

TRAINING POLICY

1 Introduction

1.1 Great Yarmouth Borough Council recognises that the development of its employees is fundamental to the Council achieving its objectives. By providing opportunities, facilities and assistance, the Council aims to ensure that all employees have the knowledge, skills and experience necessary to perform to the highest standards and help realise their full potential.

1.2 From 6 April 2010, most employees have a legal right to request time to train. This does not affect the practices that the Council has in place generally to identify, agree and deliver training, but it is an additional statutory responsibility that the Council needs to meet when asked to do so. A local Procedure has been prepared and appears at Appendix A to this Policy.

2 Definition of Training

2.1 For the purpose of this Policy, “training” is defined as: “An organised activity aimed at imparting information and/or instructions to improve the recipient’s performance or to help him/her attain an appropriate level of knowledge or skill.”

3 Policy Objectives

3.1 Training activity will be primarily aimed at enabling the Council to meet its objectives. However, the Council will accommodate the individual ambitions of employees wherever possible provided there is a link between the training to be undertaken and the employee’s current or future job responsibilities.

3.2 Training should be carried out in response to an identified or predicted training need. Corporate training needs will be identified by Senior Managers¹ as and when they arise. The appraisal process and other, ongoing, methods (such as ‘one-to-ones’) may be used to identify the individual training needs of employees. [Please also see paragraph 7.3 and Appendix A, concerning the legal right to request time to train that most employees have.]

3.3 Emphasis will be placed on schemes of training which allow the acquisition and demonstration of competence in a job.

3.4 Employees who would otherwise be compulsorily redundant will be retrained for alternative employment within the Authority wherever this is practicable.

3.5 Training is regarded as a continuous process to be undertaken throughout an individual's career. An employee's age will not normally be a factor when future development is discussed.

¹ The term “Senior Manager” shall encompass the Managing Director, officers subject to the Conditions of Service for Chief Officers of Local Authorities and Service Managers.

- 3.6 Elected Members as well as employees can benefit from planned and structured training opportunities. In this respect, when a training need is identified, a suitable training event will be arranged as part of the annual training programme for Elected Members prepared by Member Services.

4 **Purpose of Training**

- 4.1 The overall purpose of any training must be to maintain and improve the standards of service provided for the community. Within this, the principal reasons for training should be seen as:
- (a) Improving the performance of employees in their current posts and enabling them to deal with new developments in those posts.
 - (b) Developing individual employees in preparation for future vacancies and, therefore, assisting with succession planning.
 - (c) Preparing employees under threat of redundancy for redeployment to alternative vacant posts within the Council and helping them achieve an acceptable level of performance in the early stages of employment in their new post
 - (d) Enabling Elected Members to make the most appropriate decisions by ensuring that they:
 - (i) are kept as up-to-date as possible in the specialist and technical aspects of the Council's work, and
 - (ii) possess the skills required to discharge the responsibilities they hold.

5 **Resources**

- 5.1 The Council recognises that adequate resources must be made available to facilitate training its employees. An annual budget for training will be prepared and normally targeted at identified training needs. A significant proportion will be retained centrally to fund the Corporate Training Programme.
- 5.2 The costs of retraining employees redeployed as an alternative to redundancy should be included as part of the overall financial appraisal of the redundancy and reorganisation costs.

6 **Means of Training**

- 6.1 There are many different means of training. The Council will take a flexible approach bearing in mind such factors as the operational requirements of the job, the usefulness of the various methods, tutor/venue availability and cost. Much of the Corporate Training Programme will, however, feature in-house short courses, as it is recognised that this is an effective way of training groups of people.
- 6.2 Employees will be encouraged to pursue courses of training leading to a recognised qualification (subject to the availability of appropriate funding), where that qualification:
- (a) is appropriate to their current post and is likely to improve their performance in that post, or
 - (b) is appropriate to a post they are likely to occupy in the future and would help prepare them or improve their performance in it, or
 - (c) will then qualify them to study for a further qualification appropriate to their current or future post.
- This is commonly known as "Post Entry Training". For further information about Post Entry Training at the Council, please see the appropriate section of the Local Conditions of Service.

