



Learning and Development Policy

Employee Experience Team

Document Control

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1. Learning & Development Strategy - Background

The current Strategy was developed to reflect the Council’s Corporate Strategy “Creating Futures” (Jan 2018). A new Corporate Strategy is currently being developed (September 2020) and the Council has great insight from its staff and residents gleaned during consultation and engagement during the Covid19 pandemic. Therefore, this strategy will be reviewed to ensure it is in line with that new vision and priorities as set out in the new Corporate Strategy once finalised. Likewise, it will be reviewed as part of the proposed Workforce Strategy.

2. Learning and Development Mission Statement

To use a blended-learning approach with a variety of learning methods and respond to the dynamic learning & development needs of the council, catering to colleagues across hierarchies and equipping them with skills and behaviours required to excel at their roles thus contributing to corporate strategy & goals while reacting positively, rapidly and effectively to a changing external environment.

3. Aim

- 3.1. Ensure employees are supported and enabled to meet the changing demands of the organisation and its service users so that the organisation achieves its strategic objectives.
- 3.2. Facilitate employee development and/or personal development through assisting them to broaden, deepen and thereby further enhance their existing skill base.
- 3.3. Provide a working environment where continuous learning and development takes place that helps employees gain more satisfaction from their roles, increase motivation and enhance employee retention, where required.
- 3.4. Contribute to the mission, vision and goals of the council by providing excellent services through our employees.

4. Scope

- 4.1. The learning and development policy covers the learning needs of all Waltham Forest Council employees including FTE (Full Time Employee), Fixed Term Contract, and Part Time based on the requirements of their role.
- 4.2. Agency workers do not fall under the scope of the learning and development policy however this can be reviewed on a case by case basis.
- 4.3. It covers all aspects of employee development including but not restricted to mandatory training, induction/ orientation, essential soft skills and employee development, essential technical and computer skills training, in-service education, coaching, mentoring, and apprenticeships using a multi tool method ranging from classroom courses, self-study, qualifications, online/e-learning, guides, and external workshops.
- 4.4. The learning and development policy enables the employee through the employee life cycle from recruitment to exit.
- 4.5. The policy applies to all learning and development activity undertaken or lead by the learning and development function under the learning and development budget.
- 4.6. Where possible learning activity to be facilitated by members of the L&D team commissioning external trainers where required for specialised initiatives.
- 4.7. This policy might also cover other learning initiatives led by other teams but assisted by L&D in an advisory capacity.
- 4.8. Other functions have the responsibility of arranging training for technical or bespoke topics if required. However, they are required to keep learning and development informed to ensure that the training is made available to other functions if applicable.

5. Communications

- 5.1. The L&D team have the responsibility of ensuring that learning & development opportunities are communicated with employees of the council on a periodic basis
- 5.2. This will be undertaken through communications via communications channels like Your news, managers newsletter, and through the ForestHub “Training Calendar”.
- 5.3. The L&D team will also send targeted communications via “manager mailshot” which will be sent to managers on a monthly basis.
- 5.4. Other teams running learning activities outside of corporate L&D have the responsibility of co-ordinating with the L&D team to support with publicising their initiatives on the L&D comms channels as well.
- 5.5. The L&D team will also support employees without council laptops/ emails using the communication sent to managers of employees without council laptops/emails and those employees themselves.

6. Administration

- 6.1. L&D is support by the HR Admin team in all the administrative tasks as agreed in the SLA between the two teams.
- 6.2. Where L&D activities are initiated by the L&D team, the L&D team will lead on co-ordination of the admin.
- 6.3. Where L&D activities are initiated by teams other that corporate L&D the admin will be co-ordinated by that team. This will be reviewed by the L&D team on a case to case basis based on availability of resources.

