

Mastering the Digital Shift

Unleash the power of
eLearning to drive UK Public
Sector digital adoption

A practical guide to boost skills, confidence, and software proficiency.



“The Government’s increased investment in improving productivity through digital transformation in the UK public sector is a welcome step. Rolling out new technology and software to improve working processes lies at the heart of a more efficient public sector. We’ve carried out research amongst 1500 public sector employees* to analyse their readiness to make the required digital shift.

The results are concerning. They show that realising the full benefits of these programmes is compromised by a failure to equip the public sector workforce with the right skills, knowledge, and motivation to adopt new working practices.

Currently, systems training is far too often a “tick-box” exercise. Much of the learning is forgotten before it can be applied, and isn’t reinforced where it really matters—in the flow of work.

In this practical guide, we’ll demonstrate how applying effective eLearning to improve digital adoption is straightforward and costs a fraction of the original investment.

Its successful implementation will also improve employee confidence and motivation at a time when talent retention is a big problem for many public-sector organisations.

Do have a read. I’d welcome any comments and feedback you may have!”

Regards, Patrick
CEO, Omniplex Learning



The Public Sector landscape



Budget constraints are putting immense strain on already stretched resources.

Real-time cuts in public expenditure mean that public sector bodies struggle to meet the ever-increasing demand for their services.

The latest budget protects selected public sector areas such as the NHS and Education, which benefit from a **2.4%** boost in 2024-25. However, the Institute for Fiscal Studies explains that the knock-on effect means unprotected departments such as prisons, courts, and local government will see a real-term fall of between **1.9%** and **3.5%**.

The impact on local authorities is increasingly evident.

In 2023, Nottingham, Birmingham, and Woking councils issued section 114 notices (the equivalent of bankruptcy), following Thurrock and Croydon (for the third time) in 2022. This trend is alarming, with half of all councils warning of imminent financial collapse within the next five years without significant reform.

Financial analysts at rating agency Moody's predict a continued wave of local authority failures in the near future, driven by depreciating commercial property values, high inflation, rising interest rates, and increased service demands.

Moody's identified 20 councils with substantial debt burdens, including Spelthorne, Warrington, Guildford, and Surrey Heath. They cautioned that more councils might face financial distress when finalising their overdue financial audits.

Extensive media coverage abounds in an election year when public sector service provision is a political hot potato.

The Nuffield Trust's annual public satisfaction with the NHS and social care survey in 2023 reported the lowest levels recorded since its inception in 1983. Only **24%** of the public expressed satisfaction with the NHS, compared with **60%** in 2019.

The public has never been more aware of the reduced quality of public services.

Morale is low.

Chronic pay issues in the civil service are dampening morale. Many high performers are leaving, attracted by higher salaries and perceived better benefits in the private sector.

Attracting talent to replace those leaving is a major challenge - if replacement is even possible with recruitment freezes commonplace.

In a report released on March 22nd 2024, the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) highlighted that persistent pay problems contribute to decreased staff satisfaction, posing a risk to the recruitment and retention of skilled staff.

The report pulls no punches: "Civil service pay at almost all levels has declined long-term, with median pay decreasing in real terms for most staff since 2013."

The Committee found evidence that the Government needs to take the extent of the impact of the lower pay differential more seriously.

Dame Meg Hillier MP, Chair of the Committee, said:

"For too long, Whitehall has found itself in a losing recruitment battle with the private sector without the right data, curiosity, or willingness to act to tackle the problem. The challenges this country faces are immense - an ageing population, climate change and a more volatile and hostile world, to name a few. Whitehall needs to plan to ensure it has the right skills and rewards to deliver."

The data from the CIPD's Autumn 2023 Labour Market Outlook makes for uncomfortable reading, but it comes to a different conclusion about the main reason for low morale.

50% of public-sector employees reported that morale was worse now than before the pandemic, compared with 24% in the private sector.

Low morale in the health sector was even more pronounced, with 62% of public sector employees reporting lower morale.

However, pay wasn't identified as the main reason for low morale, with only 17% citing this.

Workload and staff shortages were the most significant individual cause, cited by 48% of those taking part.

Leena Randhawa, Omniplex Learnings's Head of Learning Solutions, sees the impact of this first-hand.

