

Staff Training & Development Policy

1. Introduction

The organisation recognises staff development and learning is an integral part of the organisation's strategic planning so staff can perform their jobs effectively and in doing so, ensure the organisation meets strategic objectives.

This document forms part of a contract of employment and will be changed from time to time in line with current best practice and statutory requirements and to ensure business needs are met. Staff will be consulted in advance of any proposed changes with those required by law being implemented with or without staff consent.

2. Policy Aims

- To support a working environment where continuous learning and development take place
- To ensure staff are supported and enabled to meet the changing demands of the organisation and its service users.
- To ensure the organisation achieves strategic objectives
- To facilitate staff development at work and/or personal development through assisting staff to broaden, deepen and enhance their existing skill base.

3. Responsibilities

Staff Responsibilities

Staff development is most effective when the individual staff takes responsibility for identifying any opportunities for self-development which will enhance work performance through increased skills and knowledge.

We expect all staff to take a proactive approach to learning and development.

Staff, through the support and supervision and appraisal process, must agree what training and development would benefit them personally and/or professionally.

Staff are responsible for maintaining their own learning log, which will help to identify and support continuous professional development.

Manager Responsibilities

Line managers are responsible for assisting staff to identify training/development opportunities and requirements and for ensuring these are reviewed on a regular basis during support and supervision sessions.

Line managers have a responsibility to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of training and development. Line managers should seek feedback on internal and external training programmes, including quality and cost effectiveness. Line managers should ensure staff implement the skills they have gained through training.

Organisation Responsibilities

To ensure fair, equal, reasonable and consistent treatment of all staff regarding any aspect of the implementation of this policy.

To ensure all those with line management responsibility are reasonably trained in the practical application of this policy.

To regularly review and update this policy in line with legislation and best practice.

4. Equal Opportunities

The organisation is committed to ensuring equality of learning opportunity, no staff will be excluded from learning on the grounds of sex, gender reassignment, age, marital status, disability, race, sexual orientation, religion or belief, responsibility for dependants, trade union membership or employment status.

5. Routes to Learning & Development

Options for learning & development may include:

- On the job learning including shadowing, mentoring, coaching, skill sharing, staff away days etc.
- Secondments and placements/visits to other organisations
- Setting up job development opportunities such as public speaking and in-house presentations at team meetings
- Attending internal or external courses or events
- Attending internal or external training days/workshops
- Attending conferences, forums
- An external course of study
- Web based e-learning

6. Key Professional and Skills Based Learning

The organisation aims to prioritise learning which focuses on areas which:

- Enable the organisation to fulfil the strategic objectives
- Pertain to any organisational statutory obligations
- Are essential to generate and maintain income
- Enable effective responses and management of legislative changes
- Ensure IT skills are sufficient and developed in accordance with work needs
- Are essential to ensure the quality of service provision
- Enable staff to meet their responsibilities in completing continuous professional development required by relevant professional bodies.
- Enable management development in relation to those who have managerial/supervisory responsibilities

6.1 Communication Skills

The acquisition of communication skills by staff at all levels is beneficial to both the user group and the organisation. DbS will encourage employees wishing to pursue qualifications in BSL.

Level 1 will be offered to all staff as soon as possible after probation period is completed.

Level 2 will be offered to guide/communicators and other staff as funding and time allow.

Advanced training in deafblind communication skills for guide/communicators will be supported if funding and access to training permit based on course access and funding criteria.

7. Core Learning

There are specific areas of learning which are essential for all staff and cover a rolling programme of needs which have been identified as part of a continuous programme of learning and development. Core learning covers the following areas:

Induction

All new staff will be given a timely programme of induction. This is regarded as an essential part of staff learning and development and integration into the working environment. It is important new staff are given guidance and support on the organisation, its work and practices and their individual duties and responsibilities.

ICT (Information and Communication Technologies)

It is important all staff are given opportunities to enhance their ICT skills base. The organisation is committed to ensuring all staff have competent grounding in the use of ICT in the wider context of their professional roles. Staff will be positively encouraged to become familiar with the intranet, internet, email other electronic facilities and computer software packages at their disposal so they become confident, skilled users.

Equalities

The organisation is committed to promoting equalities through policies, procedures and practices. It is a requirement all staff attend a rolling programme of equalities workshops to heighten both individual and organisational awareness.

