

LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT POLICY AND PROCEDURE



Policy Schedule

Policy owner and lead	People Service: Head of Organisational Development	
Consultation	Corporate Management Team	Employee Engagement Forum
	Trade Unions	Disability Forum
	Corporate Consultative Forum	People Services Team
Approving body	Employment Appeals Committee	
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Related documents	Guidance on applications for funding for the Learning and Development of SBC Employees Removed reference to Apprenticeships Policy as this is yet to go through due process to approval. Performance Review Procedure Managing Performance Policy Volunteering Policy	
Review interval	Annually (next review October 2021)	

Version Control

Version Control

Version	Author	Date	Changes
1.1	Jules Potter	June 2, 2020	All indicated in red and in particular – all permanent and temporary employees have the same responsibilities (see sections 3.1 and 3.2) and all employees are required to complete 100% of their Mandatory Training to be enabled to undertake any other free internal or commissioned external training.

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1. Introduction

- 1.1** Slough Borough Council's ultimate goal is for our employees to take control of their own learning. The council is committed to being an employer of choice and investing in learning and development to achieve the Council's strategic goals and objectives and to assist employees to reach their full potential. Continuous learning and development supports employees to deliver excellent customer experience and service. It is therefore essential that we offer learning environments across the organisation conducive to the ultimate goal.
- 1.2** This policy sets out Slough Borough Council's responsibility for planning and enabling learning and development activities. It defines the responsibilities of employees to attend learning events and the financial and human resources available to them to plan and agree their development needs.
- 1.3** This policy is driven by the organisational vision and values which promote the Council as a learning organisation – *where people continually enhance their capabilities to create what they want to create*¹.
- 1.4** This policy is also implicit to the Our Futures transformational agenda. We are changing the way we work – with our residents, communities, businesses, partners and members – with new systems, processes and ways of doing things. To be regarded as the world class organisation we aspire to be, all our employees want to be afforded opportunities to develop so that great outcomes² can be delivered to those we serve.
- 1.5** To drive that vision² *We want to recruit, retain and develop high quality people who are committed to Slough and supported to do their job* and achieve the following core aims:
- Support every employee to be safe and effective in their roles throughout their career at the Council. This includes: local and corporate induction; probationary period; performance reviews (annually and at regular 1:1/supervision review meetings); mandatory training; and continuing professional development;
 - Monitor and report on employee compliance to ensure that that the Council is meeting its statutory and legal learning and development responsibilities;
 - Build capability through the Slough Academy apprenticeships so that development needs are met and all employees are able to operate with confidence in the transformed council;
 - Spend public funds allocated to employee and member development within a centralised training budget in a robust and accountable manner;
 - Appreciate and respond to different learning styles, preferences and capabilities of the workforce; and

¹ Senge, P: The Fifth Discipline 1990

² As set out in the Council's Five Year Plan 2020-25

- Upskill employees so that they are confident in their current roles; recognise their own potential; and evolve into role models for their colleagues and customers.

1.6 Development needs are analysed through team and individual performance reviews. From these training needs analyses (TNAs), employees are required and/or offered learning opportunities at the Council's HQ and/or at learning hubs throughout Slough. Some learning opportunities are led by SBC employees. Where external facilitators/trainers are required, the relevant service needs to produce a short business case which states the organisational benefit, risks and costs in relation to the requested training to secure the best expertise and value for public money.

1.7 This policy should be read and applied in conjunction with the council's vision and values as set out in the *Five Year Plan 2020-2025*; associated performance review documentation for employees through this link: <http://insite/people/your-development/performance-review/> Employees should also refer to the Your Development at SBC page: <http://insite/people/your-development/your-development-at-sbc/> in consideration of how they can self-serve or seek opportunities in respect of their own continuing professional development.

2. Scope

2.1 The aim of this policy and procedure is to provide a framework for the learning and development requirements of all Slough Borough Council employees - whether they are permanent or temporary – as well as members and volunteers.

2.2 This policy does NOT apply to apprentices or employees working for contractors, unless it supports the requirements of the post they are filling.

