

Together
we make a
difference

Employee Training and Development Policy

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ITEM NO.	SUBJECT	PAGE
1.	Statement of intent	3
2.	Principles	3
3.	Responsibilities	5
4.	Eligibility for Training	6
5.	Resourcing Training and Development	5
6.	Individual Financial Assistance	6
7.	Repayment of Training Expenses	7
8.	Entitlement to Time off for Training	8
9.	Entitlement to Time off for Training (not endorsed by the Council)	9
10.	Evaluation	10
11.	Equality Impact Assessment and Monitoring	10
12.	Data Protection	10

1. STATEMENT OF INTENT

- 1.1 Wyre Council are committed to ensuring that all staff have the necessary experience, skills, knowledge and competence required to enable them to do their job effectively.
- 1.2 Our policy is therefore to develop the overall competencies of all staff to ensure that we have a flexible and change ready workforce that it continues to achieve high standards and provide quality, value for money services to the people of Wyre.
- 1.3 Employee development refers to the progression of an individual's potential and career in terms of knowledge, skills, personal abilities, competencies and understanding to support the council's corporate objectives and priorities set out in the Business Plan. It should embrace a wide range of learning experiences, both within and outside the council and is a continuing process that can help individuals to:-
- a. Improve their performance to achieve objectives
 - b. Identify and develop their potential
 - c. React positively to change
 - d. Increase their job satisfaction
 - e. Improve their self-confidence, motivation and initiative.

2. PRINCIPLES

- 2.1 The Council is committed to equal opportunities and therefore all staff will have equal access to, and opportunity to participate in, the Council's training and development provision.
- 2.2 The key approach of the Council is that training and development is needs-driven and not provision-driven to ensure that the development provided is appropriate to the needs of the individual, the service and the organisation.
- 2.3 Staff training and development needs will primarily be identified through the Council's Induction Programme and Performance Appraisal Scheme - My 1-2-1. However, identifying training needs will also be an on-going process at all levels of the Council.
- 2.4 Staff training and development can be achieved through a variety of methods and interventions such as; on-the-job training and development, workshops, self-directed study, participation on courses,, seminars, or conferences, undertaking a vocational or professional qualification, secondment, work placement, work shadowing, coaching, mentoring etc.

- 2.5 All council staff have access to the e-learning portal known as Learning Pool. Human Resources in consultation with Heads of Service and Corporate Directors will develop, publish, maintain and evaluate corporate learning on the Learning Pool platform.
- Human Resources will communicate with all staff any mandatory learning, course updates and additional courses on a regular basis.
- Learning Pool uses a combination of SSO (single sign on) for which staff must have a wyre.gov.uk email address or alternatively those without SSO can access the system with their payroll number and should contact Human Resources for initial access.
- 2.6 The investment in training and development will be evaluated at all levels to assess achievements; development measured against competencies and future effectiveness. All line managers undertake a formal evaluation of the effectiveness of the training and development of individual staff as part of the annual performance appraisal process.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES

- 3.1 Training and development is the responsibility of all council staff and in particular:
- 3.1.1 **Corporate Management Team and Senior Leadership Team For:**
- a. promoting a climate of continuing learning and development
 - b. allocating an appropriate level of resources to fund training and development activities
 - c. identifying annual organisational priorities to which training and development can be aligned.
- 3.1.2 **Line Managers and Supervisors For:**
- a. actively promoting the Council as a learning organisation
 - b. identifying staff training and development needs
 - c. providing Human Resources with completed Personal Development Plans for their staff each year
 - d. facilitating access to staff development opportunities
 - e. assessing the effectiveness and performance gain from staff development.

3.1.3 Employees for:

- a. participating in performance appraisal meetings and taking responsibility for identifying areas where their work might be developed
- b. attending all training and development opportunities identified as essential learning e.g. Health & Safety
- c. applying their learning in their work
- d. assessing the value of the training and development courses they undertake.

3.1.4 Human Resources Team

- a. Work with Heads of Service and Line Managers to develop training programmes that meet individual and organisation needs.
- b. Designing or commissioning appropriate training to deliver this programme including the development of the Learning Pool e-learning platform
- c. Assisting with the evaluation of the effectiveness of the training and development opportunities provided.

