



Learning and Development Policy

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Human Resources

Learning and Development Policy

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1. INTRODUCTION

This document is designed to outline the council's approach and responsibilities for learning and development. Learning and development covers any activity designed to help individuals become more effective at their work by improving, or updating their knowledge and skills. This includes secondments, workplace shadowing, attending conferences or seminars, networking, coaching and mentoring.

2. OUR APPROACH

The council is committed to developing a highly skilled workforce as set out in its HR Strategy. This policy applies to all individuals employed by the council and does not apply to agency workers. Our approach is to ensure an equitable allocation of the council's resources with respect to investment in learning and development; an allocation that is in line with organisational priorities and will enable it to respond effectively to changing organisational context.

The council recognises the need to support employees through learning and development to enable them to effectively perform their role and to provide high quality services to Brent's residents.

We will achieve this through:

- using and adopting the principles of Investors in People;
- building performance management skills across the council to ensure consistent practices;
- reviewing the learning and development needs of each department annually through the Learning and Development Evaluation Framework.

3. POLICY STATEMENT

3.1 Policy summary

This policy provides employees and line managers with the principles that support the council's approach to learning and development.

1. The council's comprehensive training offer is open to all its permanent employees and includes in-house courses and externally provided training.
2. Staff are expected to keep abreast of developments within their own area through continuous professional development (CPD); using the performance management process and one-to-one meetings to identify areas of improvement.
3. The council is committed to ensuring all its employees have access to learning and development that supports both personal and professional development and improvements in service provision.
4. Employees are expected to read, understand and comply with the Time Off Policy in relation to taking employment related educational leave.
5. All employees have equal opportunity to develop their career within the council.

4. LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT POLICY AND PROCEDURE

The policy operates in conjunction with the Time Off Policy. The council will ensure that the policy is applied fairly to all employees and does not have a negative impact in relation to the council's equality standards.

4.1 Corporate Learning and Development offer

Brent Council recognises the importance of providing its employees with opportunities to develop and learn new skills that help them do their job well and provide high quality services to the community.

The council delivers these opportunities through a mix of different methods including courses and workshops, e-learning, access to online resources and training within the role.

The council's corporate e-learning offering is available via [The Learning Hub](#) while all in-class training is available to book via One Oracle self-service.

The council has developed a framework to provide a more structured and systematic approach to the planning and evaluating of learning and development at a corporate and departmental level.

This is completed through its Learning and Development Evaluation Framework that is used at team, departmental and corporate level.

Each department is expected to produce an annual learning and development plan to address the specialist skills and knowledge specifically needed by the department in order to achieve departmental and team objectives. The Learning and Development Evaluation Framework sets out the key steps that managers should take in planning and evaluating the effectiveness of learning and development activities.

4.2 Financial support

The council is committed to supporting the learning and development needs of its employees at all levels, which includes providing financial support to cover short courses and seminars that are not part of the corporate offer. The council is, however, no longer able to support funding qualifications training although paid time off may be available in accordance with the council's Time Off Policy. The council will continue to fund qualification training associated with specific initiatives e.g. BAME senior management development programme, and for trainee-type positions e.g. National Graduate Development Programme and apprenticeship programmes etc.

The council does not fund the cost of books, residential weekends, travel expenses or other costs associated with qualification training. These must be paid for by the staff member and are not reimbursable as expenses.

Non qualification training relevant to a specific service should be funded at a local level.

4.3 Apprentices and Graduate recruitment

Apprentices

Brent Council is committed to supporting the recruitment of apprentices as part of its commitment to influencing the quality of future employees by growing talent from within the council and creating opportunities and improving the lives of its residents.

As part of this the council is committed to creating 100 apprenticeship roles by 2017.

Graduates

The council is committed to identifying graduates who have the potential to become senior managers and leaders within local government over a 10-year period. As part of this commitment the council has joined the National Graduate Development Programme run by the LGA.

The graduates are recruited to the council on a two-year, fixed-term contract and are required to complete placements in key areas such as policy, strategy, and front-line service. Graduates are assigned to requesting services on a six-month rotation.

4.4 Internships and short term work experience opportunities

The council is committed to providing a variety of paid and unpaid opportunities that help to raise the council's profile within the community and provide individuals with an insight into the skills and attitudes required to work within local government.