2.3 The Council has a Corporate Learning and Development Programme with a complementary Directory. The Directory is updated as training needs are reviewed every two months, and is available to all Council employees via SBCinsite. Learning and development that is delivered by in-house facilitators/trainers is free to SBC employees. Learning and development that is commissioned and delivered by external facilitators/trainers will be funded from the centralised training budget managed by the Head of Organisational Development. However, if an employee has booked to attend a course/event and fails to do so, the relevant service will be charged for the cost of the space allocated to that delegate. The relevant service will be notified of this charge and the relevant lead/line manager will be asked to explain the reason for the absence. If it not a justifiable explanation, the service will be charged accordingly.

2.4 Generally, the Council does not fund qualifications unless the study is critical to the post; or is agreed as part of continuing professional development (CPD); career progression; or in line with service priorities. The level of support will be at the discretion of the applicant's/learner's line manager with support and advice from the Head of Organisational Development, taking into account the terms set out in the *Guidance on applications for funding for Learning and Development for SBC Employees* which can be found via this link: <http://insite/people/your-development/your-development-at-sbc/>. There is also a link on this page to the Slough Academy apprenticeships programmes: <http://insite/people/more/the-slough-academy/>

3. Duties and Responsibilities

The responsibilities of ALL employees is set out in this policy, whether they are permanent or temporary (interims, fixed-term contracts, as and when/casuals). There is also reference to volunteers, for whom the Council is accountable to ensure they are safe and effective in how they support the organisation.

3.1 Responsibilities of ALL SBC Permanent Employees

3.1.1 All permanent employees are required to live the corporate values and take personal responsibility to ensure that they are skilled sufficiently to meet the demands of their role and associated duties. To do so, they are **required** to:

- Complete the Mandatory Training Curriculum (MTC) agreed by the Corporate Management Team in October 2019 using the Cornerstone Learning Management System by the designated deadline assigned to their training records. New permanent employees are assigned to complete this MTC *before* they join the Council (details are issued to them in their new starter letter). The modules within the MTC are to be refreshed every three years (the system automates reminders). This MTC compliance data is reviewed monthly by the Senior Leadership Team and any employee who has not completed 100% of the MTC (including designated deadlines for refreshers) will NOT be assigned any of the free internal or external commissioned training until the MTC is up to date. Employees can view FAQs in relation to Cornerstone via this link: <http://insite/people/more/cornerstone/>
- Start the local induction process within **five working days** of their first day of employment at Slough Borough Council with their line manager, utilising the checklist available on SBCinsite via this link: <http://insite/people/recruitment/induction/> and/or their service specific induction checklist.
- Attend Corporate Induction within **two months** of their first day of employment at the Council. Corporate Induction dates are featured in the Corporate Learning and Development Programme Directory via this link: <http://insite/people/your-development/your-development-at-sbc/>
- Actively seek development to meet the requirements of the job role including required competencies (both as line manager and employee, where relevant) and to contribute to the continuous improvement of their service.
- Attend **1:1/supervision review meetings** with their line manager and undertake for their direct reports at **least every four to six weeks**.
- Attend an **annual performance review meeting**. This meeting is a key milestone in regular 1:1s/supervision meetings as it is an opportunity for an employee and their manager to review achievements and identify the required knowledge, skills and ability to do a job effectively and the areas where further development is possible. The performance review form and guidance is available currently on SBCinsite via this link:

<http://insite/people/your-development/performance-review/>. This form and guidance will be featured in the new Cornerstone Performance Management System to be implemented in 2021. All Personal Development Plans are reviewed by the Organisational Development Team on an annual basis to create a corporate Training Needs Analysis. Teams throughout the organisation will also be encouraged to consider their collective needs with support from the Organisational Development Team.

