CEO of the Adecco Group, one of the world’s largest recruitment agencies, regularly talks about talent scarcity as a key challenge and a lens through which we will see the entire world of work. He warns that the ‘green transition’ is here and even though we are starting to talk more about green skills, we need to marry the social with the environmental rather than seeing them as separate.

• In his blog, 6 World of Work Trends That Will Shape 2022, he explains that during COVID “Decades of hard-fought progress on equality have been undone as women were forced out of the workplace to care for family. Data shows that fewer women than men will regain employment during the COVID-19 recovery, according to the International Labour Organization.

• Digital transformation and hybrid ways of working will continue to change companies and there is a greater focus on leadership and accountability, moving away from intention being good enough - people now expect action to back up words.

• In our skills masterclass webinar, Elyse Hodgess from the Adecco Group summarised the key labour market challenges:

The Cambridge Network reported in February 2023 six trends that employers should be aware of:

1. Candidate experience
2. Ghosting
3. Employer brand
4. Automation in recruitment
5. Flexible roles
6. Increased Gen Z joining the workforce.
How to assess your attractiveness as an employer

• We take it for granted, but social housing is an amazing sector to work in. Our social impact across a wide range of areas such as environmental, diversity, social mobility and social justice appeals to more and more people in modern society. We also have a great range of roles across our operations – people have countless career choices all in one sector.

• Don’t be afraid to promote the great things that your organisation does, how great your team is and the positive impact that the roles you offer can have. Put emphasis in professionalism, values and behaviours: the CIH professional standards have been designed and developed to inspire people to join and celebrate the value of our profession

• Make sure your enthusiasm describes reality though. Paint a positive, but realistic picture so that people are aware of the decision they are making. You are more likely to get greater commitment from them if they know what they are stepping into.

• Be open to what a realistic picture actually looks like. Reviewing Glassdoor, Trustpilot and internal mechanisms for feedback can show different perspectives and highlight blind spots. Remember, the more senior your position in a company the more positive your opinions are likely to be.

• Your website, social media and other communication platforms are all telling the world information about your organisation, through words, pictures, and videos. Most people considering working for you will look at these. Your messaging therefore needs to take this into account for it to be credible. An independent review and presentation of the findings can be helpful if your employer brand is something that needs improving.

• The greater flexibility you can provide in defining the remits of the role with candidates who have the skills you are looking for, the better chance you stand in securing their appointment. Be open about the benefits package, ways of working, support that individuals need and how much they want to take on.
How to meet candidates’ expectations

• Covid, hybrid-working, adoption of new technology and the number of generations in the workforce have arguably flung us into the most significant workplace experiment in history. As we manage our way through this transition, we should be wary of hanging onto traditional ways of doing things. You need to be quick, responsive, and current in your thinking to attract great skills.

• A common staff survey response that we see is “leaders do a lot of telling and not enough listening.” Being open to new expectations will support your ability to meet new employee demands providing you with greater opportunities to attract and retain skills and talent. As a sector, we are mostly constrained in terms of responding to any significant remuneration demands, but we can provide the environment for personal growth and the development of skills.

• Your workforce is made up of individuals who think and feel differently. Diversity of thought is powerful. Beware of thinking about candidate expectations through a pre-defined lens. Instead, gain as much information as you can to discover your blind-spots and other perspectives. The CIH EDI framework can be used to make positive changes across the sector. It features self-assessment tools so you can identify where you are currently with regards to EDI and consider how you can make further improvements to working practice. This will help develop a more rounded solution to attracting and retaining the skills you need.

• Many leaders in the sector are aware that expectations of the employment relationship have changed but are not confident about how to respond successfully to these changes. It is becoming much harder to be an inspiring, modern leader that engages people for high performance. People will look closely at the tone a leader sets for the organisation and what they stand for. Your leader’s style and profile can be a great opportunity to attract skills.

• Consider the environment you provide for new skills to be practised and flourish. Your employees will struggle to utilise their skills in a smothering environment. Your recruitment strategy must therefore acknowledge your culture and ensure adequate work is taking place to build a growth-focused environment for them.