Performance Management

Performance Management is an ongoing process, which the line manager and staff in:

- Identifying and describing essential job functions and relating them to the strategic and operational objectives of the organisation
- Developing realistic and appropriate performance standards
- Giving and receiving feedback
- Participating in constructive performance appraisals
- Planning learning and development opportunities to sustain, improve or build on performance.

Appraisals

These are an essential component of performance management and are supported by regular support and supervision sessions. The appraisal allows for every staff to be formally appraised with their line manager through a structured discussion on work performance over the previous year (or part thereof) and which incorporates the staff's learning and development needs for the following year.

It is an opportunity to build on strengths and address areas, which require support, enhancing the potential skill base of the individual staff.

8. Identifying and Assessing Learning Needs

There are a number of ways which learning and development needs are identified, these can be as follows:

- Occupational – As a result of introducing new technology, work methods, systems or practices (internally or externally)
- Promotion – As a result of an increase in responsibilities
- Developmental – Is vocational in nature and provides the staff with additional skills to apply at present or increases the individual's potential for further growth

- Organisational – Affects a particular function or department as a result of changing work methods, procedures or practices and/or supports the overall strategy of the organisation.

9. Individual Learning Plans

Where individual learning needs have been identified, staff are encouraged to discuss this with their line manager and develop a learning plan.

This should set out the learning required, by what method it will be achieved, what organisational objective it relates to, whether there are cost implications and the timescales involved.

10. Learning Logs Optional

Staff should keep a record of all training, learning and development they have undertaken or achieved.

Learning logs are a way of evaluating individual learning. It allows staff to record, self-evaluate and discuss their learning experiences with their line manager, identifying how their learning can be used further to benefit others, and/or the organisation as whole. Alternatively, if the learning has been unsuitable and has not complimented an individual's learning style and/or needs, this can be also discussed.

It allows staff to record what has actually been achieved against planned learning as determined through any training needs analysis and agreement of individual learning plans through the appraisal process.

11. Recording, Monitoring & Evaluating Learning

Management of DbS is carried out through a devolved line management system, from the Chief Executive through the Senior Management Team.

Organisational overview of training needs will be reviewed annually by the Senior Management Team.

Management of the Guide/communicator Service is carried out through a devolved line management system, regular contact with all guide/communicators and service-users informs the monitoring of these skills on a regular basis.

Supervisors are responsible for ensuring Good Working Practice Guidelines are followed and lead by example.

Service users are encouraged to report any issues/problems they may have with guide/communicators through reviews and complaints procedures highlighting possible training needs.

Good working practices and development form the basis of in-service meetings.

Regular team meetings, encouraging open discussions between staff on skill shortages, training needs etc.

12. Study Leave

Study leave allows staff to pursue a recognised qualification or accreditation, which is seen as valuable and relevant to their work and provides a means of ensuring the organisation attracts, retains and develops high quality staff. Study leave permits staff to take paid time off for exam preparation, sit an exam, build a portfolio of work for accreditation or attend a day release course.

Applications for study leave should be made as soon as reasonably possible to line managers.

13. Higher Education

The organisation will consider requests for financial assistance towards programmes of higher education and approved professional qualifications where the course is considered to be relevant and will be of benefit to the staff and the organisation in the long term. The following will also be considered:

- For all training, interest should be shown and then presented to department heads to approve with identified funding sources.
- Funding for training will be agreed where it is considered essential and/or beneficial to furthering the aims and objectives of DbS.
- It is considered essential for the safety and well-being of deafblind people
- It is considered desirable in terms of CPD
- It is considered appropriate to meet registration requirements, currently with Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC), necessary to provide a professional service to deafblind people.

Staff should submit a request to their line manager for consideration. The line manager should then forward this to the CEO for approval.

Training priorities

- Priority will be given to training that improves the quality of direct service to deafblind people.
- Where spaces are available others will then be offered places.
- Ongoing and effective workplace assessments and practice learning.

14. Reimbursement of Fees

Where the organisation has agreed to contribute towards course fees, staff will be required to reimburse the full amount should they leave the organisation for any reason during the course or if they fail to complete the course.

A pro rata percentage of the course fees would be reimbursed to the organisation if staff leave the organisation for any reason within one year of completion of the course.

15. Data Protection Act 2018

The organisation will treat all personal data in line with obligations under the current data protection regulations.