

LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT PROCEDURE

**Developing a learning culture to support the delivery of
the Council's Vision, Purpose and Values**

This document applies to all Council employees with the exceptions of:

- Employees in educational establishments with delegated budgets where this policy is advisory only

Updated July 2017

CONTENTS

PROCEDURE..... 1

 Approval and funding for learning and development 1

 Training expenses and “time off” 1

 Financial assistance..... 1

 Qualification Courses 1

 Non Qualification Courses..... 1

 Reimbursement of professional subscriptions 2

 Travel expenses 2

 Overnight stays 2

 Books/study material 2

 Time off work allocation 2

 Attendance at Course..... 2

 Study Leave 2

 Distance learning (AND NVQ’S)..... 3

 Repayment of training expenses..... 3

 Work Related Qualification Scheme Agreement General Guidance..... 3

PROCEDURE

Approval and funding for learning and development

Each Director will make provision for a learning and development budget and how this is allocated will depend on the internal arrangements of the Directorate.

Not all learning and development opportunities have a direct cost. Coaching and mentoring, work shadowing, e-learning or on the job training all have an indirect cost in officer time. This should be recognised and built in to work schedules.

Funds available for learning and development are limited and employee's expectations may not always be met. Every effort should be made to prioritise development and training against the Director Area Service Plan.

Funding and support would normally apply for work related learning and development only; personal learning and development support would be at managers' discretion.

Training expenses and "time off"

Lincolnshire Fire & Rescue uniformed personnel should refer to relevant Service Orders.

Time off for training and study leave and reimbursement of appropriate fees and expenses will be given in approved cases in accordance with the [Local Scheme and Conditions of Service](#).

Financial assistance

As a condition of financial assistance employees may be required to repay a proportion of expenses incurred if they leave the Council within a period of two years after completing training. Details of the circumstances in which this may be required will be made clear before any commitment to training is made **and further information is contained in the Repayment of training expenses section of this policy.**

Qualification Courses

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

- tuition/course fees
- registration fees
- examination fees
- reasonable expenditure on books and other essential equipment
- travelling expenses
- reasonable additional costs e.g. binding of thesis

The Director (or his/her designated representative) may approve payment for a re sitting of examinations, where the failure or unsatisfactory progress has been due to exceptional circumstances, and if the employee has followed their studies diligently.

Non Qualification Courses

- course fees (including accommodation where appropriate)

- travelling expenses
- additional costs

N.B. Support will not normally be given for qualifications of marginal value to the Council.

Reimbursement of professional subscriptions

Where there is a requirement to join a professional association to undertake a qualification course, the Council will reimburse subscriptions in accordance with the criteria set out in [Professional Subscriptions](#) policy.

Travel expenses

Necessary travel expenses will be paid in accordance with the [Business Travel Policy](#) and [Travel and Subsistence Rates](#).

Overnight stays

Reasonable costs will be paid for accommodation, an evening meal and a drink along with out of pocket expenses. Please refer to the [Local Scheme and Conditions of Service](#).

Books/study material

- wherever possible books should be obtained from the appropriate Director Area Library or resource centre, and returned when study is completed
- if this is not possible costs will be reimbursed for essential books on production of a receipt. They will then be the property of Council on completion of studies

Time off work allocation

- The number of days required for the purpose of study should be agreed in advance with the Line Manager in accordance with the requirements of the individual programme of study.
- Employees should be allowed dedicated time and space to complete e-learning courses within their working hours, as they would any other form of training
- Provided learning is agreed and approved as part of the development plan, learning can be carried out in any location and at any time as agreed and planned and considered 'work' time.

Attendance at Course

- Attendance at all training courses/day release shall be classed as a standard day (half day courses shall be classed as a half standard day)
- Where blended learning is offered and e-learning is a pre-requisite to tutor-led learning, managers are asked to recognise and facilitate this as part of course attendance.

Study Leave

- leave will be granted with pay for employees undertaking qualification training for final revision purposes for all exams
- time off will be equal to the duration of the exams and will be allowed for first attempts only
- this leave will normally be taken during the period of two weeks prior to the exams

- time off can be given to complete work based/service improvement projects which form part of a study programme, subject to approval by the appropriate Line Manager

Distance learning (AND NVQ'S)

- where training is undertaken on a distance-learning basis , normally up to fifteen working days will be allowed for the purposes of study, attendance on residential training courses and examinations
- reasonable time off may be allowed for the purposes of compiling and maintaining NVQ portfolios

Repayment of training expenses

Employees studying for qualifications (and certain non-qualification courses, identified in advance by the Director,) will be required to repay any expenses incurred if they leave the authority whilst undertaking the training or within two years of the qualification being obtained (3 years where significant level of financial assistance, e.g. Social Work and Occupational Therapy Degree) with the following exceptions:

- all courses externally funded
- if the employee is dismissed through redundancy or ill health
- the Director should approve any circumstances where a recovery is not to be made, e.g. NVQ's obtained as a requirement of the job
- all apprenticeship funded training.

Reclaims 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 or 1/36 applying for each month completed since qualifying. For example an employee who leaves 5 months after qualification would be required to repay 19/24ths or 31/36ths.

All repayments will include fees and expenses but will exclude salary paid in respect of the time spent on the study.

The requirement to repay expenses must be made clear to the employee before they undertake the training.

Recovery will be made from the employee's final salary.

Repayment is also required if an employee fails to sit an examination within a reasonable period or fails to show satisfactory progress in study or discontinues the course.

Work Related Qualification Scheme Agreement General Guidance

In recognition of the economic climate the Council has to operate in, and the Council's political responsibility to taxpayers, there is an expectation that the quality and cost of any learning and development opportunity is carefully considered as part of a wider cost-benefits analysis. This is particularly the case with work related qualifications which are linked to Directorate/Service specific objectives.

To support employees to undertake work related qualifications that are not funded by other means in the most cost effective way to the employee and the Council, the Council has devised a work related qualifications scheme.

As part of the work related qualifications scheme, employees may apply for a loan for work based qualifications from a Service Area. In this situation the work related qualification scheme agreement (attached) must be signed by the employee and their manager. The work related qualification scheme agreement contains agreed terms of how and when the loan should be paid back and the employee must sign up to the work related qualification scheme agreement before payment of the loan is made.

The work related qualification scheme agreement must be used at all times unless a 'bespoke' agreement is or has already been deemed necessary by People Management and this has been signed off by Legal Services.

Once the work related qualification scheme agreement has been signed by both the employee and the employee's manager, it must be sent to People Services to be held on the individual's personal employee record along with the agreed pay back terms.