The skills toolkit by Bailes Partners Consulting

Use part three of the toolkit to help your effectiveness in the labour market.
CHAPTER FOUR
Building talent pipelines

When we think about skills, we can also consider how we develop talent within our organisation so we can be flexible with our resources. As an alternative to purchasing skills in the labour market, more employers are now developing skills and talent internally. In this section we look at how internally grown skills can add to your skills strategy.

Aligning your financial investment to your organisation’s skills needs

• Chapter 2 took you through identifying your skills gaps and business critical areas. The results of this exercise will point you in the direction of where to focus your investment initially. Be cautious however about putting too much investment into skills development focused on immediate pressures.

• Think about investing in priority areas at the same time as investing in future skills by building broad pipelines of skills development. Focusing on fewer individuals reduces your resilience but can allow greater depth of learning or investment. Developing skills growth across a larger number of your workforce supports greater resilience against staff turnover. Depending on the skills need, it’s likely you will want to employ a balance of both tactics.

• You will need to balance skills development with obtaining skills from the external labour market. A key aspect of your skills strategy should be considering when it makes sense to invest in purchasing skills rather than developing them internally and link this to your resourcing plans.

• Where you choose to develop skills internally this shouldn’t be focused on learning information in a classroom. Once you’ve identified the skills that are needed, careful consideration should be given to the many ways that relevant skills can be obtained. There are often secondary skills needed to be developed at the same time to support the primary objective, for example emotional intelligence, negotiating and strategic thinking.

• Remember that under-investing in your skills development will reduce impact. Work within the budget you have and design a strategy accordingly. It is better to excel in a narrow area than underachieve across many as this will erode trust in learning and affect future buy-in for activities and programmes of work.
Development of skills pipelines

- Skills pipelines are pools of individuals who can fill roles with identified skills. These can be employees who are prospects for advancement, or who are developing these skills ready for use, or external candidates your organisation has a relationship with who are interested in joining.

- To maintain organisational resilience, you will want to plan your skills pipelines over several years so that you have a steady stream of more skills coming into the workforce. Too many could result in you losing some (and therefore the investment you have made), too few means that you won’t be able to fill your skills gap. A balanced investment in the variety of skills pipelines needs planning.

- Ensure you are collecting sufficient data to inform your future actions in sustaining your pipelines. Ask yourself whether they are representative and do they have sufficient depth and breadth to sustain shocks.

- People that make up your skills pipelines can become disengaged even with training investment if they aren’t given the opportunity to progress and utilise their new skills. Don’t just focus on developing skills, ensure there are ways to bring the skills into business activity and the employee experience. This may be through opportunities to collaborate in new areas and expand their portfolio. Failure to find ways to use newly acquired skills may increase the risk of employees seeking external progression. You may have then invested in skill development without any return.

Mapping skills development with impact and measures

- The success of your skills pipelines is directly linked to the impact felt within the business. Produce an impact framework so that your skills pipeline and associated activities remain aligned to agreed purpose and expected impact.

- Ensure regular contact with key stakeholders or form a stakeholder group to meet, review progress and agree any action required. There should be clear focus for this group to ensure skills development remains aligned to business needs.

- It is important that you can evidence the difference that a structured skills pipeline has made. Show the skills journey - before and after snapshots with survey data for example can help evidence the development journey.

- Triangulating data will help remove bias and form an overall picture of how your pipeline is developing. Human resources data combined with operational performance reporting will be able to evidence value and can be used to highlight monetary savings.

The skills toolkit by Bailes Partners Consulting

Use part four of the toolkit to access a template which sets out the desired impact from an investment in skills development and help communicate purpose.
CHAPTER FIVE
Strategic skills planning tools

This chapter provides a roundup of the top activities and tools that will help you develop skills effectively in your organisation.