- Attend **probationary** period meetings. In the first **six months** of employment, an employee is also required to undergo a probationary period. The period of probationary service provides a formal opportunity for managers to review the progress of new employees and to assess their suitability for the post to which they have been appointed. For more information, please see SBCinsite weblink here: <http://insite/people/your-development/probation/>. All permanent employees who have completed successfully their **probationary** period may apply for study leave and funding in line with the *Guidance on applications for funding for the Learning and Development of SBC Employees* which can be found via this link: <http://insite/people/your-development/your-development-at-sbc/>
- Take control of their own learning through the corporate or directorate/service specific learning opportunities which are appropriate to their role/career development, as well as meet their learning objectives as set out in their **Personal Development Plan** (discussed at their annual performance review and at each 1:1/supervision review meeting). This includes selective learning methods such as work buddying, mentoring, coaching, action learning sets and job shadowing. Such training is to be completed within working hours and in agreement with your line manager. Where external courses/seminars are held outside working hours, attendance needs to be agreed with their line manager and arrangements made for time off in lieu (TOIL).
- Be mindful to arrive at any training session, including Corporate Induction, *at least* 10 minutes before it starts and to attend the whole session. Failure to complete the whole session will be recorded as non-attendance unless prior notification has been made to the Organisational Development Team.
- Maintain their professional registration or membership where applicable. Employees should refer to their employment contracts for the available financial support for such registration or membership.
- Record attendance and performance, where appropriate, at any learning event in 1:1s and/or annual performance review meetings to demonstrate compliance.

3.2 Responsibilities of all Individual Temporary Employees (interims, fixed fixed-term contracts, as and when/casuals)

- #### **3.2.1 All temporary employees – interims, those on fixed-term contracts, and casual workers (as and when) - are required to live the corporate values and take personal responsibility to ensure that they are skilled sufficiently to meet the demands of their role and associated duties. To do so, they are **required** to:**

- Complete the Mandatory Training Curriculum (MTC) agreed by the Corporate Management Team in October 2019 using the Cornerstone Learning Management System by the designated deadline assigned to their training records. New temporary employees are assigned to complete this MTC *before* they join the Council (details are issued to them in their new starter letter/via email engagement with their line manager). This MTC compliance data is reviewed monthly by the Senior Leadership Team and any employee who has not completed 100% of the MTC (including refreshers by designated deadlines) will NOT be assigned any relevant free internal training until the MTC is up to date. Employees can view FAQs in relation to Cornerstone via this link: <http://insite/people/more/cornerstone/>
- Start the local induction process within **five working days** of their first day of temporary employment at Slough Borough Council with their line manager, utilising the checklist
- Start the local induction process within **five working days** of their first day of temporary employment at Slough Borough Council with their line manager, utilising the checklist available on SBCinsite via this link: <http://insite/people/recruitment/induction/> and/or their service specific induction checklist.
- Attend Corporate Induction within **two months** of their first day of employment at the Council if they are contracted to work for **more than three months** at the Council. The dates of Corporate Induction are featured in the Corporate Learning and Development Programme Directory - <http://insite/people/your-development/your-development-at-sbc/> If an employee's contract is three months or less, their line manager should seek advice from the Organisational Development Team about whether the requirement of attending Corporate Induction is beneficial to the employee and the service. If an employee's contract is less than three months initially but is extended, they should attend Corporate Induction at the next available opportunity.
- Actively seek development to meet the requirements of the job role including required competencies (both as line manager and employee, where relevant) and to contribute to the continuous improvement of their service.
- Attend **1:1s/supervision review meetings** with their line manager and their direct reports at least **every four to six weeks**.
- Subject to the length of their contract, after they have completed their probationary period they should attend an **annual performance review meeting**. This meeting is a key milestone in regular supervision meetings as it is an opportunity for an employee and their manager to review achievements and identify the required knowledge, skills and ability to do a job effectively and the areas where further development is possible. The performance review form and guidance is available currently on SBCinsite via this link: <http://insite/people/your-development/performance-review/>. This form and guidance will be featured in the new Cornerstone Performance Management System to be implemented in **2021**. All Personal Development Plans are reviewed by the Organisational Development Team on an annual basis to create a corporate Training Needs Analysis. Teams throughout the organisation will also be encouraged to consider their collective needs with support from the Organisational Development Team.