- 6.3 Where an employee who is studying for a qualification is recruited from one post to another they should, wherever possible, be given the opportunity to continue that training under the same conditions as in their previous post.
- 6.4 Where an employee is studying for a qualification that is not relevant to their current or future work with the Council (i.e. not listed in (a), (b) or (c) of 6.2 above) no financial support will be given. Senior Managers may, however, consider requests for other means of assistance by which the Council can help the employee gain the qualification they seek.
- 6.5 Employees will be encouraged to attend training events and professional meetings for the purpose of Continuing Professional Development (CPD), provided that the subject matter covered by the event is relevant to their current or future work with the Council.
- 6.6 Employees will normally receive paid time off during their usual working hours to undertake relevant and approved training. This does not, however, apply to all events that are organised under the Council's 'Lifelong Learning Partnership Agreement' with UNISON (only to "Essential Skills" learning, which includes Essential IT Skills). There may also be occasions when a request made under the Time to Train 'Right to Request' Procedure is agreed subject to the employee taking unpaid time to train (please see paragraph 4.1 of Appendix A).
- 6.7 The Council will make various knowledge and learning resources available online and so build an e-learning platform for use by employees and Elected Members. E-learning helps to achieve a blended approach in meeting learning needs (particularly those identified at appraisal) and can be very cost effective and convenient.

7 **Responsibility**

- 7.1 The *Council* holds overall responsibility for setting policy objectives, monitoring performance against those objectives and providing adequate resources for the training of its employees. The Council delegates the detailed management of training to each respective Senior Manager.
- 7.2 The prime responsibility for training rests with management. Each *Senior Manager* is responsible for ensuring that each of his/her employees is adequately trained to carry out their current job, providing development training for any future responsibility and prioritising the training and development needs within their function. Senior Managers consider formal Time to Train Requests (please see paragraph 5.2 of Appendix A). They may also organise Council-wide training on a particular aspect of their work that impacts on other areas. On behalf of the Senior Manager, each *manager* and *supervisor* has day-to-day responsibility for the training and development of their sub-ordinates. This responsibility will entail:
- identifying the training needs of each employee in consultation with the employee;
 - providing information, instruction and training to ensure the health, safety and welfare at work of the Council's employees under their control;
 - selecting the most appropriate methods of training and development to be used;
 - costing individual training requirements;

- liaising with training providers and Skills Brokers where the training is specific to their area of responsibility;
- pre-course briefing and post-course debriefing;
- encouraging and supporting employees during training;
- creating an environment and providing opportunities for the employee to gain experience and put the learning into practice, and
- reviewing the training and its application to work.

NOTES:

- (a) The Human Resources section is available to give advice and assistance in any of these responsibilities (see 7.4 below).
- (b) Where a training requirement may impact upon the central training budget, Human Resources must be consulted before any commitment is made.

7.3 Each *employee* has the responsibility for taking reasonable steps to ensure they have the ability, knowledge and experience to carry out the needs of their job. They should take an active role in identifying their own training needs and deciding how these needs are satisfied. When the manager and the employee have agreed a course of action, the employee is responsible for ensuring they make the most of the training facility provided. If an employee wishes to make a formal request for time to train, they should ensure that the request is valid (in particular, please see Section 5 of Appendix A).

7.4 *Human Resources* will assist Senior Managers, managers/supervisors and employees within the Council to identify and satisfy training needs. Human Resources will:

- advise and help all parties with training issues generally, including specific advice around the Procedure at Appendix A to this Policy;
- assist in the identification of training needs, largely through the appraisal process;
- offer advice on alternative ways of meeting needs;
- advise on and/or provide appropriate resources for common needs training, e.g. training equipment, packages etc.
- plan, co-ordinate and implement Council-wide initiatives;
- liaise with training providers and Skills Brokers;
- compile and maintain overall control of the central training budget and the Corporate Training Programme;
- undertake equalities monitoring by analysing take up of places on courses organised as part of the Corporate Training Programme.

8 Evaluation of Training

8.1 Before committing an employee to a course of training, the manager should be clear

as to the reasons why the training is needed and that the need is valid to the current or future needs of the organisation. There should also be a clear vision, common to both manager and employee, of what the training is to achieve if it is to be seen to be successful.

8.2 After the training has occurred, there should also be an evaluation of whether it has had any effects and precisely what those effects are. Evaluation of training undertaken in the previous 12 months will be built into the appraisal process². It is only by evaluating training that the Authority can be certain it is committing its resources in the right direction and receiving value for money.