1. Add skills considerations to every decision-making document and project initiation document that you can. Skills need to be thought about everywhere.
2. Build a compelling argument that is relevant to your organisation demonstrating the importance of strategic planning for skills development.
3. Identify what skills you need to deliver your current corporate plan and the next. Skills development is a long-term game, and it can take years to build resilience into your workforce skills.
4. We all have to prioritise use of our resources and so ensure you understand where your skills gaps are and the greatest risks for your organisation in relation to skills.
5. Help leaders across the business to horizon-scan and consider emerging skills that will need to be developed now for the future.
6. Seek clarity on whether the skills requested will drive behaviours or activities. This will ensure you plan for the right intervention, manage expectations, and maintain a focus on outcomes that are sought. Avoid people jumping to how to develop skills before thinking carefully about what skills and why they are needed first.
7. Review and shake up your approach to attracting skills from the labour market. You need to be quick, responsive, and current in your thinking to attract great skills.
8. Don’t be afraid to promote the great things that your organisation does, how great your team is and the positive impact that the roles you offer can have.
9. Consider where it makes sense to invest in purchasing skills rather than developing them internally and link this to your resourcing plans.
10. Plan your skills pipelines over several years so that you have a steady stream of more skills coming into the workforce.
11. Consider whether skill taxonomies and skill clusters might work in your organisation so that skills and talent development initiatives are aligned with entry points at all levels of your structure.
12. Use methods that are relevant, practical and add value as people develop skills. The 70-20-10 model for learning and development is commonly used to develop content and delivery methods. 70 per cent of employee knowledge is derived from job-related experiences, 20 per cent from interactions with others, and 10 per cent from formal training.
13. Use your CIH membership to access the knowledge areas and professional standards to improve skills.
14. Take time to understand the areas of your business that might push back on your endeavours and develop strategies to mitigate their impact. A 'stick' approach rarely works. You will need to find a way to bring people with you.
15. The success of your skills pipelines is directly linked to the impact felt within the business. Produce an impact framework so that your skills pipeline and associated activities remain aligned to agreed purpose and expected impact.
The Skills Toolkit

A series of free guides to help you address your organisation’s hardest skills challenges

#1 - How to build the case for a focus on skills

How to build the case for a focus on skills
Your handy checklist:

- Understand what skills are needed to deliver your organisation’s current and future strategic objectives.

- Make time to horizon-scan what skills your industry may require in the longer-term. Do this by keeping abreast of challenges, policy, legal and regulatory changes which can affect your organisation.

- Keep raising strategic risks around skills with leaders.

- Include market trends and skills analysis in Board and Executive updates. At the same time, review and signpost others to market updates such as the ONS Labour market overview and leading recruitment firms overviews.

- When presenting the case for skills development, make sure you include:
  - The operating environment, economic update and labour market trends
  - Internal context such as the organisations skills gaps, capacity, staff turnover levels
  - Identify the skills need and how it relates to corporate objectives
  - Provide recommendations on how you can obtain the skills in the current environment and over the longer term. Invite other ideas
  - Be clear on the consequences of not planning now for future skills needs

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Time to build a case for a focus on skills?

Our customised programme drives strategic skills planning that's practical, inclusive, and sustainable.

Get in touch hello@bailespartners.co.uk

Why Bailes Partners Consulting?

We equip organisations for the skills challenges of tomorrow. Sharing the know-how to build inclusive leadership models that support people to flourish and outperform expectations.

Effective Leadership  Change & Transformation  Business Growth  HR Consultancy Practice

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The Skills Toolkit

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Assessing skills gaps and resilience
#2 Assessing skills gaps and resilience

We can learn lessons from sport about the need to balance short and long term objectives, the crucial role that culture plays and finding the right people to join our teams.

This short video explores these points

Organisational Skills Needs Assessment

Our Organisational Skills Needs Assessment provides a framework for conducting a basic Essential Skills needs assessment in your organisation. This template serves as an example of the assessment process we undertake with clients. We encourage you to use this as a starting point in the planning process.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What is the role/skills needed?</th>
<th>Length of service of current incumbent in post</th>
<th>Known information whether this post is likely to become vacant &amp; timeframe</th>
<th>Number of internal colleagues who could potentially undertake this role</th>
<th>Alignment to identification of talent</th>
<th>Diversity within the team</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Essential post required to maintain organisational delivery</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emerging skills need to deliver future objective (role not currently in structure)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Time to assess gaps and build resilience?

