

Training and Development Policy

Reviewed 29 June 2011



**North Warwickshire
Borough Council**

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1. Introduction

This Training and Development Policy is a set of guidelines and requirements reflecting the Council's values and culture. It is based on a set of principles to which the Council adheres in the overall management and development of its workforce. This will enable both managers and employees to understand the philosophy and overall approach taken by the Council to investing in its workforce. This Policy has been developed in line with North Warwickshire Borough Council's overall vision and strategy and reflects a belief in the need to develop all employees, whether employed on a full-time or part-time basis.

2. Aims of the policy

To provide all employees with the training and development required to enable them to fully undertake their duties and responsibilities, thereby enabling the Authority to achieve its own aims and priorities.

1. To recognise that a balance must be struck between business needs and helping staff develop to their full potential;
2. To demonstrate to managers and employees that decisions on who receives training and development and the reasons for this allocation are made in an open and transparent way;
3. To emphasise that training and development opportunities are open equally to all staff members, including part-time and fixed-term employees; and
4. To have a clear policy on training and development that enables any auditing or benchmarking of activities, as they relate to the provision of training and development, to be undertaken in a straightforward way.

3. Principles of the Policy

1. The Council thinks of its workforce as an asset as well as a cost, and believes that it should invest in that asset;
2. The Council believes that all its employees have the potential to grow, both in their work role and personally, and it shall endeavour to provide opportunities for this growth;
3. The Council considers it appropriate to base such training and development opportunities on the requirements of the business, and decisions about investment in staff training and development will be made accordingly;
4. The Council wants to ensure that access to training is equitable;
5. The Council believes that responsibility for training and development should be shared between the Council and its workforce;
6. The Council will ensure that appropriate procedures are in place to plan, deliver and evaluate training and development activity;
7. The Council wants to empower its staff to take ownership of their own development, with support from their managers and the Council as a whole;
8. The Council believes that its line managers have a key role to play in people development;

9. The Council works within recognised good practice guidelines, such as the national standard of Investors in People, to ensure that both the quality and quantity of training and development is relevant and "fit for purpose"; and
10. The Council regularly reviews its overall level of investment in staff training and development to ensure that where possible adequate and appropriate resources are provided.

4. Training and Development Initiatives

The Council provides a range of training and development opportunities to staff. These fall into four broad categories:

1. **Programmes relating to the enhancement of skills for an employee's role.** These include internal and external courses providing technical training, for example on the use of software packages, and specialist training relating to the skills that employees require for their job.
2. **Programmes leading to a professional or academic qualification that are relevant to an employee's role.** The Council encourages employees who wish to do so to pursue continuous professional development and where appropriate to gain further qualifications. The Council will approve courses of study such as the Higher National Certificate, professional accountancy qualifications, and membership of a professional body.
3. **Programmes that have a specific management or supervisory focus.** These include internal and external courses on management development, supervisory skills for line managers, and leadership development programmes.
4. **Health and safety training.** This includes, but is not limited to, courses in manual handling, risk assessment, fire awareness and first aid.

Training may be delivered to meet future needs (succession planning) which are linked to organisational goals, performance, workforce planning and personal development. When talent is identified through the appraisal process development may be required in the employee's current role, potential to expand the current role or the potential to develop into a more senior role. Development plans may comprise coaching, secondments, project management and participation in professional programmes such as future leaders or a recognised qualification.

Decisions on the suitability and applicability of programmes will be determined through the appraisal process, during which individual training and development needs are identified. These are prioritised and delivered on a needs basis.

5. Roles and Responsibilities for Implementation

Both line managers and employees have a responsibility to implement training and development initiatives. There will be an opportunity to discuss

development needs through the appraisal process and agree appropriate courses of training or study. Line managers should encourage their staff to undertake relevant programmes. Employees are expected to take up the opportunities provided and report back to their line manager on their applicability once completed.

Line managers have a responsibility to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of learning for employees who have undergone training and development. Line managers should where it isn't service specific contact HR to give feedback on training programmes, including their quality and cost effectiveness. e.g. courses on supervision, leadership, time management etc. Line managers should ensure that employees implement the skills that they have gained through training.

It is the line managers' responsibility to ensure that the training agreement is signed before financial assistance or day release is authorised. It is the line manager's responsibility to instigate the recovery of monies in line with section 7.3 of this policy.

6. Planning and Implementing New Initiatives

Any new training initiatives will be planned as a result of training needs which are identified through the Council's appraisal process. In addition, the Council is committed to reviewing training initiatives so that relevant training and development is provided for skills in specific job areas, where work procedures have changed, or where new standards are introduced. Any new training and development programmes offered to staff will be publicised and administered by the Council's HR team. These programmes will be approved by Management Team and included in the annual Corporate Training and Development Plan.

7. Individual Requests for Training and Development

Employees can request training and development at any time but this will usually be done within the appraisal process, as outlined above. Employees should channel requests through their line manager.

Training that leads to a recognised qualification where the career chances of someone attending a course are considerably enhanced and some short courses that have a high cost associated with them i.e. courses that exceed £1,000 will require the employee to sign a training agreement. This agreement must be signed before the Council commits to the course.

7.1 These courses should be:

1. Relevant to the job or business needs of the Division;
2. Of an acceptable level for the individual;
3. Recognised through the appraisal process / recruitment process;
4. Authorised through the training needs analysis for the Corporate Training and Development Plan; and

5. It can also be contractual in that they are an essential criterion in the person specification for the job or that it was agreed at recruitment as part of the employee's package.