8.3 It is the manager's responsibility to ensure that:
(a) the employee is briefed before the training takes place, and
(b) at a suitable point after the training, they are debriefed.
During prolonged courses of training, it may be appropriate to hold several intermediate debriefing sessions so that the manager can keep track of progress.

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² When an in-house course is held, feedback forms will also normally be issued to delegates as soon as possible after the course has finished, to gain their immediate views of the training they received. This is particularly useful when considering whether a course needs to be modified before being run again.



TIME TO TRAIN 'RIGHT TO REQUEST' PROCEDURE

Preamble

- (i) From 6 April 2010 most employees of the Council have a right to request time to train.
- (ii) Employees' requests can be to undertake accredited programmes leading to a qualification, or for unaccredited training to help them develop specific skills relevant to their job, workplace or business.
- (iii) This does not affect the practices that the Council has in place generally to identify, agree and deliver training. Not all training requests have to be made using this Procedure, but it is an additional statutory responsibility that the Council needs to meet when asked to do so.

1. Key Messages

- Most employees have a right to make a request for time to train.
- There are set time scales for the Council to respond.
- Requests and responses have to be in writing.
- There is no automatic right for the time to be paid or for the cost of the training to be met by the Council, but it can do so if it wishes.
- Requests can only be refused for certain specified reasons.
- Employees may appeal against any decision.

2. Employee Eligibility Criteria for Time to Train

- 2.1 To make a request for time to train an individual must be an employee of this Council and have worked for us continuously for at least 26 weeks on the date they make their request. Agency and casual workers do not have the right to request time to train.

3. Training Employees Can Request as Part of Time to Train

- 3.1 Employees can make requests to undertake any training which they believe will improve their effectiveness and the performance of the Council.
- 3.2 The training they undertake can include accredited programmes - leading to the award of a recognised qualification - or shorter unaccredited training to help them develop specific skills relevant to their job, workplace or business.
- 3.3 Employees can request training that is delivered in whichever way they believe is most appropriate and effective. For example, they might request training which could be:
 - undertaken at the workplace or elsewhere, including at the employee's home;
 - delivered whilst they are working or separately;

- provided or supervised by the Council, a local college or training provider;
- undertaken without supervision.

3.4 There is no limit on the amount of time - or the amount of study or training - that an employee can request. Employees can ask to undertake more than one piece of training in a single request for time to train, e.g. where they would like to improve their literacy and numeracy skills in addition to another piece of training.

4. Payment for Time Spent Training

4.1 Employees have the right to request that the Council allows them time to undertake training. They do not have the right to be paid for the time spent training, but the Council can agree to pay for the time. It may be, though, that the Council can agree to a request for time to train, and reach agreement with the employee that they will work flexibly to make up the time spent training, or that they will take unpaid time off to train.

5. Information Employees Must Include in a Time to Train Request

5.1 In order for a request for time to train to be a valid request, covered by the legislation, it must be submitted in writing and contain all the following information:

- a statement that the application is an 'application under section 63D Employment Rights Act 1996';
- the subject matter of the proposed training or study;
- where and when the proposed training or study would take place;
- who would provide or supervise it;
- what qualification it would lead to (if any);
- how the employee thinks the proposed training or study would improve their effectiveness and the Council's performance;
- the date of the application;
- the date and method - e.g. email or letter - that the employee's last application (if any) was submitted.

5.2 Employees can submit requests in any written form they choose as long as they contain all the above information. A template letter is available on the Directgov website and may be accessed [here](#). The request should be sent to their Senior Manager¹ (who will normally be their Service Manager). The Senior Manager should consider the request in consultation with Human Resources.

6. Frequency of Requests

6.1 The Council is only required to consider one request from an employee in any twelve month period unless he or she has requested that we ignore an earlier request (see Section 9 below).

6.2 If the Senior Manager intends to ignore a request because the employee has submitted more than one request in a given 12 month period, it is good practice for him/her to inform the employee within 28 days that s/he does not intend to consider it.

¹ For the purpose of this Procedure, the term 'Senior Manager' shall encompass the Managing Director, officers subject to the Conditions of Service for Chief Officers of Local Authorities, and Service Managers.

7. Invalid Time to Train Requests and Request Withdrawals

- 7.1 If the Senior Manager considers that a request is invalid because it does not include all of the necessary information, he/she must notify the employee of this within 28 days, and tell them the reason why they consider that the application is invalid. This must be in writing.
- 7.2 The employee may then revise and resubmit their request with the error corrected. This is then regarded as a new request because the initial request was not a valid one.