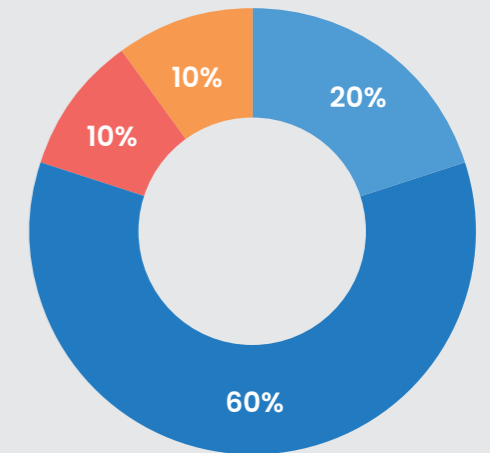


"With increased workloads and the need to compensate for staff shortages, I find that many staff simply don't have the time to attend training that might help them cope better, learn how to use new software, or take on new responsibilities," she said.

Our research bears this out.

60% cited a "lack of time for individuals to attend training programmes" as the biggest challenge to delivering digital transformation in their organisation.

What are the current challenges in your organisation when delivering training for digital transformation programmes?



- Budget constraints prevent sufficient training programmes from taking place
- Lack of time for individuals to attend training programmes/courses
- Training and L&D not seen as a priority
- Training content fails to engage individuals and is ineffective

And even when staff manage to attend training, the quality and ability to engage the learner is often lacking:



"The time and resource is one of the biggest challenges within the public sector but also the time and skill-set to create engaging content with a lack of skill-set."

Omniplex Learning Research respondent

The public sector is lagging behind the private sector in digital adoption.

There's a general acceptance that public sector problems are not just financial.

In the latest budget, the chancellor proposed a new set of productivity initiatives supported by £800 million in funding. In his statement, he emphasised that departments must find "better" ways to spend their allocated funds. However, there was little detail on achieving this, leaving each public sector body to decide the vital "how".

This uncoordinated approach may explain why the public sector lags behind the private sector in rolling out digital transformation programmes to improve productivity and efficiency.

FutureDotNow, a coalition of UK industry leaders, thought there was a "significant digital skills gap within the public service workforce."

The 2023 House of Lords Public Services Committee report found that many public sector bodies remained reluctant to embrace digital technology and eLearning. It found that;

"The Government should ensure online training is accompanied by training to use digital tools so that public servants have the digital skills needed to access online training. Such training will need to evolve as new technology becomes available and will need to be accessible to people throughout their careers."

And this appears to be a global phenomenon.

According to an Accenture report last year, 75% of public service leaders worldwide acknowledged the growing importance of technology architecture for overall organisational success. However, many felt that outdated technology was impeding their progress.

Our team sees this first-hand in daily engagement with our public sector clients.

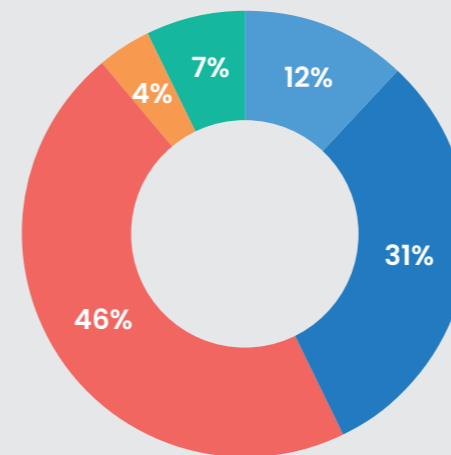
"The willingness is there, but the follow-through is lacking. This has a direct impact on productivity and efficiency. The Government's statistics show that since the pandemic, the private sector has seen a 1.3% increase in productivity, compared with a 5.7% decline in the public sector", commented Omniplex Learning's Leena Randhawa

Our research of over 1500 public sector employees sheds some light on this.

The results show that 88% of those asked reported "some/mostly or total" alignment of their organisation's learning and development strategy with their Digital Transformation programmes:

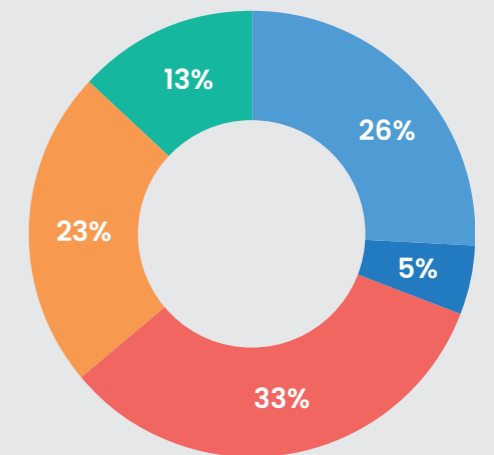
However, in practice, the research also shows that it may not be getting the focus needed from L&D strategies, rated below other factors, such as upskilling for new roles or training employees to do their current jobs:

How aligned is your organisation's Learning & Development strategy with your Digital Transformation programmes?



