

How Slieve Russell Hotel is developing leaders from within

THE CHALLENGE AT A GLANCE

Upcoming senior management retirements

Challenge attracting experienced managers

No structured succession plan

> "Attracting experienced managers can be challenging. This reinforces the importance of investing in our own people."

Orla Murphy, People & Culture Manager



KEY RESULTS

Stronger leadership
More managers developed from within

Clearer career pathways
More opportunities for employees to progress

Better staff retention
Fewer leavers, lower recruitment costs

Skillnet Ireland

Fáilte Ireland

About the programme

Skillnet Ireland's **Strategic Talent Development Programme** helps businesses plan for their people and skills needs now and for the future. Through practical workshops, one-to-one mentoring and applying a clear step-by-step framework, managers or HR lead the business to develop a tailored people development plan to support the business goals.

PROGRAMME AT A GLANCE

3
months
Expected programme duration

4-5
days
commitment including workshops

6-8
hours
One-to-one mentoring

Approx. 30
hours*
Developing your business's talent development plan

Time depends on the nature of the plan being developed for your business.

HOW THE PROGRAMME WORKS

1. **UNDERSTAND**
   Identify your business's people and skills needs, with guidance from your mentor.
2. **PLAN**
   Create a tailored talent development plan through practical workshops and mentoring.
3. **EVALUATE**
   Determine how you'll measure progress and track results.
4. **GAIN APPROVAL**
   Present your plan to senior leaders and secure their support.
5. **IMPLEMENT**
   Put your plan into action with support from your business.

WHO SUPPORTS YOU?

Your business sponsor provides leadership support and direction, while your mentor offers expert guidance throughout the programme.



What you'll take away

A practical plan tailored to your business's people and talent challenges, plus a reusable framework to identify skills needs, develop your team and build clear career pathways for long-term success.

Building a future from within

ABOUT THE BUSINESS

Slieve Russell Hotel Golf & Country Club is a four-star resort in Co. Cavan, employing 342 people across four generations and 25 nationalities.

With senior management retirements on the horizon, the hotel needed to develop its next generation of leaders. Recruiting experienced managers locally was challenging, while career progression and succession planning were largely covered during annual appraisals.

People & Culture Manager Orla Murphy was enabled through Fáilte Ireland's Employer Excellence Programme to join **Skillnet Ireland's Strategic Talent Development Programme** to build a more structured approach to developing talent from within.



TAKING ACTION: HOW SLIEVE RUSSELL PUT THE LEARNING INTO PRACTICE

Through workshops and one-to-one mentoring, Orla worked with the People & Culture team to:

- ✓ **Identify critical roles** and assess potential leadership gaps.
- ✓ **Create succession plans** based on roles rather than individuals.
- ✓ **Build talent pipelines** two levels deep for key positions.
- ✓ **Develop career pathways** to prepare employees for future roles.
- ✓ **Separate career conversations from annual appraisals**, supported by training, coaching and mentoring.

General Manager Tony Walker supported the process as business sponsor, attending the first module. Mentoring with Kathleen Halligan helped Orla challenge existing practices and plan for future talent needs.



> "The programme provides a valuable opportunity to challenge your thinking, take a fresh perspective on talent development and plan more strategically for the future."

Tony Walker, General Manager

A new succession plan

WHAT CHANGED?

Slieve Russell introduced a structured approach to succession planning, identifying critical roles and potential successors up to two levels deep.

Career development conversations now take place separately from annual appraisals. The hotel also identified a new Strategic Business Analyst role to help grow midweek conference and event sales.

THE RESULTS FOR SLIEVE RUSSELL



43 internal promotions

23 in 2025 and 20 so far in 2026.



66% of management vacancies filled internally

More managers developed from within.



20 employees on development pathways

Preparing staff for future roles.



2.4% reduction in staff turnover

Fewer employees leaving the hotel.

+5% Great Place to Work Trust Index

An improvement over three years.



Around 9% lower recruitment costs

Estimated reduction in 2026.

WHAT ORLA GAINED

The programme gave Orla a practical framework for identifying critical roles and developing future leaders. Workshops and mentoring helped her challenge existing practices and take a more strategic approach to succession planning. She also gained the Certificate in Strategic Talent Development, worth 5 ECTS credits at Level 9 on the NFQ, supporting her professional development.

BUILDING ON THE LEARNING

Slieve Russell has developed an Emerging Leaders Programme, supported by QQI Level 5 accreditation in Hospitality Operations, and is introducing a new Hospitality Traineeship Programme.

Want to know more?

Skillnet Ireland's Strategic Talent Development Programme is open to participating businesses of Fáilte Ireland's Employer Excellence Programme, who meet Skillnet's programme eligibility criteria to apply.

For further information and to express your interest, visit Fáilte Ireland website.