7. Induction

It is important that all new employees have a suitable induction to the Council, their Directorate/Service and their role. This should include:

- 7.1. Online Induction: The Induction page link will be sent to employees as soon as they have email access and intranet. The employee has the responsibility of reading through the induction page resources and carrying out all the activities required by them as a new starter including any mandatory eLearning. More information on e-learning in the E-learning section.
- 7.2. Directorate Induction: Directorates should have separate events for the new employees from their directorates to cover a more in-depth overview of that particular directorate. The responsibility for this type of Induction lies with the directorate.
- 7.3. Service Induction: Role or Workplace induction on the job training from line managers and colleagues all come under service induction. Managers have the responsibility of ensuring new starters receive all the required job-related training to ensure that they are able to perform their role efficiently. Managers are encouraged to set objectives at this stage on (Clear Review) to help staff get a better understanding of their role expectations.
- 7.4. Corporate Induction: Learning and development has the responsibility of inviting new starters to the Corporate Induction as an introduction to working in local government and a welcome to Waltham Forest. Line managers must ensure that the employee attends the corporate induction when invited. Corporate Induction is held periodically based on demand and senior management availability.

8. Self-Study

- 8.1. Employees are encouraged take responsibility for their development and the council believes learning is most effective when the individual employee identifies opportunities for self-development which will enhance work performance through increased skills and knowledge.
- 8.2. [E-learning](#) are available that would suit most training needs
- 8.3. E-Learning is available for use to all employees and has a wide range of topics ranging from mandatory courses, soft skills, technical skills and SAP. Employees are encouraged to use the e-learning portal to do beneficial courses related to their role. The e-learning zone can be accessed from any computer with Internet access, at home or in work, 24 hours a day.

9. Training needs analysis

- 9.1. Training needs will be determined through senior management feedback, employee feedback, staff surveys, training requests via Hornbill, the previous year's appraisal and training needs analysis data, changes in external & internal environment of the council and organisation strategy.
- 9.2. The corporate framework and priorities will also determine training needs as will changes in the external environment like Covid19.
- 9.3. The staff survey results will also have an impact on the L&D offer.
- 9.4. Training offered will be reviewed based on employee feedback collected after each workshop.

10. Corporate Training Calendar

- 10.1. Learning and development will create a training calendar with workshops throughout the year based on a continual training needs analysis. The workshops in this calendar will be run during the course of the year and are open to all employees
- 10.2. Employees are encouraged to select appropriate courses that would contribute to their development and add them to their performance appraisal as Learning and Development Objectives.
- 10.3. All employees must agree with their manager before they book onto any training provided to ensure business continuity. Approval will be granted on first come first serve basis.

11. Mentoring

- 11.1. Mentoring is a structured programme and the interested employees are required to get manager's approval before taking part in the mentoring scheme.
- 11.2. Employees must have a clear objective from the programme and ideally this should be decided during the performance appraisal meeting and be added as one of the development needs.
- 11.3. Learning and development will manage the mentoring programme.
- 11.4. Employees will be required to document their learning from the mentoring programme. They will also have to attend the mentoring meetings regularly and frequent absences or cancellations will result in being struck off the programme. They will also have to attend mentoring training designed for both the mentor and mentees.
- 11.5. The programme lasts for approximately six months and arrangements are agreed between the individuals once every 6 weeks.
- 11.6. A new mentoring framework and reverse mentoring framework is currently being developed.

12. Apprenticeships

- 12.1. The future of our council depends on the way we recruit and nurture new talent. Apprenticeships are an exciting way to help us achieve this, providing a bigger pool of employees who will be eager to learn on-the-job.
- 12.2. An apprenticeship is defined as a job with training.
- 12.3. Apprentices learn as they work and are required to successfully complete an assessment at the end of their apprenticeship to prove they can carry out all aspects of their job.
- 12.4. Anyone over the age of 16 can be an apprentice, whether they're already employed or not. An apprentice could be a young person taking on their first job or a long-standing member of staff looking to develop new skills.
- 12.5. Apprenticeships take a minimum of 12 months to complete, although some apprenticeships can take longer depending on the level of apprenticeship undertaken.
- 12.6. According to a survey conducted by the National Apprenticeship Service, 96% of apprenticeship employers say apprenticeships are beneficial to their business.
- 12.7. Additionally, apprentices make a valuable contribution to the council and, through learning and developing their knowledge, are able to understand the key aspects of your team's responsibilities.
- 12.8. All apprentices are required to spend 20% of their time in dedicated apprenticeship training, usually completed off-site and under the guidance of a registered apprenticeship training provider.
- 12.9. We're required by law to pay into a government fund known as the Apprenticeship Levy and training funds are taken from here with no additional cost to us.
- 12.10. All apprentices must work a minimum of 30 hours a week or the equivalent number of hours over a longer period if undertaking an apprenticeship part-time.
- 12.11. All apprentices are required to be paid at least the National Minimum Wage and at the Council apprentices are paid London Living Wage.
- 12.12. Please refer to our 'salaries paid to apprentices' page or contact the apprenticeships manager if you have any questions.
- 12.13. The recruitment process for apprentices is like hiring any other member of staff for your team. If you have any questions about recruiting an apprentice, please contact the apprenticeships manager.