- Totally aligned
- Mostly aligned
- Some alignment
- Little alignment
- No alignment

What would you say is the role of Learning & Development in your organisation?



- Training employees to do their current job
- Staff recruitment and retention
- Upskilling employees to take on new tasks/roles
- Helping people use new software as part of Digital Transformation rollout
- Improving departmental performance

Is AI the saviour?

Many believe that AI can improve productivity and efficiency in the UK public sector. But it's early days, and there's a nervousness about how AI should be deployed.

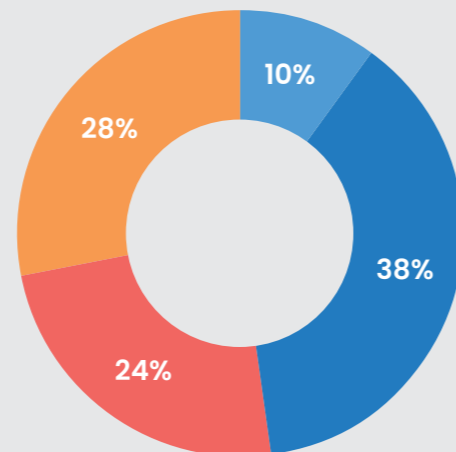
The National Audit Office's March 2024 survey of government bodies reported that AI was "not yet widely used across government, but **70%** of respondents were piloting and planning AI use cases."





In contrast, recent data from the UK Government on AI activity indicates that **68%** of large companies, **33%** of medium-sized companies, and **15%** of small companies have adopted at least one AI technology.

AI Journal reports that with a skills gap in the market, the private sector has shown more proactive engagement in spearheading reskilling efforts. **49%** of public sector bodies will integrate AI to address the evolving demands of the business landscape. In contrast, large private sector enterprises nearly double this rate of AI implementation, with **90%** reporting current or planned use of AI.

Our survey reveals an intention to use AI, with **62%** having either "dipped their toes in" or "keen to explore AI for L&D further". However, less than **10%** of public sector organisations use AI for L&D programme delivery.

How ready is your organisation to use AI in its L&D digital programme delivery?



-  We use AI from time to time in L&D programme delivery
-  We've dipped our toes into AI, but haven't used it much yet
-  We haven't used AI yet for L&D programmes delivery, but are keen to explore further
-  AI is not a priority





eLearning has a significant role to play.

eLearning can help the UK public sector organisations address the broad range of challenges they face, such as budget constraints, increasing demand for services, workforce shortages, technological adaptation, and maintaining public trust and satisfaction.

Specifically, improved eLearning programmes and content can have a direct impact on morale and retention by increasing employees' confidence, pride, and satisfaction, positively affecting their loyalty and commitment.

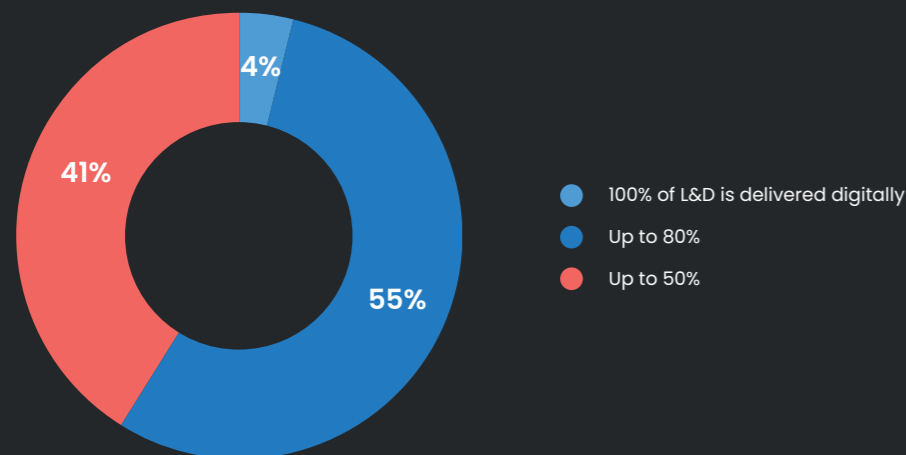
And the good news is that there's evidence that eLearning is used extensively in the UK public sector. Results from our survey indicate that more than half of the respondents report that up to **80%** of their training is delivered digitally.

