

Hyndburn Borough Council

Learning and Development Policy and Procedure

1. Introduction

Updating knowledge and skills to meet new challenges is part of one of our values. We want to promote a culture where learning is valued and encouraged, including learning from mistakes. We want to support staff to perform at a high standard and reach their potential. Learning and development contributes to the success of individuals, teams and it benefits the Borough we serve.

2. Our Learning and Development Principles

- Learning and development includes any activity designed to help individuals become more effective at their work by improving their knowledge and skills. It encompasses a range of activities including involvement in projects, training courses, conferences, visits to other organisations, work shadowing, networking, formal study, coaching and mentoring.
- Learning and development is a key part of employee engagement. We believe staff perform better when they feel valued and confident and know how their role contributes to the bigger picture.
- It is a continuous process. We expect staff to keep up to date within their own area of expertise. Our performance and development review process creates a specific time for people to discuss development with their manager but these discussions can happen throughout the year.
- The responsibility for identifying training and development needs and carrying out agreed training and development activity is shared between the line manager and member of staff.
- The Council will encourage and support appropriate learning and development where resources allow.
- People who wish to achieve a first level 2 qualification will be supported to do so and members of staff will be encouraged to improve their current levels of literacy and numeracy where appropriate.
- Each member of staff is expected to have a positive and proactive approach to learning and development.
- The Council recognises that returning to learning can highlight a lack of confidence and will support and encourage people, and facilitate access to support from Union Learning Representatives.
- We will work to ensure equality of opportunity across all learning and development activity.
- All employees are expected to participate in the evaluation of learning and development.

3. Responsibilities

3.1 Line Manager Responsibilities

- Ensure that staff have the skills, training and support they need to do their job well;
- Hold reviews during the probationary period and manage induction to ensure people, including those redeployed from other roles, are supported and are suitable for the role.
- Take ownership of own performance and development including leadership and management skills;
- Attend or complete any training that the Council deems as mandatory and ensure that staff do the same;
- Manage under performance using the Performance improvement Procedure;
- Conduct PDR meetings with each member of staff in the agreed timescale and return the development plan to HR by the deadline;
- Respond to any additional requests from staff to attend training within 28 days, giving reasons if the request is refused (see S4.4);
- Seek advice from HR when required; and
- Ensure that the development needs of all staff are given consideration and that the needs of staff employed on a part-time or short-term basis are addressed fairly.

3.2 Human Resources (HR) responsibilities

- Provide advice and information about learning and development matters, including when these are linked to other HR policies;
- Work with staff and managers to consider whether apprenticeships could assist in supporting the skills development required;
- Co-ordinate learning and development activities organised centrally;
- Collate development plans from the annual Performance and Development Reviews;
- Managing the training budget;
- Ensuring there are trained coaches available;
- Monitor attendance at training events and maintain training records;
- Take a broader view of training and time off agreed to ensure that there is a broadly consistent approach across the Council; and
- Liaise with Union Learning representatives.

3.3 Employee Responsibilities

- Be open to feedback and suggestions for improving your skills and knowledge;
- Attend agreed training, giving at least two days' notice if you are unable to attend;
- Arrive promptly and prepared for the day;
- Engage positively with the training (listen, mobile phone off or on silent);
- Ask the trainer for clarification if you do not understand anything;
- Pass relevant information back to work colleagues after the event;
- Complete evaluation surveys; and
- Engage positively with the PDR process.

4. How we plan training and development

4.1 We will make decisions on the funding of training and development courses as described below:

- We will consult with senior managers and other relevant groups to establish organisational learning and development needs, including those that promote employee wellbeing;
- At team level, Heads of Service and line managers should feed back any team needs;
- At individual level, the performance and development review process is the main vehicle for identifying learning and development needs.

4.2 HR will produce a Learning and Development plan based on the points listed above, in consultation with Management Team. This will not cover all learning and development activities. The following list gives examples of informal but often very effective ways of learning. The staff member and line manager are responsible for arranging these.