4.4.1 Internships

Internships are paid opportunities where the individual is expected to carry out specific work-related tasks over a set period of time with the aim of providing the individual with professional experience and the opportunity to develop skills. It is recognised that internships will normally be for a minimum of six months to a maximum 12 months. Intern arrangements must be funded from existing budgets and the council's recruitment and selection policy and procedure will apply in the usual way. A job description and person specification would be drafted and job evaluation would be undertaken. Advice should be sought from Human Resources.

4.4.2 Work experience opportunities

The council's work experience opportunities are unpaid opportunities available to all students who live in the borough. It is recognised that these opportunities will normally be for a maximum of two consecutive weeks.

Opportunities are available to students at Key Stage 4 (typically aged 14-16 and studying for GCSEs) and post 16 year old students. The council does not apply an upper age limit and welcomes applications from mature students.

Requests to complete work experience are made by submitting a complete work experience application form. If an individual is under 18 years of age their parent(s) or guardian(s) need to provide consent for the student to undertake the work experience placement. The completed application form is returned to the relevant department or Human Resources for assessment of the suitability of the individual and the placement request.

4.5 Secondments

The council uses secondments to enhance service delivery, motivate and develop employees, and as a form of personal development that can support career progression. The council recognises three types of secondment:

- **Internal secondments:** a council employee works in a different area of the council whilst still retaining their substantive post;
- **Outgoing secondments:** a council employee works in a different organisation whilst retaining their substantive post with the council;

- **Incoming secondments:** a role at the council is filled by an employee of another organisation who remains employed by, and retains their substantive post with, that organisation.

Secondments must be in line with the council's Pay Policy and Procedure.

4.6 Acting up opportunities

On occasions staff may complete additional activities that are carried out over and above their normal duties and responsibilities.

These opportunities must comply line with the council's Pay Policy and Procedure.

4.7 Work shadowing

The council recognises that work shadowing can provide an opportunity for employees to gain an understanding of a particular role, service area or profession by shadowing staff. The duration of the opportunity will depend on what is agreed with the line manager of the employee who is requesting the shadowing opportunity and the relevant service. However, it is recognised that the placement should not normally exceed two weeks.

Employees who are shadowing do not receive additional remuneration for the activities they may perform as part of the opportunity.

4.8 Coaching

Coaching is the term used to describe the learning and development process that is used to increase an individual's performance through support of an coach. The process can be informal or formal and differs from mentoring as it focus on a specific personal or professional competence as opposed to general overall development of the individual as occurs in mentoring.

4.9 Mentoring

Mentoring is a development process where an experienced individual shares their knowledge with someone who is less experienced in a relationship of mutual trust.

A key component of mentoring is for the individual to take primary responsibility for managing his or her learning with the help of the mentor.

Brent Council participates in a pan London borough mentoring scheme called MyMentor that is accessed via <http://www.mymmentor.me.uk/>.

4.10 Attending conferences and seminars

Employees must request approval in advance from their line manager to attend all conferences and seminars.

Costs for attending conferences/seminars are funded from service budgets.

5. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

5.1 Employees

Employees have a responsibility to:

- participate in learning and development activities that have been identified in conjunction with their line manager;
- keep a record of training undertaken;
- discuss learning and development needs with their manager;
- assess the impact of learning and development on their performance; and
- complete all essential training within the timeframes specified.

5.2 Line managers

Line managers are required to:

- induct new employees/employees new to a post;
- discuss learning and development needs with individual employees as part of the annual performance management process and 1-2-1/Supervision meetings;
- evaluate the effectiveness of learning and development in their area to demonstrate a clear benefit and return on investment through an improvement in services to Brent residents;
- be aware of equality and diversity issues and how they impact on employee development opportunities including consulting with disabled staff about their training needs and making any reasonable adjustments needed to enable them to be trained; and
- monitor the performance of each employee to identify whether they reach the required level of performance.

5.3 Directors, Operational Directors and Heads of Service

Senior Managers are responsible for:

- ensuring this policy is implemented across the council and supports the principles of the Investors in People standard.
- evaluating the return on investment on training conducted in their area through the council's Learning and Development Evaluation Framework.

5.4 Human Resources

Human Resources will be responsible for determining and advising on this procedure.

6. FURTHER ADVICE

Further advice is available from Human Resources.