However, the analysis also suggests that the effectiveness of the eLearning deployed needs to be improved.

We believe that increasing the effectiveness of systems training in the flow of work will improve productivity and efficiency at an operational level, increasing the return on the huge investment in digital transformation programmes.

The following section provides some practical recommendations on how to achieve this.

How much of your organisation's training is delivered digitally/online versus face-to-face?



**Practical guidance for
successful eLearning
implementation
in public sector
organisations**

**We asked 1500 people in the public
sector what they saw as their priorities
for L&D in 2024/25.**

Continue reading to find out the Top 5.

Digital transformation rollout: Improving new software and working process adoption.



“In our organisation, the biggest L&D challenge is delivering training for big IT Project rollouts that engage users & provide learning in the moment.”

Omniplex Learning research
L&D Manager in a large Government department

Increased productivity and efficiency lie at the heart of the Government’s declared strategy to improve public sector performance.

A recent press release by the Exchequer Chancellor sets “out the case for reform across public services to unlock productivity.” The Treasury’s research reveals that “some public servants waste a whole working day each week on admin” and that embracing “new tech and cutting admin workloads would save millions of working hours, including around **750,000** policing hours every week.”

The declared intention to reduce the number of people working in the public sector leads to one conclusion, which is perfectly summarised by The 2023 House of Lords Public Services Committee report:

“The challenge is substantial: the public sector will have to deliver the same or better outcomes with less labour available.”

This puts tremendous pressure on public sector employees to have the skills and know-how to use new software and adopt improved working processes in the flow of work.

Leena Randhawa, Omniplex Learning’s Director of Learning Solutions, explains:

“Far too often, the systems training for staff supporting digital transformation roll-out is ineffective. Training usually takes place before the new systems are live, so much of the learning is forgotten by the time employees use it to perform their work tasks.”

Leena’s observations are supported by empirical evidence.

Professor Art Kohn’s research quantifying the impact of 19th-century psychologist Hermann Ebbinghaus’s famous work, the “Forgetting Curve,” further illustrates this concept. He found that students forget approximately **70%** of the material taught within **24** hours of a training session.

So, relying totally on up-front systems training – however engaging – will fail to effectively equip users to use new working processes correctly from day one.

The solution is a Digital Adoption Platform such as Omniplex Guide to reinforce the up-front learning in the flow of work.

Here’s how it works:

Digital Adoption Platforms allow employees and customers to access in-app support, step-by-step walkthroughs, and on-demand assistance for seamless systems and software training integrated into their workflows.

Rather than solely relying on initial classroom learning, these platforms offer personalised onboarding, guidance, and real-time support, reinforcing fundamental principles and training.

By connecting individuals to workflows, they streamline processes, alleviate the complexities of new technology, and reduce support tickets and management time spent resolving issues.

This approach improves learning retention by reversing the “forgetting curve” effect. It also boosts employee confidence and productivity by ensuring uninterrupted workflows, facilitating the journey towards successful digital transformation.

A practical example.

Consider the scenario of an NHS staff nurse or a contracted agency nurse operating in a bustling A&E unit.

After triaging a patient, they need access to update their Electronic Patient Record (EPR) to update their details. Although they attended a training course on the new EPR software and app a few weeks prior, some of what they were taught was a little hazy. They lack confidence in their ability to navigate the latest software. Because their colleagues are occupied, immediate assistance is not available, and the hospital’s technical support helplines are overwhelmed.

However, these challenges can be alleviated with a Digital Adoption Solution like Omniplex Guide.

The staff nurse is provided with in-app prompts, assistance, and support on-screen as they progress through the online EPR process. They are guided through data input in the appropriate format and fields.

Should they overlook anything or input incorrect information, they receive prompts and guidance to ensure the task is completed accurately.

If they need further assistance, step-by-step walkthroughs, on-demand PDF guides, and instructional videos are readily accessible.

Content for OmniplexGuide is straightforward to create in-house and can be implemented in days.

Many organisations are now using Digital Adoption Platforms such as Omniplex Guide as part of their training programme. The costs are minimal compared to the development and implementation costs of deploying the new technology. More importantly, as the Fosway Group recently pointed out, it ensures that poor adoption and improper software usage don’t waste this investment.



