



Learning & Development Policy

June 2018

ARMAGH CITY, BANBRIDGE AND CRAIGAVON BOROUGH COUNCIL

Document Reference Number:	GPRC/P18/V1.0
Title of Policy:	Learning & Development Policy
No of Pages (including appendices):	7
Version:	One
Issue Date:	June 2018
Policy Nominated Officer:	Niamh Shannon
Equality screened/Rural Impact Assessed by:	Niamh Shannon
Equality screening/Rural Impact Assessment date:	25 March 2018
Amendment Version Issue Date:	
Sent out by:	
Approved by:	
Review Date:	

AMENDMENT RECORD SHEET

Remove and destroy old pages. Insert new pages as indicated.

Revision Number	Page Number	Date Revised	Description of Revision

Contents

1.	INTRODUCTION	2
2.	AIMS	2
3.	EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY	2
4.	RESPONSIBILITY OF TRAINING PROVISION	2
5.	TRAINING RECORDS	3
6.	ESSENTIAL SKILLS TRAINING	3
7.	POST ENTRY TRAINING	5
8.	REVIEW	7

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon Borough Council recognises the contribution employees make to the success of the organisation. It also recognises the need to support staff to ensure that they are equipped with the necessary skills and attributes to deliver customer-focused, value for money services at this time of significant change.

2. AIMS

- 2.1 The purpose of this policy is to ensure that:
- Staff are equipped with the knowledge, skills and attributes required to deliver the objectives laid down in the Community Plan, Corporate Plan and the resultant Business Plans.
 - Staff are enabled, as far as possible, to achieve their own potential, ensuring a motivated workforce aspiring to excellence.
 - Training is identified in line with yearly budgets, delivered and evaluated on a planned and structured basis, ensuring efficiency, effectiveness and value for money.

3. EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY

- 3.1 Learning and Development opportunities are open to all employees, regardless of age, gender, religion, race, political persuasion or disability. The provision of training assistance will be governed by the criteria of need, relevance to organisational objectives, staff development and cost effectiveness.
- 3.2 In assigning any development opportunity that may potentially give a promotional advantage, Managers must be duly cognisant of their equality obligations. While service exigencies will often be a foremost consideration, Managers will be expected to objectively justify all decisions and demonstrate fairness in the workplace at the widest level.

4. RESPONSIBILITY FOR TRAINING PROVISION

- 4.1 The Executive Management Team is responsible for setting the levels of expenditure that can be allocated each year to Learning & Development. Training plans will be completed by Heads of Department / Line Managers in Sept/Oct and submitted to the Learning & Development section in HR for review. The plans should be aligned to business need and detail all essential, mandatory and Health & Safety training. Budget allocation will be made in March. Departments who fail to submit a training plan will be allocated a nominal figure based on the previous year's training activity.
- 4.2 The Learning & Development section will also be responsible for drawing up an annual Corporate Training Plan. Depending upon business needs each year, the

Corporate Training Plan may take priority over individual departmental plans and as such the training budget will be modified accordingly.

5. TRAINING RECORDS

- 5.1 Learning & Development will collate and maintain a personal training record for each employee, briefly summarising training undertaken within a particular year. Copies of these records can be made available on request. It is important that these records are kept up to date and for that reason all information in relation to training should be forwarded to the Learning & Development section in HR (Craigavon). Line Managers should use these yearly training records during appraisal interviews to evaluate the impact this training has had on performance and to identify any further training needs.

6. ESSENTIAL SKILLS TRAINING

6.1 On the Job Training

- 6.1.1 For many employees the greater part of their training will be on the job and it is important that this is properly recorded and assessed. Managers must ensure that any on the job training on equipment/machinery is recorded. The training record must include the date that the employee has completed the training and the signature of the Manager and the employee. A record must be given to the L&D section, HR (Craigavon) for personal files.

6.2 External Training

- 6.2.1 From time to time it may be necessary for employees to attend externally provided essential skills training in relation to their post. In such instances, the following procedure should be adhered to:
- Once a suitable course or training event is identified, the employee must complete the “Application Form for short course/seminar/conference.” This must be signed off by the employee, their Line Manager and Head of Department. The form, including any course details, must be passed to the L&D section, HR who will check to ensure that it falls within current budget provisions.
 - Line Managers should endeavour to control the number of requests for the same conference/seminar and ensure that multiple requests are not submitted unless absolutely necessary. If approval is granted to 1 individual then that member of staff must, on request, share their learning with the rest of the team.
 - L&D will notify the employee if the training has been approved and employee can then book themselves a place on the course and make all the necessary arrangements. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that sufficient time is available to obtain all the necessary approvals, otherwise a place on the training event/course cannot be guaranteed. Early processing of forms also allows for early bird rates and discounts to be applied.
 - After the training has taken place, the employee and the Line Manager must evaluate the course and inform L&D section, HR of any positive or negative

feedback. Staff are encouraged to give honest and constructive feedback. Both parties should also agree any actions which may be implemented as a result of the course.

- All travel and subsistence associated with attendance at a training event will be paid from the departmental travel and subsistence budget and not the training budget. Where an employee is a casual or essential car user, mileage will be paid at the appropriate rate. Only the public transport rate will be paid in relation to post entry qualifications. Employees must ensure that their car insurance covers them for occasional business use before using their own car to attend training events.
- When course attendance is mandatory and requested by the council for the satisfactory performance of duties, leave of absence is granted and paid for. Course attendance outside normal working hours is treated as working hours and paid for (or taken as lieu time depending on the terms and conditions of employment of the individual). Where the course is related to the employment and is mutually beneficial to the council and the employee, leave of absence is granted and the employee will be paid for any time that coincides with his/her normal rostered shift. Course attendance outside normal rostered hours for the employee is not credited as lieu time nor is it paid for.
- In all cases where training (including post entry training) is given at the expense of the Council, the employee will be required, after completion of the course to carry out the tasks for which he/she has been trained and which relate to their post.
- Depending upon the type of training; and to avoid a potential conflict of interest; there may also be some restrictions in place on an employee using any training/qualifications funded by Council for another party or for personal gain. Further information on this will be made known if applicable.