12.14. With over 300 apprenticeships available, there should be at least one to support your team's requirements. To discuss your options, please contact the apprenticeships manager who can help answer any queries you have.

13. In Service Education

13.1. In some instances, it might be appropriate and beneficial for employees to undertake an external educational programme leading to qualifications. Before in-service education is used, consideration of using an Apprenticeship process should be given.

13.2. The types of study covered by in-service education include (but are not restricted to) sandwich/block release, evening classes, day release/part-day release as well as distance/open learning courses, correspondence and Open University Courses.

13.3. All permanent members of staff are eligible to apply for in-service education.

13.4. In-service education requests must be discussed with and agreed upon by the line manager and head of service/ director.

13.5. In-service education is paid for by the requesting employees' cost centre.

13.6. Applications for in-service education are made on an individual basis and each application will be considered on a case by case basis.

13.7. Employee may request assistance in the form of release for study, for financial help or both.

13.8. All in service education cases employees must follow the process below at this [link](#). in-service education form can be found in Appendix 1 of this document. It should be noted that staff who leave prior to completing their in service education, or leave the Council within two years of completing their in-service education will be required to pay all or part of the cost of their in-service education back to the Council. Employees will be required to sign a contract to adhere to this.

14. Appraisals

14.1. The Waltham Forest appraisal (Performance Management and Development - PMD) system is key to the effective management of staff.

14.2. The system ensures staff are aware of their work objectives and that they meet with their managers on a regular and on-going basis to discuss work progress, review objectives and development as well as to provide support and feedback.

14.3. The annual appraisal cycle includes:

- Objective setting in April
- Mid-year review in October
- Annual appraisal in March
- With ongoing one-to-ones throughout the year, ideally every 4-6 weeks

14.4. This is over and above the professional supervision required for all employees.

14.5. The process below outlines the activities involved in completing individual appraisals for all staff and managers below Chief Executive/Director level. This also includes how to use the competency framework for all staff. You can find more information on this by clicking the link below.

[More information and guidance on the Performance Management and Development \(PMD\) Scheme](#)

14.5.1. Appraisal preparation

This looks at the things that managers and staff should be doing to prepare for the objective setting part of the appraisal cycle.

14.5.2. Objective setting

The process of discussing and agreeing work objectives, competencies and learning and development priorities for the coming year.

14.5.3. Review progress

The on-going cycle of one-to-one/supervision meetings.

14.5.4. Mid-year review

Reviewing the staff member's progress halfway through the year.

14.5.5. Annual appraisal

Preparing for and carrying out the annual appraisal at the end of the yearly appraisal cycle.

14.5.6. The appraisal process will be recorded on Clear review the council's performance management system. Further guidance on how to use the system can be found here

15. Competency Framework

15.1. The competency framework applies to all staff with level specific behavioural statements outlines in the competency different levels outlined in the Competency Framework document on the [intranet](#).

15.2. There are four categories of competencies:

- Lead: being a good role model and delivering outcomes
- Engage: powerful communications and building effective relationships
- Change: delivering change and being personally effective
- Improve: challenging how things are done and finding innovative solutions

Detailed information on the competency framework is available on the [intranet](#)

15.3. There are four key stages in using competencies within the appraisal process:

- Review competencies for your level / grade
- Identify development needs
- Collect evidence
- Evaluate evidence at review meetings

Appendix 2 contains detailed advice on how to use competencies with the appraisal.

16. Virtual Training

In response to the guidelines issues by the government on social distancing due to COVID 19 and in our endeavour to have no gaps in employee learning and encourage and support employees to participate in online training programs in order to promote employee development, partnership, and organisational enrichment.