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Reviewing your effectiveness in the labour market

#3

The Skills Toolkit
A series of free guides to help you address your organisation’s hardest skills challenges
Before advertising in the same way that you have always done, or considering a different media channel to attract better candidates, it is worth pausing to analyse how effective your organisation is at attracting skills in the labour market.

Start by asking yourself if you tell the story of your organisation and its impact when you advertise.

The creation and promotion of a positive narrative about your organisation can often be missed as we focus too much on the role itself. Candidates will search for information if it is not presented by you and therefore it is useful to develop your organisation’s story.

Use our checklist to help guide your effectiveness when looking for skills in the labour market:

- Do you explain the purpose of your organisation and the social impact it has?
- Does your website look inviting and show a diverse range of people?
- Are you promoting your employee benefits?
- Do you have a clear story about what it is like to work at your organisation?
- Are your adverts engaging, modern and give a sense of what the role is really like?
- Have you looked at Glassdoor, Trustpilot and other review sites to see what is being said about your company in the public domain?
- Have you assessed your employee offer against competitors?

However much you are able to sell the benefits, your portrayal of what working life will be needs to be authentic and reflect the employee experience.

Time to benchmark your organisation’s skills attractiveness?

Our customised programme drives strategic skills planning that’s practical, inclusive, and sustainable.

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#4 - Measuring skills development impact

The Skills Toolkit

A series of free guides to help you address your organisation’s hardest skills challenges

Measuring skills development impact
#4 Measuring skills development impact

Evaluating your skills development programmes will evidence how effective the offer is and whether it is meeting the desired goals.

As a business, you’re investing valuable resources in your programmes, so it’s essential you can identify what’s working, what’s not (and why), return on investment, and how to keep improving.

Too often, desired impact is not clearly articulated leading to an ambiguous understanding of what success looks like and disconnected views across an organisation.

*Essentially you need to answer three questions:*

☐ What are you doing?
☐ Why are you doing it?
☐ What does good look like?

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**Top Tips**

☐ Use a variety of methods to assess the impact of skills development activities so you can triangulate the information you have gained.

☐ Use operational performance metrics, such as customer satisfaction or delivery turnaround times, to assess impact. The way that you develop skills must be aligned to achieving a business impact, whether short or long-term.

☐ Communicate the timeframe which you expect to see an impact of the skills development is important. This avoids assumptions that skills have not been effectively developed in the short term when you are operating longer-term skills pipelines.

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**Time to measure skills development impact?**

Our customised programme drives strategic skills planning that’s practical, inclusive, and sustainable.

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**Desired Impact Audit**

Our *Desired Impact Audit* provides a framework for clarifying desired impact from an investment in skills development and helps organisations communicate purpose. This template serves as an example of the assessment process we undertake with clients. We encourage you to use this as a starting point in the planning process.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What are you doing?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What skills development activities is being delivered?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For example: Secondments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What business need is this responding to?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For example: Corporate plan objective</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Why are you doing it?</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Why is this the most effective skills development activity to suit the need?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For example: What delivery method? (eg. experiential, theory-based, problem-solving, active, secondments etc)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the desired impact resulting from this specific skills development?</td>
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<tr>
<td>For example: More resilient teams/ succession plans</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What does good look like?</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What are you looking to achieve and what measurement(s) will you use to assess achievement? Return on investment?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For example: Operational performance metrics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How long will it take to see a measured impact over the short, medium and long-term?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You should set out what impacts the business can expect to see in what timeframes so that it can plan to utilise these.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Time to measure skills development impact?**

Our customised programme drives strategic skills planning that’s practical, inclusive, and sustainable.

Get in touch hello@bailespartners.co.uk

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**Why Bailes Partners Consulting?**

We equip organisations for the skills challenges of tomorrow. Sharing the know-how to build inclusive leadership models that support people to flourish and outperform expectations.

**Effective Leadership**  |  **Change & Transformation**  |  **Business Growth**  |  **HR Consultancy Practice**

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