



LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT POLICY AND PROCEDURE

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Owner - role	Corporate Services Manager

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Current Version	Date Approved	Approved By	Changes
V1	14 th January 2019	Corporate Services Sub-Committee	Reviewed, reformatted and name changed to Learning and Development Policy.

1. POLICY STATEMENT

Castlehill Housing Association (CHA) recognises the contribution of our workforce in the achievement of our aims and objectives and is committed to supporting the development of all our staff. This policy sets out our approach to prioritising and planning staff development, in order to improve our performance as a provider of a range of housing-related services. These include specific measures which promote equality of opportunity in our Learning and Development activities and in accessing Learning and Development opportunities.

1.1 PRINCIPALS

The Learning and Development Policy is a statement of intent, and our overall approach to Learning and Development seeks to:

- Offer staff a relevant, rewarding induction appropriate to their job role.
- Provide staff with regular continuing development which maintains skills in key competence areas, and helps prepare for new roles and changing responsibilities.
- Encourage staff to reflect on their performance and identify their own development needs through processes such as support and supervision and annual review.
- Establish individual development plans for each staff member which reflect CHA's needs and their own aspirations.
- Support staff to gain professional, academic or vocational qualifications which are required or desirable for the role they perform.

1.2 SCOPE

This policy applies to all staff who work for the CHA and our Learning and Development opportunities will be planned with diversity in mind, aiming to minimise barriers to participation and to ensure that all staff have equal access to opportunities which are relevant to their role and development needs.

CHA recognises that barriers may include travelling distance, scheduling of events, the level of personal commitment and time required to complete training, and the training methods used. We will endeavour to take these into account when planning or delivering development activities.

1.3 RESPONSIBILITIES

Senior Management Team / Corporate Services Sub-Committee will:

- Determine strategic priorities relating to Learning and Development
- Approve an annual Learning and Development Plan
- Commit and deploy appropriate resources to ensure delivery of agreed plans
- Participate in appropriate Learning and Development activities
- Oversee managers' performance of their roles and responsibilities in respect of Learning and Development

Managers must:

- Apply Learning and Development policies fairly and consistently within their teams
- Assist staff to identify their development needs and review their progress, promoting a variety of methods to acquire relevant skills, knowledge and experience
- Ensure that staff have knowledge and skills to perform their roles effectively
- Conduct appropriate support and supervision, and an effective Annual Review, with each staff member
- Ensure that staff attending Learning and Development activities have opportunities to apply the learning in practice

Employees must:

- Acknowledge their responsibility for their own personal and career development, and for their own contributions towards this
- Support the Learning and Development process in identifying their own development needs and aspirations
- Participate actively in support and supervision, and their Annual Review
- Make the commitment to attend relevant Learning and Development activities, informing their line manager or HR well in advance if changes need to be made
- Provide feedback about the activities undertaken as part of Castlehill's evaluation process

HR / Corporate Services will:

- Provide guidance on the strategic direction of Learning and Development and research and develop policies and procedures relating to Learning and Development,
- Assist in developing provision of learning and development activities in conjunction with Senior Management Team and line managers. Analyse development objectives and needs from the Annual Review process to develop an annual Learning and Development plan
- Develop and maintain Learning Management systems
- Design and manage systems of evaluation, making recommendations and taking action where appropriate
- Provide an effective administration service which maintains records in accordance with the law and good practice

2. PROCEDURE

2.1 DEFINING REQUIREMENTS

CHA identifies Learning and Development needs and priorities using information from various sources, including:

- Strategic aims and objectives and annual departmental work plans
- Changes in the external operating environment that affect us
- Engagement with managers and staff
- Data on quality and performance which point to training needs
- Discussions with employees through induction, supervision and personal development plans agreed through the annual review process

This activity informs Learning and Development planning and identifies ongoing learning needs that arise throughout the year.