- Reading (books, journals, reports, newspapers)
- Being a member of committees or working groups
- Work shadowing
- Taking on new tasks or project work
- Watching training/educational videos
- Using diagnostic instruments (e.g. learning styles questionnaire, Belbin team types questionnaire)
- Asking for feedback on your own performance from those who work closely with you
- Being coached (see Hytranet or HR for details)
- Belonging to an action learning group (meeting with peers to discuss work related issues with the aim of finding solutions to problems)
- Involvement in activities related to a professional body or employer's association (eg, attending branch meetings, giving a presentation to fellow members)
- E-learning and webinars

4.3 Requests for training and professional development should be made using the Course Funding Application Form. This should be submitted to HR by the deadline, or at other times if outside the PDR process. Requests will be prioritised according to factors such as:

- Is the training legally required or in response to changing legislation?
- Is the training essential for health and safety reasons?
- Will the training improve team flexibility, in terms of people covering colleagues' roles?
- Is CPD an essential part of someone's professional status?
- Will training assist in workforce planning – for example if someone is due to retire and their duties are to be allocated to other staff?
- Will the training help us improve the services we can offer our customers?
- Will it help with the implementation of the council's policies and procedures?
- Will it develop managerial capabilities for existing and future managers and supervisors?
- Will it enable more effective use of technology to improve efficiency and service provision?

4.4 Often staff attend training for which no request for training budget provision is required. The form in Appendix 3 should be used to inform HR so that individual training records can be updated.

4.4 Time to Train – the Legal Right

4.4.1 Regulations give employees with 26 weeks' service a legal right to request "time to train", for training which they believe will improve their effectiveness at work. This time can be paid or unpaid.

4.4.2 Managers must consider any requests and inform the staff member of their decision within 28 days

4.4.3 The request can be refused when there is a good business reason to do so, including where the manager does not believe that the training will help improve performance.

Apprenticeships

4.5 The Council pays an Apprenticeship Levy and is able to draw on this funding to pay for apprenticeship training. We also have to have regard to a government-set target on the number of apprenticeship starts each year. Apprenticeships cover a wide range of occupational areas and levels, up to degree level. Existing employees can undertake apprenticeships as a route to gaining a qualification. We will expect staff and managers to seriously consider this route to meet training. HR will consider requests for training and explore whether there is a suitable apprenticeship available.

4.6 Managers must consider whether vacant posts could provide an opportunity to employ an apprentice.

5. Financial support and time off

Training courses / conferences

5.1 Training courses and conferences will generally be funded by the training budget, or another Council budget. Any travel and subsistence costs will be met by the employee's service area and will only be paid in line with the Council's policies on Mileage and Subsistence.

Allowances for travel to and from college or other training events

5.2 Employees will be entitled to claim travelling costs from their home or the workplace, whichever is least, based on the actual cost of using public transport (bus or train). Where it is not possible, reasonable or safe to travel by public transport, the Council's agreed mileage rates will be paid. Indeed, it may be more cost effective, taking into account the employee's hourly rate of pay, to drive and claim mileage rather than use public transport. If the employee has to use their own car they must be insured for business use and if they are not a casual or essential car user, a copy of the insurance certificate should be attached to the mileage claim. Employees should car share where possible, with the most economical journey being used – this will include factors such as the location of any pick-up points from home addresses, whether there is a lease car holder amongst the group, and whether the driver's insurance covers passengers.

Time credited for training courses

5.3 Time spent attending training courses will be credited at 3 hours 42 minutes for a half day course and 7 hours 24 minutes for a full day course. We acknowledge that some courses (including travelling time) will actually take less time and in other cases the employee will have a longer day. Time spent on overnight stays prior to or following any meeting or training course will not be eligible for any time claims. Part-time staff will be credited with exactly the same time as full-time staff attending an equivalent course.

5.4 Professional / academic qualifications

5.4.1 Professional or academic qualifications / accredited training, including that funded via an apprenticeship, may be fully or partly funded by the Council depending on the nature of the training, whether it is required for the role and the available budget. Before any agreement to fund such a course is finalised, there should be a clear written agreement as to what time off will be allowed. For example, college attendance between 1pm and 9pm could mean half a day (3 hours 42 minutes) credit being agreed.

5.4.2 The Council will pay registration and examinations fees, providing the examination is taken and 80% attendance is registered. These will be paid directly to the college / learning establishment. If the employee needs to resit, the Council will pay the first re-sit examination fees **only**.

5.4.3 If funding is not available and the employee wishes to self-fund the training, time off or other support **may** be agreed on an individual basis.