“Systems training remains a core learning need for all businesses. Keeping up with changes to existing systems, onboarding new users, and managing user churn can be a resource-intensive activity. Omniplex has focused on clear and demonstrable cases that improve access to the right support at the right time for employees and increase the efficiency for learning teams and administering the content needed for targeted and effective learning.”

Myles Runham
Senior Analyst, Fosway Group, April 2024

Create personalised learning pathways for high flyers.

Improving morale and arresting the drain of top talent are the biggest challenges for many of our public sector customers.

Personalised learning pathways can play a big part in addressing these challenges. Helping individuals shape their personal and professional development programmes ensures buy-in and relevance, leading to increased confidence and self-esteem.

As a result, employees are much more likely to feel a greater sense of loyalty and commitment to their employer organisation and are less likely to have their heads turned by offers from elsewhere.

“We know from experience that identifying highflyers and creating a personal development plan tailored specifically for their needs and career aspirations is a powerful employee motivator”, commented Leena Randhawa, Omniplex Learnings’s Director of Learning Solutions.

It’s easy to create content in-house using authoring tools such as Articulate 360 and video animation software such as Vyond. Training courses can bring learning to life in any format to suit learner needs, whether in a traditional classroom setting, online courses, peer-to-peer delivery, or experiential learning opportunities.

Once the training programmes are underway, the learner and the L&D team can manage the learning effectiveness, progress, and next steps using a Learning Management System (LMS)

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“Tailoring training and development programmes to upskill top talent, develop their interests, and help them achieve career goals through personalised learning pathways boosts employee engagement and satisfaction.”

Omniplex Learning Research respondent

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“Aligning L&D content and provision to skills development to provide a clearer journey for learners around career mapping and progression.”

Omniplex Learning Research respondent

Providing easy access to engaging, interactive online learning tools and resources.

Making the learner experience easy.

A structured approach is needed to put the learner at the heart of the Learning and Development (L&D) strategy.

It's essential to make content readily available on demand, allowing employees to select and self-serve precisely what they require, when they need it.

Google is a good role model. It's accessible via any browser on any device with just a few clicks. Users have complete autonomy over their search queries. They can refine their searches to enhance the quality of results, with all options intuitively laid out for easy scanning and selection.

A Learning Management System (LMS) like Docebo works in the same way. It allows learners to discover and self-serve relevant content across various devices as needed.

Content is structured in user-friendly libraries using intelligent interfaces that showcase courses and materials. Learners are guided to quickly find solutions to workplace challenges, mirroring the seamless access experienced of Google.

Less is more!

In line with the immediacy of Google, we recognise the need for concise, pointed learning content that quickly addresses pressing workplace issues – “less is more!”. Lengthy and overly complex eLearning content can overwhelm and deter users from seeking instant responses to their needs.

We recommend creating content in bite-sized formats tailored to address known challenges and issues specific to the organisation that are likely to hinder workplace performance.

Articles are best limited to **250** words and videos kept under one minute wherever possible. Other visual materials, such as infographics and cheat sheets, should focus on just one or two topics at a time.

This is easier than it might sound. Award-winning authoring tools like Articulate 360 facilitate easy in-house content creation and editing across various formats and channels, ensuring content is optimised for learning within the workflow.

Bring learning to life.

Learning from Google, we recommend bringing learning content to life within the workflow by creating engaging and entertaining experiences that users will enjoy using.

For example, with Vyond's video creation software, anyone in-house can create memorable, animated videos covering no more than two learning outcomes. These videos can captivate learners and aid the learning process.

Introducing learning using gamification through Docebo's suite of services makes the learning experience interactive to fully engage employees, encourage progress, and offer rewards and recognition for their learning achievements.

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“Making it easier for our learners to find and access the learning they need simply and efficiently, which is a constant issue for central government departments that have to engage with a multitude of L&D platforms and disparate provisions – none of which is aligned.”

Omniplex Learning Research respondent

Harnessing the power of AI for public sector training, learning and development.

As with digital transformation, the public sector lags behind the private sector in embracing and integrating AI.

When used in learning and development, AI can help speed up content creation, measure performance, improve personalised targeted learning, and refine the learning experience.

However, it needs to be seen in a broader context, and there's a danger that the immense hype around AI will drive a siloed approach to its deployment.

There are also unknowns and ethical considerations that require a cautious approach to implementing AI to the public sector workplace.

Omniplex Learning's CEO, Patrick Jocelyn, points out that "AI has a big role to play in L&D. But it is one tool that needs to form part of a coordinated approach to helping public sector organisations meet their key challenges, such as increasing digital adoption".