6.3 Health & Safety Training

6.3.1 The Council will provide health and safety training and safety information to employees to ensure that they are not injured whilst at work. The Council has a duty of care and will endeavour to ensure that staff are working in a healthy and safe environment and will provide training to ensure that employees are competent in health and safety. The Council also aims to ensure that those accessing council services are protected. The following health and safety training will be provided for our employees:-

- Basic induction training and training on how to work safely, including arrangements for first aid, fire and evacuation and manual handling.
- Managers will receive risk assessment training so that they can identify specific training needs within their departments.
- Casuals will also be given adequate health and safety training.

- Any externally provided health and safety training should be requested via the application form for short course/seminar/conference and the necessary approvals sought.

7. POST ENTRY QUALIFICATIONS

- 7.1 The Council is supportive of providing opportunities for employees to achieve recognised accredited qualifications. Applications of this nature will only be considered from staff who have successfully completed their probationary period. Post Entry training includes any course which results in a qualification and is obtained through:
- Day release
 - Evening classes
 - Distance learning
- 7.2 Approval for Post Entry training will not normally be granted unless prior identification of the need has been recorded through the appraisal system.
- 7.3 Applications for such courses should be made on the “Post Entry Training Application”. They should be approved up to Departmental Director level and submitted to Learning & Development no later than 31 May for any courses starting September/October and 30 September for courses starting January. Late applications will not be considered.
- 7.4 All applications will be reviewed simultaneously by EMT and in line with budgets. Approval will be allocated in the following order:
- The course of study will make a contribution to your performance as outlined in the objectives in your appraisal
 - The course of study will make a contribution to the achievement of departmental objectives
 - The course of study will make a contribution to the achievement of organisational objectives
 - The course of study will contribute to your personal development and have some potential relevance to performance.
- 7.5 Where a course is deemed to be personal development, the Council may require the applicant to pay 50% of the costs involved and/or attend on their own time (by taking annual leave or TOIL as necessary).
- 7.6 If a course spans more than one academic year, you should submit an application clearly stating this and providing as much detail as possible and a total breakdown of the costs. Eligibility for further years is not an automatic right and evidence may need to be provided of successful completion of the previous years’ study. Eligibility to higher qualifications is also not an automatic right; and in these instances staff need to submit a new application in line with the procedure above.
- 7.7 Approval will mean payment of the following:
- Course fee
 - Registration fee
 - Exemption fee

- Examination fee
- Essential text books (in line with 7.8 below)
- Residential fee

7.8 50% of the cost of essential text books can be reclaimed up to a maximum of £75 per year. All text books purchased must be part of the reading list of the course. The costs will initially be borne by the employee. Receipts should be sent to the L&D section, HR, who will arrange for reimbursement at the appropriate level.

7.9 Day release for attendance at classes must be regarded in every way as a day on normal duty. If ill the employee must send the usual notification to their office. If the employee is to be on leave, then prior approval must be obtained from the Line Manager and a leave card submitted in the normal way.

7.10 Study Leave / Examination Leave

7.10.1 Study leave is granted prior to the sitting of official examinations. When more than one examination is taken, 1 day's study leave per examination may be granted up to a maximum of 5 days in the study year.

7.10.2 Examination leave is granted for the actual sitting of the examination. The day on which the examination is being held will be considered as special paid leave whether the time of the examination is outside normal working hours or not.

7.10.3 Where a dissertation or thesis is taking the place of an official examination, study leave to a maximum of 5 days may be granted at the discretion of the Head of Department and L&D section. If an employee has to prepare for an oral examination on their thesis then study leave may be granted at 1 day per subject. Officers will normally be expected to select a dissertation/thesis subject relevant to the Council's business.

7.10.4 Study leave and examination leave may be withdrawn if attendance at classes is less than 70%.

7.11 Continuation of Support

7.11.1 Employees required to re-sit examinations must do so in their own time and at their own expense.

7.11.2 Financial assistance will not normally be continued beyond the first attempt at any one examination. In exceptional circumstances (e.g. illness), further concessions may be granted. Each case will be considered on its own merits.

7.11.3 For courses of more than 1 year, examination results must be submitted as approval to continue a course will be influenced by examination results.

7.11.4 Where studies are discontinued by an employee at any time during a course of study, he or she will be required to repay monies in respect of fees and text books.

7.11.5 If an employee resigns from the employment of Local Government within 2 years of completing a course (end date of course taken as end of study and any exams if

applicable), all monies paid in respect of fees and text books will be deducted from any final salary.

7.11.6 Fees in respect of membership of professional institutes will be paid only during the course of study and after that will fall in line with the Council's policy in relation to professional fees.

7.11.7 Council support does not extend to study in Council time, other than study leave or other time specifically approved. However, reasonable use of Council hardware and software in the student's own time can be approved.

7.11.8 If employees wish to attend graduation ceremonies, they will be expected to do so in their own time and at their own expense.

8. REVIEW

8.1 This procedure will be reviewed regularly by the Council and, if necessary, revised in consultation with recognised Trade Unions.