16.1. Virtual Classroom Training

16.1.1. Learning & Development will use MS Teams to run workshops where convenient as a response to COVID19 advice on social distancing

16.1.2. Participants have the responsibility of booking on and attending workshops as required

16.2. E-learning

16.2.1. E-learning (also known as electronic learning), for the purpose of this policy, is defined as any and all learning which is delivered via a computer and/or other electronic device such as a tablet. E-learning provides flexible and mobile learning to the defence community. On the basis that access to online material is possible, learners can engage in their studies wherever they are in the world. This helps to ensure learning is continuous and completed within those timescales agreed with line managers and employers.

16.2.2. Also, learners accessing knowledge through e-learning platforms are presented with the opportunity to study in their own time and pace. This is a positive alternative to the constraints of traditional, classroom based, learning. E-learning can be a key aspect of a blended approach to learning where there is an element of face-to-face engagement, or as a standalone option to the development of knowledge and skills underpinning professional competence.

16.3. The principles are as follows:

16.3.1. E-learning programmes must provide opportunities for flexible and independent learning

16.3.2. Learners should have access to e-learning material which is comparable to material delivered through face-to-face programmes

16.3.3. Delivery systems and/or platforms are to be maintained to such an extent that barriers to e-learning are minimal

16.3.4. Approved centres are encouraged to exploit innovative technologies to enhance the learner experience

16.3.5. L&D to ensure guidance is available

16.3.6. E-learning providers are to meet the standards expected and required by all their stakeholders

16.3.7. L&D will assure the quality and availability of e-learning opportunities and delivery systems/platforms which support the attainment of accredited qualifications.

17. Employee Led Learning

- 17.1. We encourage employees at the council to take ownership of their learning during their journey at the council as this leads to empowerment of the employee and putting them in charge of their self-development.
- 17.2. The first step towards employee-led learning is putting their L&D objectives on Clear Review and letting their managers know their training needs at the mid-year and end of year review.
- 17.3. The Training Needs Analysis uses this data to inform the training calendar making it employee led rather than management led.
- 17.4. We have also put in place a Learning Management System (LMS) on the e-learning portal that employees can use to book themselves on virtual or face to face training.
- 17.5. E-learning, mentoring, virtual/face to face initiatives, self-study, external training, online resources etc. offer employees multi-mode, multi-method, blended learning options.
- 17.6. On-demand training is available through the e-learning site is accessible to all employees with & without council email and free and open to all employees with all courses on different subjects available for employees to complete.

18. Appendix 1

Application Form to pursue an In-Service Education Course

PLEASE NOTE THERE IS A SECTION THAT YOUR LINE MANAGER WILL NEED TO COMPLETE, GUIDANCE FOR LINE MANAGERS ON COMPLETING THIS FORM CAN BE FOUND ON PAGE 5

GUIDANCE FOR STAFF COMPLETING THE FORM *(please ensure you read the following carefully):*

- Please complete this form, following discussions with your manager
- You need to complete a new application for each academic year of course
- Any expenses you incur will need to be claimed via HCM and will require receipts prior to your managers approval
- Make sure you complete the form in full with sufficient information in your responses to ensure the In Service Panel can make a decision on your application
- Complete the form and forward to your line manager for consideration. It is your responsibility to ensuring the completed form is returned to Hr@walthamforest.gov.uk by the second full week of June

PERSONAL DETAILS:

Mr <input type="checkbox"/> Miss <input type="checkbox"/> Ms <input type="checkbox"/> Mrs <input type="checkbox"/>
First name:
Surname:
Home Address:

EMPLOYMENT DETAILS:

Job Title:	Directorate:
Department/Service:	Grade:
Employee No:	Name of Line Manager:
Work address:	
Telephone no. and ext:	Email address:
Start date with authority:	Start date in current post:
What are the main duties of your post?	