Take control of their own learning through the corporate learning opportunities which are essential to their development in the role they are covering, as well as attend those learning opportunities as set out in their **Personal Development Plan**, if a Performance Review meeting is appropriate to the length of their contract, see details above. Details of corporate learning opportunities are featured in the Corporate Learning Directory via this link: <http://insite/people/your-development/your-development-at-sbc/>

- Maintain their professional registration or membership where applicable. Temporary employees are required to self-fund their registration or membership, unless otherwise stated in their contractual terms.
- Record attendance and performance, where appropriate, at any learning event in 1:1s/supervision review meetings and/or annual performance review meetings to demonstrate compliance.

Removed section on sessional workers/tutors as now featured in section 3.2 above

3.3 Responsibilities of the Volunteer

- 3.3.1 Volunteers have valuable time, skills and experience that they can use to support communities and the town of Slough. Working with volunteers allows the Council to expand and enhance its services and better understand the needs of communities.
- 3.3.2 This policy applies to all volunteer applicants to Slough Borough Council who would like to donate their time, skills and experience to carry out volunteering roles without financial reward. **Although a volunteer is not an employee of the Council with no legally binding contractual relationship between the Council and the volunteer, the Council is accountable for their safety and effectiveness in the role they are doing without pay on the Council's behalf.**
- 3.3.3 Each volunteer is nominated a named person to support them throughout their time with Slough Borough Council. For more details on this support to volunteers and how they should be inducted to the Council, please see the link here to the Volunteering Policy: <http://insite/people/more/volunteer-guidance/>
- 3.3.4 **All** volunteers have a role description that outlines activities to be undertaken and should therefore live the corporate values and take personal responsibility to ensure that they are skilled sufficiently to meet the demands of their role and associated duties. To do so, they are **required** to:
 - **Complete the Mandatory Training Curriculum (MTC) agreed by the Corporate Management Team in October 2019 using the Cornerstone Learning Management System by the designated deadline assigned to their training records. The modules within the MTC are to be refreshed every three years (the system automates reminders). This MTC compliance data is reviewed monthly by**

the Senior Leadership Team and any volunteer who has not completed 100% of the MTC (including designated deadlines for refreshers) will NOT be assigned any of the free internal or external commissioned training until the MTC is up to date. Employees can view FAQs in relation to Cornerstone via this link: <http://insite/people/more/cornerstone/>

- Attend Corporate Induction within **six months** of their first day of volunteering role if that role is due to last for **more than three months** at the Council. The dates of Corporate Induction are featured in the Corporate Learning and Development Programme Directory - <http://insite/people/your-development/your-development-at-sbc/> If the **volunteering** role is three months or less, their line manager should seek advice from the Organisational Development Team about whether the requirement of attending Corporate Induction is beneficial to the **volunteer** and the service. If the volunteering role is extended is less than three months initially but is extended, they should attend Corporate Induction at the next available opportunity.

3.4 Study Leave

- 3.4.1 The vast majority of learning opportunities take place outside of formal programmes of study. For the purposes of this policy, work based or on-the-job development, such as coaching, mentoring, shadowing, reflective practice, are not included in the study leave allocation for time off. These should be planned activities agreed between the line manager and employee so that the employee can manage their workload within core working hours; there is minimum impact on service delivery; and there is equity of access for all employees.
- 3.4.2 Where study leave of half a day or more is required to attend a conference/seminar or other form of learning event, all employees should seek permission to attend from their line manager. Study leave should be recorded as such on the employee's annual leave record on the Agresso HR System and the manager should also discuss and agree with the employee additional time to reflect on what they have learned and/or cascade their learning to colleagues, where appropriate. For all periods of study leave, employees should refer to the *Guidance on applications for funding for the Learning and Development of SBC Employees* which can be found via this link: <http://insite/people/your-development/your-development-at-sbc/>

3.5 Employee Compliance

- 3.5.1 All permanent and temporary employees can access their own training records by logging into Cornerstone. If they are unable to do so and need to confirm their training compliance, they should contact the Organisational Development Team via: training@slough.gov.uk From December 2020, all line managers will be given access to the training records of their team members. In addition, Agresso – the Council's self-service HR System – will feed Cornerstone in terms of establishment details i.e. starters/leavers etc.