7.2 Assistance provided by the Council:

1. Paid study time up to a maximum of 7.4 hours per week up to a full academic year. This will be dependent upon the requirements and level of the course and will be agreed by the HR Officer and the Assistant Director before the study begins. This would include day release, computer based learning, tutorials for distance learning. Where distance learning requires block release e.g. several 1 week blocks, paid leave would be given to the maximum above.
2. Paid leave relevant to the length and time of the examinations/assessments plus where applicable travelling time to and from the exam (that in excess of a normal days home to office return journey).
3. Paid leave for exam revision: 1 day per exam.
4. Paid leave relevant to the length and time of an exam re-sit if approved by the HR Officer and the Assistant Director.
5. Required text books approved by the HR Officer can be purchased through the Council's procurement process.
6. Travel and subsistence as detailed in the Council's travel and subsistence policy. Where the employee uses public transport, standard class rail and bus fares will be reimbursed.
7. Where travel is one off long distance, and public transport is used, rail tickets must be purchased as much in advance as possible through the Council's procurement process.**
8. Where an overnight stay is required accommodation must be approved and booked through the Council's procurement process. **
9. Any reasonable sums, after approval by the HR Officer and the Assistant Director, in respect of additional expenditure which falls on the employee as a result of attendance at an approved course.

** The forms are on the intranet and can be located at procurement **

7.3 Liability for Refund of Financial Assistance

Members of staff will commit to the liability to refund financial assistance received when they sign the training agreement (see page 9 of this document), in the event of one or more of the following circumstances:

1. Leaves the Council's employ (except for health or redundancy) within two years of completing the course/qualification or during studying for the course/qualification;
2. Fails to attend the course regularly;
3. Fails to submit assignments on time regularly;
4. Where a member of staff, without good cause, fails to sit for an examination within a reasonable period or fails to show satisfactory progress in his/her studies or discontinues his/her course;
5. Is dismissed from a course; or

6. Unreasonably fails to qualify despite appropriate support being given through the Improved Performance Support Policy.

7. Leaves the course voluntarily

Each case will be assessed by HR and the Assistant Director to determine whether the liability is a full or part refund.

The line manager is responsible for ensuring that the agreement is signed by the appropriate employee and forwarded to HR for retention on the employee's file before the employee starts his/her course.

8. Monitoring and Evaluating Investment in Training and Development

The Council firmly believes that it is critical to the success of both the planning and delivery of training and development activities that the resources invested are monitored and the outcomes achieved are measured. Such outcomes may be demonstrated at an individual, departmental and corporate level. Senior managers have an important role to play in this process. The Council uses its evaluation findings for future business planning and the planning of continued investment in staff training and development.

9. Coaching and Mentoring

The Council encourages line managers to provide coaching and mentoring support for staff who are undergoing training and development. Managers have a responsibility to ensure that the skills and knowledge of more experienced staff members are shared with more junior employees to ensure that learning occurs in a planned way.

The Council also recognises that there are huge benefits to the individual and the organisation from having a coach. Where it is identified that coaching is an appropriate way for the individual to develop and subject to availability of budget, then coaching will be delivered via the West Midlands Coaching Pool.

10. Recording of Training and Development Activities

Following an appraisal the line manager enters the training required, its priority and cost on to the divisional training plan template. This information is collated annually to form the basis of the Council's training and development plan. On completion of any internal course the employee will complete a course evaluation form. Analysis of the evaluation forms gathered will be undertaken by HR and used within the overall evaluation of training and development.

11. Equal Opportunities

Decisions relating to training and development will be made fairly and consistently, and equality of opportunity will be provided for all staff in this area.

12. Induction Training

All new members of staff [and all those changing job role] will receive an induction on their job role. The Council provides full programmes of general induction training, which are set out in the induction process.

13. Related Documents

Equal Opportunities Policy
Induction Process
Improved Performance Support Policy
Training Agreement
Travel and Subsistence Policy

14. Monitoring and Review

The provisions of this Policy will be subject to regular review and as required by changes in legislation and guidance. The first review will be in August 2013 when the next review date will be set. The Human Resource Section will monitor the Policy.

15. Communication and Training

The provisions of this Policy and any updates will be communicated to all employees of the Council.

TRAINING AGREEMENT

I agree with the conditions as laid down in the Training and Development Policy, and I understand that these are in accordance with the National Conditions of Service relating to the Post Entry Training of Local Government Officers.

I have read and understood the Conditions under which financial assistance is given.

I agree that in the event of me voluntarily leaving the Council's employ or being dismissed within two years of completing a course of study (for reason other than health or redundancy), I will refund any financial assistance given by the Council in full or in part (dependant on management's decision), **and agree** that the outstanding monies can be deducted from my final month's salary. If this constitutes a large proportion of my salary or exceeds the salary this will not be possible and I will agree a repayment plan with the Council.

I agree that I will refund any financial assistance given by the Council in full or in part (dependant on management's decision), if I have voluntarily left a course, been dismissed from a course or failed to pass any examinations in accordance with Liability for Refund of Assistance (Section 7.3) of the Training Policy, **and agree** that the outstanding monies can be deducted from the next month's salary following my leaving the course. (see above)

Course Details:

Signed

Print Name

Date

NB. This form must be signed before authorisation can be given for Financial Assistance or Day Release.