8. Withdrawal of a Request by an Employee

- 8.1 An employee may withdraw a request at any point before they have been given the decision. They can notify the Senior Manager orally or in writing (a template letter is available on the Directgov website and may be accessed [here](#)). If the Senior Manager does not receive written notification from the employee that their request is withdrawn, he/she must confirm the withdrawal of the application to the employee in writing.
- 8.2 If an employee withdraws a request, it will still count as a request that the Council has received for the purposes of this legislation.

9. Ignoring Earlier Requests

- 9.1 There are three circumstances in which the employee, having submitted a further request, may ask the Senior Manager to ignore an earlier request submitted within the last 12 months. These are:
- where the employee notifies the Senior Manager that they mistakenly submitted an earlier request before 12 months elapsed and they wish to withdraw the earlier application;
 - where the employee did not undertake training that was agreed following a request because the training was cancelled - unless this was due to their own conduct in relation to the study or training;
 - where the employee failed to start training that was agreed as part of a request because of some unforeseen circumstance beyond their control.
- 9.2 In these circumstances, the Senior Manager must ignore the fact that the employee submitted an earlier application, and consider their present request.

10. Timescales for Considering Time to Train Requests

- 10.1 Within 28 days of receiving a valid request the Senior Manager must either:
- accept the request on the basis of the information set out in the individual's written request and inform the employee of their decision in writing;
 - meet with the employee to discuss their request – then, within 14 days of that meeting, inform the employee of the decision in writing.
- 10.2 Normally, the 28 day period begins on the day the request is received. But the timescales for holding meetings and issuing notices of decisions on applications and appeals can be extended by agreement with the employee who has made the request. Such an agreement must be recorded in writing and a copy given to the employee.

- 10.3 The record of agreement to extend these timescales must:
- specify what period the extension relates to;
 - specify the date on which the extension is to end;
 - be dated.
- 10.4 There is no requirement that the Council must reduce these timescales in order to meet an urgent need e.g. the course of training starts within the 28 period. But it is good practice for the Senior Manager to make reasonable efforts to meet any time constraints that the employee has.

11. Requesting Additional Information to Help Consider a Request

- 11.1 If the Senior Manager receives a valid request but feels that additional information is needed before he/she can give the request proper consideration, he/she can ask the employee to provide additional information.
- 11.2 If the employee refuses to provide the additional information needed to consider the request, the Senior Manager can treat their request as withdrawn. To do this, the Senior Manager must inform the individual in writing that s/he considers their request to be withdrawn.

12. Considering Whether to Accept or Reject a Time to Train Request

- 12.1 The Senior Manager may be willing to accept in full the employee's proposals for training as set out in their request.
- 12.2 There may also be cases where the Senior Manager is willing to accept the request, but think the training need can be met in a different way to the request proposal. For example, the Senior Manager may wish to deliver training in-house rather than using an external training provider, or there may be different courses or qualifications that the Senior Manager believes would better meet the training need that the employee has highlighted.
- 12.3 In such cases, the Senior Manager must discuss the employee's request with them before reaching the final decision and confirming it, in writing, to the employee.
- 12.4 As well as the training method, the Senior Manager needs to consider how the costs of the training will be met. The Council does not have to pay for the training, but may choose to do so. Human Resources must be consulted if the Senior Manager is looking for the cost of all or part of the training to be met from centrally held funds, before any decision is made.
- 12.5 Requests for time to train can only be refused for one or more of the following business reasons:
- the proposed study or training would not improve the employee's effectiveness in our business;
 - the proposed study or training would not improve the performance of our business;
 - the burden of additional costs would be too great;
 - the proposed study or training would have a detrimental effect on our ability to meet customer demand;
 - the Senior Manager would be unable to reorganise work among existing staff;
 - the Senior Manager would be unable to recruit additional staff;
 - the proposed study or training would have a detrimental impact on quality;

- the proposed study or training would have a detrimental impact on performance;
- there would be an insufficiency of work during the periods the employee proposes to work;
- there are planned structural changes during the proposed study or training period.

