



LOCSU

Succession planning

February 2024

Succession Planning



Succession planning for LOCs is critical.

LOCs continually identify and develop members (not just officers) to fill key leadership roles to ensure the sustainability and effectiveness of their committees.

The doors of your LOC are always open to you, they welcome new members and leaders of the future.

Why is it important?

- It ensures smooth transition when current chairs/senior officers step down.
- Helps to maintain continuity of your LOC.
- Helps to retain local LOC knowledge (cultures, values and processes).
- Ensures the LOC has capable leaders to step in when required.

This toolkit includes:

1. Succession Planning Process Framework
2. Role Profile Template
3. Talent and Succession Planning Grid
4. Potential Successors Summary Grid
5. Committee Leader Action Plan
6. Succession Planning Checklist
7. FAQs

Additional content:

[Attracting and developing new members - short course](#)

[Five-point succession planning programme](#)

[LOCSU Succession planning toolkit](#)

Succession Planning Process Framework

Before you start to look at a succession planning strategy, you need a plan in place. It is a good idea to start with this process framework:

	STEP	PROCESS DESCRIPTION	TOOL
1	Identify key roles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role fulfilment • Understand your committee • Which roles are at risk? • Who holds the knowledge and experience? 	Discussion with all committee or succession planning sub-committee; brainstorm; LOCSU's succession planning model
2	Identify needs using the role profile	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider the skills you have and the skills you require • Do you need new blood? • Is anyone due to retire or leave? • How long have members been on the committee? 	Skills gap analysis; leadership competency model; movers, leavers & stickers; consider relationships formed with commissioners
3	Build role profiles	Consider all positions but focus on the urgent	Role profile
4	Assess	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compare members of the committee available v development of the positions • Identify development opportunities for members 	Succession and talent planning grid; nine box decision-making matrix; summary grid
5	Source new members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who is suitable? • How to attract new members? • Start recruiting 	Mini-course: How to attract and develop new members?
6	Nurture and development opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and grow members • Learning and training • Mentor/shadowing • Build a strong talent pool • Handover process (how long?) 	Create development plans; leadership competency; PDP/action plans; feedback; SWOT
7	Evaluate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review, monitor and evaluate • Continuous quality improvement • Document the handover process for futureproofing the LOC 	Do any gaps still exist? Any revisions required? Review bi-annually or annually

Role Profile

The LOCSU role profile is a tool that provides a template to evaluate the specific responsibilities and requirements of the key roles in the LOC as part of the succession planning process. It can be used as a committee to discuss the following:

- Consider each key role in the LOC (role fulfilment) and select successors that are a good fit for each role
- Outline the requirements for each role in terms of knowledge, skills, experience or competencies, both now and in the future
- From this role profiling clarity can be established and an LOC member development and/or action plan can be created
- This can act as a comparison tool to compare the role criteria against potential successor experience and knowledge.

Role (i.e Chair):			
<p>Role criteria: Outline the knowledge, experience, skills, abilities and competencies required for the role from your job description (roles, responsibilities and personal characteristics):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Examples to include: Staying current with NHS Landscape</i> 2. 3. 4. 			
Development Actions – both now and for the future			
Development Area	Action	Timeframe	Progress/comments
		3-6 months	
		6-12 months	
		12 months +	
Notes			

This should be completed for each key role. Once this template is complete, there should be a clearer understanding of the requirements and knowledge required for each role and a development plan for successors. Step 2 is about identifying potential successors/talent.

Talent and Succession Planning Grid



To use this tool:

Simply add names in the appropriate boxes below, depending on whether someone is ready for the role now, developing talent or an emerging talent. The RAG rating helps to focus actions that are needed.

To be completed in conjunction with committee.

Role	Ready now <i>0-1 year</i>	Developing Talent <i>1-3 years</i>	Emerging Talent <i>3-5 years</i>	Risk <i>(Red, Amber, Green)</i>
Chair				
Vice Chair				
Secretary				
Treasurer				
Total (optional)				

Potential Successors Summary Grid



To use this tool:

Begin by indicating the name of the member against the role they are being considered for. For each candidate, rate their confidence in their potential performance for this role and provide an estimated timeline for how long the candidate will need before they are ready to take on the position.

For these estimates, it's important to consider input from multiple sources. Consider consulting other committee members for direct reports of the succession candidate. We recommend completing this grid for all committee members not just the current officers.

Role	Name of potential successor	Current role	Ready now <i>0-1 year</i>	Developing talent <i>1-3 years</i>	Emerging talent <i>3-5 years</i>	Comments <i>(i.e. Strengths, weaknesses)</i>
Chair						
Vice Chair						
Secretary						
Vice Secretary						
Treasurer						
Vice-Treasurer						

Leader Action Plan

Empowering leaders in the committee: Igniting growth and success within the committee.

This succession planning action plan should be led by the Chair and completed with the committee.