3.5.2 Cornerstone will hold 'live' training records so that the Organisational Development Team is able to assure the Council that it is meeting its statutory and legal requirements in terms of learning and development. The records are also shared for auditing and inspection purposes when required.

3.6 Responsibilities of the Line Manager

3.6.1 It is the responsibility of line managers, in discussion with their employees, to identify ongoing Mandatory Training compliance at 1:1s/supervision review meetings; and to agree appropriate learning opportunities by facilitating the arrangements to allow employees to take advantage of these. Learning and development needs should be discussed during the annual performance review meeting – see details via this link: <http://insite/people/your-development/performance-review/> utilising the **Personal Development Plan** template. This Personal Development Plan should be reviewed and updated and updated in 1:1s/supervision review meetings between managers and employees. Such review meetings should be used to offer support to employees in relation to their learning needs as well to discuss any capability issues. If there are capability issues, managers should consult the Managing Performance Policy via SBCinsite: <http://insite/people/hr-policies/managing-performance/>

3.6.2 Line managers should:

- Familiarise themselves with this Learning and Development Policy and associated funding guidance and support implementation throughout the Council.
- Take personal responsibility to be a role model to their team in their performance and behaviour by completing the requirements set out in sections **3.1-3.2** of this policy, dependent upon their own role.
- Have an understanding of their employee/s or volunteer/s tasks and key responsibilities and how they contribute to the Council's Five Year Plan and values - [our refreshed values](#) - and the 'golden thread' to service plans, budget setting and team and individual objectives.
- Identify, support and plan the requirements for their employees or volunteers, as set out in sections **3.1-3.3** of this policy, where relevant.
- Review learning activity of their team members through access to the Cornerstone Talent Management System when available in 2020 and support their employees to comply with the requirements as set out in sections **3.1-3.3** of this policy, where relevant.
- Ensure that learning opportunities are accessible equitably for members of their team and most especially to their employees who are not office-based and do not have regular access to a PC. Please note that the People Services Plan identifies that ways of working are changing across the organisation through smart working and will encourage and support online learning.

- At each annual performance review and subsequent 1:1s/supervision review meetings, line managers should ask their employees to provide evidence of their compliance with the requirements set out in sections **3.1-3.3**, where relevant. Line managers should take personal responsibility to support their employees to complete their Mandatory Training requirements by the **designated deadlines on their training records** on behalf of the **Senior Leadership Team**. It is recognised that there are occasions where such corporate deadlines are missed due to sickness and bereavement or family/dependent emergency. The line manager should seek advice from the Head of Organisational Development in respect of such incidences to avoid inaccurate employee compliance reporting.
- Ensure there is adequate service cover whilst an employee/s is/are attending a learning event or has study leave.
- Record an employee's attendance at any learning event at annual performance reviews and subsequent 1:1s/supervision review meetings to demonstrate compliance. **This functionality will be available on Cornerstone in 2021. In the meantime, please notify the Organisational Development Team of such attendances (if an attendance register is NOT taken at the learning event) via training@slough.gov.uk.**
- Investigate and take appropriate action if notified that an employee is unable to or fails to attend any learning opportunities which are provided or arranged by the Organisational Development Team. This includes Corporate Induction. Failure by the employee to notify the Organisational Development of non-attendance will incur a departmental fine for the cost of the place on the course/event. The fine may be larger if an external course incurs more cost. This is subject to evidence that the employee's failure to attend was related to sickness, bereavement or family/dependent emergency. If an employee fails to attend due to a service need, the line manager should notify the Organisational Development Team **at least 24 hours** in advance.
- Ensure that learning activities are reviewed and that employees are supported to transfer their learning to the workplace including disseminating learning to colleagues, where appropriate.

3.7 Responsibilities of the Senior Leadership Team

3.7.1 In addition to line management responsibilities, the Senior Leadership Team - comprising the CEO, Directors and Service Leads - has the leadership responsibility to:

- Review, at least annually (following service planning and performance review season), a Training Needs Analysis (TNA) plan for their service with support from the OD Team; and
- Approve study leave and relevant funding for programmes in line with the principles identified in the *Guidance on applications for funding for the Learning and Development of SBC Employees*.