DETAILS OF PREVIOUS EDUCATION:

Establishment	Year	Subject(s) or Qualification	Examining Body	Result

DETAILS OF PREVIOUS SUPPORT BY THE COUNCIL:

Have you ever been given support to study by this Council? Yes No
(If yes, please provide details below)

Establishment	Year	Amount funded by Council	Subject(s) or Qualification	Examining Body	Result

THE PROPOSED COURSE OF STUDY THAT THIS APPLICATION RELATES TO:

Course Title/Qualification *(please do not use abbreviations):*

Stage and Year of the course you will be completing *(ie 2nd or 3rd):*

Mode of Study:

Full Time Block Release Day Release Part Day Release and Evening

Evening Class Distance Learning Open University Modular Study

Other (please specify)

What day/periods will you need to be away from the office:

Total duration of course:

Educational Establishment:

Examining Body (if applicable):

Starting date of course:

Completion date of course:

What are the costs for your course? *(you will need to provide details of these costs for consideration to your manager)*

Course Fees: £

Examination Fees: £

TOTAL COSTS FOR THIS ACADEMIC YEAR: £

ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL COSTS:

PLEASE NOTE SOME OF THESE COSTS MAY NOT BE SUPPORTED BY THE COUNCIL – EXPENSES ARE APPROVED AT DISCRETION OF YOUR MANAGER (Please refer to the relevant guidance based on the course you are applying for)

Text Books: £	Travelling expenses: £
Registration fees: £	Membership fees: £
Other costs (please specify): £	

DETAILS OF PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS:

Have you attempted this stage of the course before? Yes No
 (if yes, the please complete details in next section)

Establishment	Year	Subject(s) or Qualification	Examining Body	Result (failed, incomplete, withdrawn)

GENERAL INFORMATION (please complete this section fully):

YOU MAY PROVIDE ADDITIONAL SHEETS IF REQUIRED

Why do you wish to take this qualification?
How might the Council benefit?

TIME OFF TO UNDERTAKE COURSE OF STUDY

PLEASE MARK THE RELEVANT BOXES AND PROVIDE DETAILS OF DURATIONS

Does this course incorporate a compulsory residential period? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If yes, please provide details of duration
Does this course require attendance on field trips or external placements? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If yes, please provide details of duration
Study Leave: Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If yes, please provide details
Exam Leave: Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If yes, please provide details
Project/Dissertation: Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If yes, please provide details

APPLICANTS DECLARATION:

- In the event of receiving financial assistance in respect of my in-service education course, I hereby undertake to remain in the service of the London Borough of Waltham Forest for a period of two years from the date on which the qualification is obtained. I have read the conditions attached to the support within the provisions of the In-Service Education scheme and confirm that I agree to abide by them.
- I understand that if I fail to honour this undertaking by leaving the Council's service before the end of the two year period, I will be obliged to repay in full a sum equal to the financial assistance (excluding salary) received by me under the In-Service Education scheme.
- I further understand that should I, without good reason, fail to sit an examination within a reasonable period, or fail to show satisfactory progress in my studies, discontinue my studies, or I am dismissed from my employment, or resign from employment prior to completion of my in-service education course I will be in breach of the conditions of the In-Service Education scheme, in these circumstances, support under the scheme will be withdrawn and I will be required to repay in full a sum equal to the financial support (excluding salary) received by me under the provisions of the In-Service Education scheme.
- I agree that such repayments due to the Council may be deducted at source from any sums, including salary, due to me. In the event of such sums due to me being insufficient, I agree to repay the Council the balance before leaving its employment.

Applicants Signature

Date:

Print Name:

MANAGERS DECLARATION (it is mandatory to complete this section):

Managers need to consider the criteria listed below to help make a decision regarding their staff member's application for In Service Education (please refer to the 'In Service' how to guide)

Does the proposal help meet the employees training and development needs?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Does the proposal support the immediate business and service needs?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Does the proposal represent value for money?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Can the need for time off be balanced against the Councils service needs?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Will the proposal assist in developing and retaining high quality staff?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Is the course relevant to the applicant's current area of work?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Have you considered any factors (ie sickness record, employee performance) that may prevent the employee from undertaking the course during this academic year?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

I do / do not support this application (delete as appropriate)

Additional Comments:

NOTE: As the Line Manager you need to discuss your decisions with your staff member prior to returning the completed application form to H@walthamforest.gov.uk for a decision by the In Service Panel.

Manager's Signature:

Date:

Print Name:

19. Appendix 2

Using Competencies within Appraisal