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Leader competency	Positive indicators <i>(Key strengths)</i>	Negative indicators <i>(Areas for Development)</i>	Actions to be taken <i>(any support required)</i>	Timescales	Notes
<p>1. Communicating and engaging the committee</p> <p>The leader involves individuals from the committee and demonstrates that their contributions and ideas are valued and important for delivering outcomes and continuous improvements to the LOC community.</p>					
<p>2. Develop capability</p> <p>The leader builds capability to enable people to meet future challenges using a range of experience as a vehicle for individual and organisational learning. The leader acts as a role model for personal development.</p>					

Leader competency	Positive indicators <i>(Key strengths)</i>	Negative indicators <i>(Areas for Development)</i>	Actions to be taken <i>(any support required)</i>	Timescales	Notes
<p>3. Influence for results.</p> <p>The leader has the required skills to have a positive impact on other people, builds relationships to recognise other people's passions and concerns, uses interpersonal and organisational understanding to persuade and build collaboration.</p>					
<p>4. Health and wellbeing</p> <p>The leader creates an ethos of proactive health and wellbeing within the LOC.</p>					

Leader competency	Positive indicators <i>(Key strengths)</i>	Negative indicators <i>(Areas for Development)</i>	Actions to be taken <i>(any support required)</i>	Timescales	Notes
<p>5. LOC culture</p> <p>Effective leadership that encourages the best use of LOC members skills and creates an environment that supports and mentors other LOC members.</p>					
<p>6. Takes action</p> <p>Demonstrates a readiness to make decisions. Takes action to improve outcomes for patients and the optical industry.</p>					

Succession Planning Checklist



- 1 Assessment of key roles.**
What are the competencies and experience required for each key role.
- 2 Identify potential successors within the committee.**
Assess their skills, knowledge, and interest in taking on leadership roles.
- 3 Assessment of potential successors.**
With each member, identify their needs and provide training and development opportunities to enhance their capabilities to the next level.
- 4 Foster mentorship and networking opportunities for aspiring leaders.**
- 5 Create a clear transition plan** outlining roles, responsibilities, and timelines.
- 6 Communicate the succession plan** to committee members and stakeholders.
- 7 Ensure adequate documentation** of processes, procedures, and contacts.
- 8 Encourage knowledge sharing and cross-training** among committee members.
- 9 Evaluate and monitor** the progress of potential successors regularly.
- 10 Continuously review and update** the succession plan to adapt to changing needs.

Remember, each committee may have unique requirements, so feel free to customise this checklist accordingly.

Good luck with your succession planning!

What is succession planning, and why is it important for LOCs to implement it?

Succession planning for LOCs is when the Chair or committee identifies and develops members (not just officers) to fill key leadership roles in the future. This is important because it ensures a smooth transition when current chairs or committee members retire, decide to step down or something unforeseen happens unexpectedly. It helps maintain continuity, retain the local LOC knowledge (culture, values and processes) and ensures the LOC has capable leaders to step in when required.

What are the key steps involved in creating a succession plan?

To create a succession plan, you can follow these key steps:

1. **Identify key positions:** Determine which roles are critical for the LOCs success.
2. **Assess current talent:** Evaluate the skills, experience, and potential of current members.
3. **Develop talent:** Provide training, mentoring, and growth opportunities to prepare LOC members for future roles.
4. **Create a succession pool:** Identify a pool of potential successors for each key position.
5. **Implement development plans:** Create personalised development plans (PDP) for individuals in the succession pool. (Use GOC/ABDO PDP template).
6. **Monitor progress:** Regularly review and assess the progress of individuals in the succession pool.
7. **Continuously update the plan:** Adapt the succession plan as LOC needs and priorities change.

Remember, each LOC may have its own unique approach to succession planning.

How can LOCs identify potential successors for key positions?

LOCs can identify potential successors for key positions in the committee by assessing their skills and potential for growth. This can be done informally through needs analysis and conversations with the chair, as well as with other members, or by more formal methods such as a performance review process and assessing competencies.

LOCs can consider the members' ambition, willingness to take on new challenges, and their ability to adapt to changing circumstances. Identifying high-potential LOC members and providing them with development opportunities can help prepare them for future leadership roles.

What are some of the common mistakes that LOCs make when developing succession plans?

Some common mistakes LOCs make when developing succession plans include:

1. **Focusing only on the top-level positions:** Neglecting to identify successors for key roles at various levels within the LOC.
2. **Lack of diversity and inclusion:** Failing to consider a diverse pool of candidates for succession, which can limit fresh perspectives and hinder innovation.
3. **Not involving members in the process:** Excluding members from discussions about their own development and potential succession opportunities.
4. **Overlooking potential candidates:** Not recognising the potential of members who may not fit traditional leadership stereotypes.
5. **Lack of ongoing evaluation:** Failing to regularly review and update the succession plan to align with changing LOC needs and goals.
6. **Lack of time:** It takes time to develop people and there is a need to invest in people, with adequate handover, transition and shadowing.