2.2 DETERMINING HOW TO MEET THESE REQUIREMENTS

CHA recognises that needs can be best satisfied using a range of Learning and Development methods that include both formal and informal approaches to learning. This could include, but is not limited to: on the job training, conferences, role shadowing, workshops and briefing sessions, online and distance learning, training courses and professional, academic or vocational qualifications.

Activities are set within a framework which aims to provide a variety of learning methods, and our Learning and Development plans take account of this. However, all development should lead to a recognised qualification or a measurable improvement in skills, knowledge and expertise of staff. Line managers should encourage staff to reflect on their aims prior to learning, and on outcomes after learning, and to share key points with colleagues where relevant.

Due consideration should be given to the cost of any learning methods, be that time spent by individuals and line managers, or the cost of courses and qualifications.

2.3 PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTING

CHA's Corporate Learning and Development Plan will aim to provide a framework of activity to be undertaken and seek to prioritise key learning requirements. This document will be reviewed regularly throughout the year to assess progress. The plan will:

- Set out what is to be achieved and methods of delivery
- Seek to establish the overall objective of any development interventions and outcomes expected,
- Indicate timescales for achievements and tie into budget setting activity to ensure adequate financial resource is available

2.4 SUPPORTING EMPLOYEES

CHA is committed to providing funding and support for training that is needed to achieve and maintain individual, team and organisational priorities and objectives.

Mandatory training will be fully funded by CHA. Mandatory training needs will be identified by job role and discussed during the staff induction period. Most of this training is delivered via our online training portal and staff are expected to undertake this promptly as and when required.

Work-related training may be partially or fully funded and supported; where training is not associated with the work of the Association, it will not be funded but we aim to be flexible where possible as to working arrangements.

Where a specific qualification or development programme is supported, the principle will be that the course costs only are funded. Additional costs for books, subscriptions, travel, exams and registration will be reviewed on an individual basis, dependent on the requirements of the course and should be agreed in advance, before commencing the course. Staff will be asked to sign a training contract on undertaking a funded work-related course of study to outline the conditions on which the funding has been given.

The employee must inform their manager of the following in writing as soon as possible of the following:

- The employee withdraws from the course, fails to sit an examination or complete other requirements of the training within the timescales specified by the provider
- Any extenuating circumstances that impact on the employee's ability to meet the requirements of the course.
- The employee fails to submit or participate in the required academic or practical assignments and therefore fails the module/course as a result.

When study leave is required, this need to be discussed by individuals with their line manager and Director and will be dependent on other commitments of the team, the individual and the organisation. Study leave should be granted when there is a specific time commitment required by an individual to assist them, for example in preparation for an examination. In any case, no more than 5 days leave will be granted in any one academic year. Due to the nature of some vocational qualifications time is required at work to enable assessments by external assessors to take place. In this case reasonable time will be given during working hours to allow this to take place. Expectations should be made clear before commencement of a course of study as to what is reasonable.

2.5 EVALUATION

CHA believes that it is critical to compare Learning and Development objectives with outcomes to assess how far the development activity has achieved its purpose.

All learning and development activity will be evaluated to ensure that appropriate development activity has been undertaken. Evaluation information will be used to review and improve the quality of the development provision. Evaluation will also be used to ensure staff are benefiting from these activities to improve their overall effectiveness at work, and to ensure that the financial commitment made by the organisation to develop its staff is well invested.

3. LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

Timescales	Component	Essential Elements
First six months	Induction	Completing Induction Checklist Mandatory online and job specific training Induction Review Meetings
Ongoing	Ongoing Supervision and Support	Individual 1-2-1 meetings with managers Team Meetings Staff Meeting and Briefings Formal Supervision – job specific
Annual	Appraisal Process	Reviewing previous performance against objectives and Castlehill Values Setting task and value based objectives Completing personal development plan
Ongoing	Continuing Professional Development	Completing and recording actions in personal development plan Undertaking relevant CPD to maintain professional qualifications