Deploying AI against solid business objectives will ensure a proportionately bigger impact on L&D.

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“Harnessing AI tools but recognising the public sector, especially as Central Government Departments, can be very risk averse.”

Omniplex Learning Research respondent

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“Understanding trends and preparing for change. Using AI to enhance learning using performance-driven data whilst complying with carbon zero initiatives.”

Omniplex Learning Research respondent

Reducing L&D costs.



“Unfortunately, financial restrictions are in place at the moment, so the biggest priorities are to fulfil our statutory obligations with reduced funding.”

“Budget constraints in local government mean that tough decisions on immediate priorities can sometimes take precedence over longer-term goals.”

“Keeping compliance training and development of individuals, teams and service areas within an ever decreasing budget.”

Omniplex Learning Research respondents.

Learning and development professionals in the UK public sector are in a dilemma.

There has never been a greater need to meet statutory compliance standards, upskill employees, train them to use new software, adopt new working processes, and create motivating learning pathways that encourage improved performance and engender greater loyalty.

However, reduced budgets hinder compliance training and the acquisition of new skills and knowledge among public sector employees. Training programs are being scaled back or discontinued altogether, limiting opportunities for professional development and career advancement. As a result, many employees need help keeping pace with evolving job requirements and industry best practices, leading to decreased productivity and efficiency.

We believe this is a driver for many employees to leave for higher-paid jobs with better benefits in the private sector,

A March 2024 TUC survey of more than 1000 public sector workers found that 38% have already taken steps to leave their profession to get a job in another field or are actively considering it.

A further TUC analysis discovered that around 2.2 million public sector workers are “seriously thinking about quitting their jobs for good.”

L&D professionals are increasingly turning to eLearning over classroom-based learning with its reduced costs and increased flexibility on employee attendance. Our own research points to 80% of learning being delivered digitally.

We also advocate bringing your L&D functionality and management in-house. This has a positive impact, not only in terms of reducing costs but in demonstrating the value of L&D in driving improved performance across a range of critical factors:

- 1 Decreasing the costs associated with developing course programs and content:**

Streamlined, agile in-house content creation can save managerial time and cut costs by removing the need for expensive outsourcing of L&D content creation.

Priorities can be adjusted as circumstances evolve to accommodate changing scenarios. Any employee can create and edit content using tools such as Articulate 360. Animated videos are simple and fast to make using easy-to-use software such as Vyond.
- 2 Facilitating immediate access to performance data:**

Using a learning management system (LMS) such as Docebo to access data and metrics on L&D impact and effectiveness “at your fingertips” is a powerful way of demonstrating control and accountability over the investment made in training, learning, and development.

Sharing regular reports demonstrates accountability to the organisation, which helps foster a learning culture.
- 3 Exerting control over all facets of L&D management to yield a return on investment:**

Using an LMS provides detailed management reports on the organisational impact of eLearning programmes and on individual learner performance. This allows management to understand, measure and assess the return on investment generated by L&D programmes.
- 4 Optimising investments:**

To avoid the waste created by poor user adoption of new software rolled out via digital transformation programmes, using a Digital Adoption Solution such as Omniplex Guide can directly impact user performance by providing the training and knowledge in the flow of work.

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We're not surprised at these findings

Our eLearning team were “not surprised” at the “Top 5” issues highlighted by our research respondents.

“We encounter these types of challenges every day when we're training our public sector customers,” commented Leena Randhawa, Omniplex Learnings's Director of Learning Solutions. “This often comes down to organisations viewing training as a luxury rather than a necessity”, she added.

We encourage our clients to instil a learning culture at the heart of their organisation, where training is highly valued.

Where this happens, running engaging, entertaining and relevant eLearning programmes significantly contributes to improved individual employee and departmental performance.

And we have the evidence for this.

How **Omniplex Learning** can help...

Omniplex Learning has in-depth experience in the UK public sector's training, learning, and development requirements.

We provide award-winning authoring tools, market-leading learning management systems, bespoke digital learning creation and systems and skills training - all in one place.

We work with 100s of organisations such as



And we're an accredited Crown Commercial Services provider with a listing on G Cloud.

If any of the issues we've raised in this eBook touch a nerve, please get in touch with our Public Sector team, who are ready, willing, and able to discuss them with you.

You can email us at help@omniplexlearning.com or call 0800 850550.

We'd love to hear from you!



Let's talk

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