By avoiding these mistakes, LOCs can create more effective and inclusive succession plans.

FAQs



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How can LOCs encourage and prepare their members for future leadership roles?

To encourage and prepare members for future officer roles, LOCs can provide shadowing opportunities and opportunities for professional development, such as leadership training programs, mentoring and coaching. LOCSU also offer bitesize training webinars that allow LOC members to gain new skills and experiences. Additionally, the LOC can create a culture of continuous learning and feedback which can motivate members to develop their leadership abilities.

What role does development and training play in succession planning?

LOC member development and training plays a crucial role in succession planning. It helps prepare members for future leadership roles by enhancing their skills, knowledge, and competencies. Development and training programs provide opportunities for LOC members to acquire new skills, gain relevant experience, and broaden their perspectives. This not only prepares them for potential leadership roles but also boosts their overall professional growth. By investing in LOC member development and training, they can build a strong pipeline of capable individuals ready to step into key positions when the need arises.

What are some of the challenges LOCs face when implementing succession plans, and how can they overcome them?

Some challenges LOCs may face when implementing succession plans include:

- 1. Resistance to change:** Members may be resistant to changes in their roles or responsibilities, especially if they feel overlooked or uncertain about the process. Overcome this by clearly communicating the purpose and benefits of succession planning and involving members in the process.
- 2. Limited resources:** LOCs may face constraints in terms of time, budget, or available talent for development and training programmes. To overcome this, the LOC could prioritise the key positions and focus resources on developing high-potential members.
- 3. Lack of buy-in from leadership:** If leaders do not fully support or actively participate in succession planning, it can hinder its effectiveness. Overcome this by educating leaders about the importance of succession planning and its long-term benefits for the LOC.
- 4. Succession plan misalignment:** If the succession plan does not align with the LOCs strategic goals or if it does not consider future needs, it may not be effective. Regularly review and update the succession plan to ensure it remains relevant and aligned with the LOCs vision and priorities.
- 5. Nobody asked:** Many members state they were simply not asked! Opportunities are not openly advertised, not offered or announced with insufficient time to consider them appropriately.

By addressing these challenges proactively and involving all members, LOCs can increase the success of their succession planning efforts. LOCSU can support LOCs to address and overcome all of the above challenges.

How can succession planning benefit both the members and the LOC as a whole?

Succession planning benefits both members and the LOC as a whole. For members, it offers opportunities for career growth, skill development, and increased job variety and satisfaction. They can see a clear path for advancement and feel value from joining the LOC.

For the LOC itself, succession planning ensures a smooth transition of leadership and minimises disruptions when key positions become vacant. It helps identify and develop top talent from within the LOC. This preserves some of the expert knowledge within the LOC community. Additionally, it fosters a culture of continuous learning and development, promoting a more skilled and capable committee. Overall, succession planning contributes to long-term LOC success and sustainability.

FAQs



What are some best practices that LOCs can use to ensure the success of their succession planning efforts? **LOCSU**

Some best practices for successful succession planning include:

1. **Start early:** Begin identifying and developing potential successors well in advance to allow sufficient time for their growth and preparation.
2. **Align with strategic goals:** Ensure that the succession plan/values of the LOC align with the LOC's strategic objectives and future workforce needs. This should encourage member engagement.
3. **Involve all members:** Engage all members of the committee in the succession planning process to gain their buy-in and input, take special account of why they joined.
4. **Develop a diverse talent pool:** Consider a diverse range of candidates for succession, including both optometrists and dispensing opticians, and consider individuals from different backgrounds, work environments and different perspectives.
5. **Provide ongoing development opportunities:** Offer training and mentoring to develop members' skills and prepare them for future leadership roles.
6. **Regularly review and update:** In order that the plan remains fit for purpose and up-to-date, the policy should be regularly reviewed and updated. Continuously assess and update the succession plan to reflect changing LOC needs and to address any gaps or emerging talent. Decide in your policy who is going to review it and how often.
7. **Communicate and provide feedback:** Keep LOC members informed about their potential for growth and provide feedback on their development progress. Use the PDP templates available from the GOC or ABDO for example.

By following these best practices, LOCs can enhance the effectiveness of their succession planning efforts and build a strong pipeline of capable leaders for the future. LOCs can tap into the LOCSU resources and training to support all of the above.

How can LOCs evaluate the effectiveness of their succession plans and make adjustments as needed?

LOCs can evaluate the effectiveness of their succession plans by regularly reviewing and assessing the progress and outcomes. They can gather feedback from committee members, constituents and other stakeholders to identify areas or gaps for improvement and provide valuable insights to make any necessary adjustments. Adjustments can be made based on these evaluations to ensure the succession plan remains aligned with the LOCs goals and continues to meet its evolving needs.

Finally – what does the perfect succession plan look like?

A perfect succession plan would consider the identification of capable LOC members to fill the key officer positions, look at their skill gaps and look to develop them through training and development and activities to enable them to take over in the key officer positions.

**For further advice or feedback on
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