4. ELIGIBILITY FOR TRAINING

- 4.1 Staff with permanent, temporary or fixed term contracts may apply for course / study leave. Approval will be given on the basis of the appropriateness and relevance of the training to the individual and the business needs of the Council. Training will be prioritised in levels as follows:

1. Statutory and Mandatory training
2. Training identified in a Personal Development Plan
3. Training to support organisational development
4. Training to support employee development / career progression

5. RESOURCING TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

- 5.1 A central training budget is held by the Head of Governance & Business Support, which covers training such as technical training, short courses (e.g. seminars, conferences, workshops), professional programmes of longer term study (usually towards a qualification) or internal programmes to meet corporate organisational needs. The latter may include:

- a. Statutory training
- b. Apprenticeship Levy funds
- c. Health & Safety
- d. Management training and development
- e. Information and skills to meet new targets, initiatives and policy developments
- f. Any knowledge or skills that are required by a significant proportion of employees.

5.2 The level of funding given for each training/study leave application will be at the discretion of the Head of Service in consultation with human resources.

5.3 Where a course is related to, but not essential for the delivery of a service / job but offers scope for personal, professional and career development it is possible that the applicant may be asked to make a contribution to the cost.

6. INDIVIDUAL FINANCIAL SUPPORT

6.1 All staff who follow a course of study (including professional qualification or training event) will be expected to complete the course and should make appropriate formal application to ascertain approval and financial commitment.

6.2 Allowable Costs

Once approval to study is given, employees are entitled to financial assistance as follows:

- a. Tuition/course fees
- b. Registration fees
- c. Examination fees
- d. Reasonable expenditure on books and other essential equipment (All items purchased will remain the property of the Council)
- e. Travelling expenses in line with current Financial Procedures
- f. Reasonable costs for accommodation in line with current Financial Procedures

6.3 Re-imbursement of Professional Subscriptions

Where there is an essential requirement to join a professional association to undertake a qualification course, the Council will reimburse subscriptions for the duration of the course, however, once qualified it is the employee's personal responsibility.

6.4 Re-sitting of examinations

Any costs incurred with resitting of examinations will be met by the individual employee. (The Corporate Director may approve payment in exceptional circumstances).

7. REPAYMENT OF TRAINING EXPENSES

- 7.1 Where an employee is required to attend a course, conference or seminar as an essential part of their job they will not be required to pay back any financial assistance. However it is not in the Council's interests to invest valuable resources in individual training that is not subsequently reinvested in the organisation.
- 7.2 Where funding is granted for an individual to pursue a professional qualification or training course that has significant personal value to them (regardless of the cost), they will be required to enter into an agreement to repay the cost of that training / course should they leave the authority whilst undertaking the training or within two years of the qualification being obtained unless:
- a. the courses is externally funded
 - b. the employee is facing redundancy or ill health retirement
- 7.3 Employees and Line Managers are responsible for identifying the most appropriate training that meets the need of the service at the most appropriate value. Before any course booking is made, line managers should consult with Human Resources to determine if a payback agreement is required. Human Resources will then liaise with the appropriate Corporate Director to seek formal approval and issue the employee with the payback agreement.
- Where training runs over a number of years, line managers must contact Human Resources at the beginning of each new year of study and prior to booking to ensure the employee is issued with any additional payback forms capturing the full cost of the training.
- 7.4 The Council also retains the right to reclaim the agreed costs incurred if a member of staff fails to pass the course, show unsatisfactory progress in study or discontinues the course.
- 7.5 Re-claims will be made on the basis of 100% if the employee is part way through the course or just qualified with a rebate of 1/24 for each month completed since qualifying. The rebate period will begin to reduce from the month on the certificate of the awarding body. In exceptional cases, Corporate Directors may agree an alternative date.
- 7.6 All repayments will include fees and expenses but will exclude salary paid in respect of the time spent on the study.