5.4.4 Attendance at evening classes or weekend residential events will be in the employee's own time.

5.5 Study Leave

5.5.1 Employees are entitled to paid leave for the purpose of sitting for approved examinations

5.5.2 Employees will be entitled to half a day's study leave (3.42 hours) in preparation for each examination. Applications for study leave should be agreed with the line manager in advance.

5.5.3 It is becoming increasingly common for qualification courses to be available by distance learning, or an accredited training programme. Any time off to support this, or workplace time to work on projects / assignments, will be agreed on an individual basis at the beginning of the course. Managers should take advice from HR before agreeing any additional leave.

Textbooks

5.6 The council will pay for textbooks, up to a maximum of £50 for the period of the course. Employees should submit claims, attaching a receipt with the name of the bookshop. Textbooks paid for by the Council are and will remain the property of the Council. At the end of the course, the employee must return these to either their Service Head (if of a specific technical / professional nature) or Human Resources for more generic studies,

such as management. These will then be added to the Resource Library and available to all employees.

5.7 Repayment of Costs

5.7.1 Employees will be required to repay to the Council the actual costs of qualification training incurred if:

- they leave the Council's employment before completing the whole qualification or a defined part of the qualification (unless to move to another local authority);
- they leave the Council's employment within a two year period of obtaining the qualification (unless to move to another local authority); or
- they fail to complete the whole or part of the qualification without reasonable justification.

5.7.2 Employees being made compulsorily redundant will not normally be required to repay costs, unless there are exceptional reasons.

5.7.3 The amount due to the under the terms of this Agreement is a genuine attempt by the Council to assess its loss and is not intended to act as a penalty on the employee.

5.7.4 Apprentices taken on under an Apprenticeship Agreement for a fixed period of time will not be required to repay costs.

5.7.5 Repayment will be taken from the final salary payment. If there is still an amount outstanding then an invoice will be issued by the finance team.

5.7.6 Any repaid costs will be paid to either the training budget or the Apprenticeship Levy account, depending on the original source of funding.

6. Evaluation

6.1 Training and development activities will be evaluated in respect of their effectiveness from both an organisational and personal perspective. The performance and development review, between a manager and employee, is the main method of evaluating whether agreed development activities have achieved the intended objectives and, where necessary, plan the next steps. Other development opportunities that arise in the course of normal work activity should also be reflected upon in order to identify how this might improve future work activities. For training arranged internally, HR will ask participants to complete a short evaluation survey.

Appendix 1

Qualification Course Agreement	
Name	
Post	
Service Area	
Qualification	
College/Training Provider	
Course Start Date	
Duration of Course	
Time off work agreed (if applicable)	
Course Fees	
Registration Fees	
Detail and cost of other training expenses (Mileage / subsistence met by service budget)	
Text Books (if known) (max £50)	

I confirm that I have read and understood the Learning and Development Policy and that I agree to accept those conditions. This includes accepting the repayment terms detailed in S5.7 if:

- I leave the Council's employment before completing the whole qualification or a defined part of the qualification;
- I leave the Council's employment within a two year period of obtaining the qualification; or
- I fail to complete the whole or part of the qualification without reasonable justification.

Employee's signature: Date:

Line Manager signature:

Line Manager name (please print):

This agreement must be signed by both the employee and their line manager before undertaking any qualification training.

Course Funding Application Form
 (To be sent to the HR Team, Scaitcliffe House)

Employee's name			
Post			
Service Area			
Course applied for			
Date(s) of course			
Training provider			
Cost of course			
Location of course			
Detail and cost of other training expenses (Mileage / subsistence met by service budget)			
Time commitment required			
Reasons for wishing to attend – these will be used to decide whether funding can be made available. Attach separate sheet if necessary.			
Is the training required: <input type="checkbox"/> For legal compliance <input type="checkbox"/> For CPD Please explain.			
Manager's Support			
I agree this training course supports the employee's individual development and the team objectives.			
Manager's name			
Manager's signature	Date		

Appendix 3

**Information to add Employee Training Record
(for courses not funded from corporate training budget)**
(To be sent to the HR Team, Scaitcliffe House)

Employee's name	
Post	
Service Area	
Course attended	
Training provider	
Course duration	
Date	