13. Meeting an Employee to Discuss Their Time to Train Request

- 13.1 The employee has a statutory right to be accompanied by a work colleague of their choosing e.g. a union learning representative. The employee and their companion will be paid for the time taken away from their normal working duties to attend the meeting. The companion can address the meeting and confer with the employee during it, but may not answer questions independently of the employee. The Senior Manager may also arrange for other interested parties to be at the meeting; this may include the employee's line manager and/or a representative of Human Resources.
- 13.2 If the companion is unable to attend the meeting, the employee can ask for the meeting to be rearranged. The time the employee proposes must be convenient for all attendees, and should take place within seven days of the date originally proposed for the meeting.
- 13.3 If the employee more than once fails to attend a meeting to discuss a request - or a meeting to discuss an appeal - without reasonable cause, the request will be treated as withdrawn. The Senior Manager will confirm this in writing.

14. Communicating Decisions on Time to Train Requests

- 14.1 Once the request has been considered the final decision must be confirmed in writing by the Senior Manager.
- 14.2 For decisions that agree with the request, the written confirmation must include:
- the subject of the study or training;
 - where and when it is expected that it will take place, and over what period;
 - who will provide or supervise the training;
 - what qualification (if any) the training will lead to the award of;
 - how the training time will be taken - e.g. whether it will be paid, unpaid, or whether the employee will work flexibly whilst undertaking the training;
 - how the costs of the training will be met.
- 14.3 If an employee requests more than one type of study or training at once, the Senior Manager could decide to agree to part of the application and refuse another part. The decision notice must include the information above and make clear which part of the application is agreed to and which part is refused.
- 14.4 If the Senior Manager reaches agreement to meet the training need in a different way, the written notification should confirm the details of that agreement, including written evidence of the employee's agreement to it. It can be helpful to draft such an agreement with the employee at the meeting where this is discussed.
- 14.5 If the Senior Manager agrees to an employee's request, but foresees circumstances in which s/he may need to later withdraw that agreement, then the Senior Manager must agree with the employee the circumstances in which they will withdraw their

agreement. This should be confirmed in writing as part of the written acceptance of their request. Again, it can be helpful to draft such an agreement with the employee at the meeting where this is discussed.

- 14.6 If the Senior Manager decides that s/he cannot accommodate an employee's request for time to train, they must inform them of the decision in writing, setting out:
- which of the business reasons they are turning down their request for;
 - why the business reason, or reasons, apply in their circumstances;
 - the appeal procedure;
 - the date of the notice.

15. Internal Appeals Process for Time to Train Requests

- 15.1 An employee can appeal against the decision. They must make their appeal in writing within 14 days of receiving the written notice refusing their request or part of their request.
- 15.2 The appeal notice must be dated and must set out the employee's grounds for making the appeal.
- 15.3 Whilst the employee may, for example, appeal because they wish to challenge the business reason(s) given, there are no restrictions on the grounds for this appeal.
- 15.4 The appeal should be sent to the Senior Manager who communicated the decision. A template letter is available on the Directgov website and may be accessed [here](#).
- 15.5 Within 14 days the Senior Manager must either accept the appeal in full or arrange an appeal meeting. If the appeal is accepted the Senior Manager must write setting out the same information as is required when accepting an initial request.

16. Arranging an Appeal Meeting

- 16.1 Appeal meetings must be held within 14 days of the date the Senior Manager receives the employee's appeal notice.
- 16.2 The appeal will be heard by a different Senior Manager to the person who considered the initial request.
- 16.3 The principles on the right to be accompanied, pay for attending the meeting, what happens if the employee fails to attend and the presence of other interested parties are the same as for the initial meeting.

17. Notifying an Employee of the Decision Following the Appeal Meeting

- 17.1 The Senior Manager who hears the appeal must inform the employee of the outcome of their appeal in writing within 14 days of the date of the meeting.
- 17.2 If the request is accepted, that Senior Manager must write setting out the same information as is required when accepting an initial request.
- 17.3 If the decision is still to refuse the request, that Senior Manager must send the employee a dated, written notification including:
- the grounds for the decision
 - why the grounds apply in their circumstances
- 17.4 The time limit for arranging an appeal meeting or notifying the employee of the

decision on the appeal can be extended with the employee's consent.

18. Dealing With Unresolved Time to Train Requests

- 18.1 There may be occasions where an employee is not satisfied with the way that the Council has dealt with their application, even after an internal appeal. If that is the case we will first try to resolve any problems informally, but an employee may invoke the Local Grievance Procedure or take a case to an Employment Tribunal if they wish.