8. ENTITLEMENT TO TIME OFF FOR TRAINING

- 8.1 Training Course Attendance**
- Paid time off will normally be given for the time spent attending approved training events/courses when the member of staff would otherwise have been on duty. Staff should make clear the number of days they are required to attend for tuition on their application form.
- 8.2** Where the training event/course is not compulsory, the Head of Service in consultation with Human Resources may wish to compromise on the number of paid days off allowed.
- 8.3** Part time staff who take part in training events that exceeds their daily contracted hours, will be paid up to the full-time hours for that day, or, alternatively, it may be agreed that time off in lieu is given.
- 8.4** Members of staff who have to attend a training event which results in the employee's travelling and training event attendance time going over and above the normal daily hours, may claim time up to a maximum **11.15** hours for that day.
- 8.5** For day release and professional qualification courses it is not the Council's policy to pay a member of staff for hours spent on college days that exceed the average daily hours. Therefore, if a member of staff attends college for a full day, they are entitled to have **7.24** maximum (pro rata for part time staff) credited to their clock. If they attend college for an afternoon and evening, they are entitled to be credited for their normal afternoon hours (for full time staff this will be **3.42** maximum, for part time staff it will be the hours they would normally have worked that afternoon). The maximum of **11.15** does not therefore apply.
- 8.6** Where a training event/course has been approved which includes compulsory attendance at a residential school, the employee is entitled to their normal days' pay.
- 8.7** Where the residential school covers a weekend the employee is expected to attend in their own time as commitment to the course and they will not be entitled to any credit on the clock.
- 8.8** Paid time off can also be given to complete work based/service improvement projects which form part of a study programme, subject to approval by the appropriate Line Manager.

8.9 Distance Learning

Where training is undertaken on a distance-learning basis the employee does not receive any time off for day release. Therefore a number of paid days off will be offered depending on the requirements of the course. Up to fifteen working days per annum may be allowed dependent on the likely duration of the course, (including any days allowed under associated training events/residential school and study leave subject to 8.7 above).

The number of anticipated days off required must be stated on first booking the course and any time off should be agreed with the Head of Service in consultation with HR prior to booking and included on the training agreement form.

8.10 Study Leave and time off for examinations

Leave will be granted with pay for employees undertaking qualification training for final revision purposes for all exams.

This will be in accordance with the length of the examination, i.e. half day examination = half day leave.

Study leave is granted at the discretion of the Head of Service, and is allocated in the same way as examination leave but is subject to a maximum of five days.

Study leave will normally be taken during the period of two weeks prior to the exams

Re-sits must be undertaken in a member of staff's own time

9. ENTITLEMENT TO TIME OFF FOR TRAINING (NOT ENDORSED BY THE COUNCIL)

9.1 Whilst the Council is committed to support the vast majority of training requests employees are entitled to request time off without pay for training provided they have twenty six or more weeks' continuous service.

9.2 Approval is more likely if (but not exclusively):

- a. The training enhances the employee's own performance and that of the business
- b. The nature of the training could lead to an accredited or recognised qualification or it could improve skills that are relevant to the role of the employee
- c. There is minimal impact on the remaining staff and the service provided.

- 9.3 The council is not bound to offer payment covering any fees or expenses incurred by the employee studying under this entitlement.

10. EVALUATION

- 10.1 The investment in training and development will be evaluated at all levels to assess achievements; development measured against competencies and future effectiveness.
- 10.2 Evaluation will encompass:
- a. Reaction – “happy sheets” at the time of or immediately following training
 - b. Behaviour – assessment against competencies through appraisal process
 - c. Results – targets met and outcomes.
- 10.3 To ensure equality of opportunity relevant data will be gathered and this will be monitored to ensure that opportunities are being accessed.
- 10.4 Evaluation will need to demonstrate a clear benefit to the overall requirement to improve individuals’ performance and ultimately improve services to the people of Wyre.

11. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND MONITORING

11.1 **Equality Act**

The operation of this policy will be monitored for its impact on different staff groups in line with the Equality Act 2010. This will enable the Council to assess whether any differences have an adverse impact on a particular group, such that further action would be required.

12. DATA PROTECTION

12.1 **Data Protection Act**

In implementing this policy, the Council will ensure that any personal data relating to the application of this policy will be obtained, processed and destroyed in line with Data Protection requirements.