3.8 Responsibilities of the Organisational Development Team

3.8.1 The Organisational Development Team will:

- Diagnose and co-create learning opportunities for employees in response to organisational, team and individual needs. Such needs will be based upon priorities aligned with the Council's vision and values and to meet economies of scale and value for money. In support of this, an annual council-wide Training Needs Analysis (TNA) will be completed alongside the performance review process. Where these requirements cannot be met by the service and its budget, alternatives will be sought through discussion between the requester and the Head of Organisational Development.
- Provide appropriate support and guidance to both internal and external facilitators and trainers, including adherence to the corporate values and active movement principles.
- Inform managers of any employee's non-attendance of a learning event and provide support for investigation of absence.
- Lead and review the Corporate Induction to ensure it is robust to meet new employees' needs and ensure it aligns with corporate vision and national and local impact upon Council business.
- Review the local induction managers' checklist bi-annually (March and September each year) in line with operational needs; and the Signposting and Lonely Planet Guides for Corporate Induction every two months.
- Actively seek user views on the content and relevance of the all the learning opportunities outlined in the Corporate Directory and the Adult Social Care training programme: <http://insite/people/your-development/your-development-at-sbc/>
- Actively seek and evaluate delegate views on all learning opportunities **and record employees' attendance, when necessary, on Cornerstone.**
- Provide timely reports to the Corporate Management Team (CMT), and Directorate/Senior Management Teams (DMTs/SMTs) in relation to quality assurance reports on learning and development. Take responsibility for action, where required.
- Advise and support good practice in terms of regular 1:1s/supervision meetings between line managers and their employees and contribute to the regular review of the annual performance review process.
- Maintain a database of learning opportunities and providers and actively seek learning opportunities using a plethora of tools and techniques (appreciating all learning styles) to meet the needs of customers and partner organisations.
- Publish marketing and advertising materials which are relevant for learning and development opportunities.

- Monitor and evaluate quality and value for money for any commissioned courses and ensure that our internal and external facilitators and trainers are supported effectively to deliver the best quality courses.
- Provide information, advice and guidance to employees to support personal and professional development needs.
- Oversee and provide guidance on the corporate training budget and advise on requests for study leave and funding to the Corporate Consultative Forum.
- Provide half-year validation reviews (March and October) to the Employment and Appeals Committee in relation to adherence to this policy and the learning and development activities provided to council employees.

4. Financial Monitoring

- 4.1** Line managers and their employees should always consider in-house provision before applying for external courses where the learning goals are comparable. The Organisational Development Team can offer advice and support for such comparisons. This is particularly relevant when a comparative training need is identified by a sufficient number of employees through their Personal Development Plans and it makes financial sense to seek value for money based upon economies of scale/training provider offers for group training.
- 4.2** The Corporate Training Budget is held by the Head of Organisational Development to provide:
- 4.2.1** Centrally commissioned programmes in line with Council priorities including Corporate Induction and other learning programmes specified in the corporate Training Needs Analysis (TNA) Plan in partnership with the Directorate Management Teams.
- 4.2.2** A development programme to support all Council members. This programme is developed in conjunction with the members' development portfolio holder, known as the Commissioner for these purposes at the start of each financial year. Any further funding required is subject to the agreement of the Commissioner who holds the portfolio. The Commissioner also considers any individual member requests for learning and development on a case-by-case basis through the members' performance management framework. In 2020, members were asked to complete a training needs survey to inform the programme.

5. Approval and Ratification

This policy is subject to approval and ratification in the sign off by the Employment and Appeals Committee.

6. Dissemination and Implementation

Once ratified, the policy will be available on SBCinsite and managers will be notified via the Council's internal communications channels.

7. Review and Revision Arrangements

This policy will be implemented through the People Services Plan and monitored by the Employment and Appeals Committee on a half-yearly basis. It will be reviewed annually.

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