

# LNCT 11/08

## Partnership Learning Agreement

### 1. Background and Introduction

The Scottish Executive's "Learning Policy for Scotland" is based on the principles of *"personal fulfillment and enterprise, employability and adaptability, active citizenship and social inclusion"*. This means a change of culture in which education and training is available and accessible for everyone and "learning" takes on the broader sense of *"gaining skills to develop the confidence to progress and participate in work and the wider community."*

This initiative aims to encourage demand for learning from within the workplace itself and particularly aims to reach and engage with non traditional learners who may have been away from education for a long time or who have had had learning experiences or who lack the confidence to take up learning opportunities.

Aberdeenshire Council supports these principles and is committed to supporting them, and the aims of the Council, through the development of the skills and knowledge of its employees to ensure the continued delivery of high quality services to the people of Aberdeenshire. This is in line with Aberdeenshire's policy which sets out their aims, strategy and procedures for employee development and training.

The Employment Act 2002 extends the rights and recognition of Trade Union Representatives and Stewards to include Union appointed Learning Representatives and Learning Advisers. These rights include:

- Reasonable time off with pay to train for the role.
- Reasonable time off with pay to perform their functions.

The "ACAS" Code of practice on time off for Trade Union Duties and Activities recognises the following activities as qualifying functions:

- Analysing learning or training needs.
- Providing information and advice about learning or training matters.
- Arranging learning or training.
- Promoting the value of learning or training.

- Consulting the employer about carrying on such activities.
- Preparation to carry out any of the above activities.
- Undergoing relevant training.

The aims of both Aberdeenshire Council and Trade Union Learning Representatives and Advisers are therefore compatible and will be realised when all parties communicate, cooperate and share ideas, information and resources. Both parties are committed to the implementation of this agreement, and will work together to ensure its success.

## **2. Purpose**

2.1 This agreement sets out to:

- Identify the roles of Learning Advisers and Representatives and of CPD Co-ordinators within Education and Recreation.
- Reiterate the roles of line managers and outline the linkages to existing processes and schemes for example the Professional Development and Review Scheme/Employee Development and Review Scheme.
- Clarify the relationship between the Corporate Development and Training Unit and Trade Union Learning Representatives and Advisers.
- Set out arrangements for managing and maintaining relationships.
- Prevent duplication of effort, confusion or conflict.

2.2 Aberdeenshire Council believes that having a clear workplace agreement will encourage:

- Dialogue between union and employer over learning matters.
- A sharing of resources and expertise in the arena of learning.
- Employees to feel confident in the learning opportunities they can access.
- Line managers to be clear about their roles.
- Advisers to work in partnership with the employer.

## **3. Principles**

3.1 In participating in this agreement, we commit to the following principles:

- Learning throughout life benefits our employees by providing the skills and confidence to progress and participate at the workplace and in the wider society.

- We as an employer will encourage and enable our employees to learn and develop.
- Line managers and Trade unions colleagues will assist us in this.
- Access to learning opportunities will be available on an equal basis to all our employees.
- Equality of access to and support for learning opportunities will be subject to the conditions and guidelines as laid out in the Aberdeenshire Council Employee Development and Training Policy.
- All our employees will be encouraged to have ownership of their own learning and development.
- Participation by employees in any learning or educational initiative will be encouraged but will not normally be mandatory.
- The partners agree that all individual disputes or grievances arising from any learning or educational initiative shall be pursued through the existing grievance procedures.
- The employer undertakes that this agreement will not be used as an alternative to collective bargaining with the Unions and agrees to maintain and use existing negotiating procedures and arrangements.

3.2 It is recognised that Trade Unions Learning Representatives will work both within this agreement and within their Trade Union's protocol or standard.

#### **4. The Role of Learning Representatives and Advisers**

4.1 The role of the Lifelong Learning Representative/Adviser will be flexible according to the needs of the workforce. Nevertheless, the main components of the role will be to work with line managers and, where appropriate, complement CPD Co-ordinators to:

- a) Raise awareness of, and provide information on, learning opportunities to members of the workforce.
- b) Provide advice, support and encouragement to learners within the workforce.
- c) Raise awareness of education issues within the Union in line with member's interests.
- d) Share in discussions between Union and the Employer on workplace learning issues.
- e) Liaise with learning providers where appropriate.

#### **5. The Rights of Learning Representatives**

5.1 Aberdeenshire Council agrees to support the recruitment and training of Learning Representatives and Advisers, through allowing agreed time off to attend training under the time off for Trade Union

Business policy.

5.2 Aberdeenshire Council will, in partnership with Union Officers, promote the role of the Lifelong Learning Representative and Advisers through a variety of means including workplace newsletters, a Personnel Services Briefing and email.

5.3 Aberdeenshire Council will, through line management, authorise reasonable time off for Learning Representatives to fulfill their duties including time off for meetings between Learning Representatives and employees.

## **6. The Responsibilities of the Trades Unions**

6.1 Trade Unions will give the Council, via the Learning and Development Manager, notice in writing of the names of appointed Learning Representatives and Advisers.

6.2 Trade Unions will promote awareness of the role of the Lifelong Learning Representatives and Advisers within the Union, and commit to a Union development plan. This will facilitate the recruitment and subsequent training of Representatives and Advisers within the Union.

6.3 Aberdeenshire Council recognises the need for, and benefits of, dialogue and co-operation with Learning reps and advisers. To facilitate this, the Union will be asked to provide Representatives/Advisers to meet with Managers from the corporate development and training unit on a regular basis

6.4 Trade Unions will allow Learning Representatives/Advisers full use of their Union facilities, by local agreement with officers. Stationery, telephones and IT access will be made available in the same way as for elected workplace representatives or Health and Safety representatives.

6.5 The Union will facilitate subsequent training, requiring reasonable time off, with pay, in agreement with the employer.

6.6 Once appointed and established, advisers will meet on a regular basis for support and updating on information, policy developments, etc. The Union will facilitate these meetings.

## **7. The Responsibilities of the Employer**

7.1 Aberdeenshire Council will ensure that Line Managers are aware

of the learning agreement and will support those managers in facilitating reasonable time off to enable the Learning Representatives to fulfill their duties including attendance at training opportunities to support this work.

7.2 Aberdeenshire Council will allow Learning Representatives/Advisers to use workplace facilities to support their role where possible. Access will be facilitated to use a PC including access to Lotus Notes and other facilities at the workplace in line with other elected Union Representatives.

7.3 Aberdeenshire Council will provide supplementary training for recognised Learning Representatives/Advisers to ensure familiarity with existing Council policies and procedures in relation to development and learning as well as to establish close and effective working relationships.

## **8. The Roles of Line Managers and Linkages to Existing Processes and Schemes**

8.1 The role of Learning Representatives and Advisers supplements and complements the normal line management responsibility in relation to developing employees. The first port of call for most employees in relation to their development and training will remain their line manager. This is in line with the Council's Employee Development Policy.

8.2 Aberdeenshire Council has a number of existing processes and mechanisms in place related to employee development. These include the Professional Development and Review/Employee Annual Review Schemes as well as CPD Co-ordinators in schools. It is recognised that the work of the Learning Representatives and Advisers will work within these to support the promotion of learning.

8.3 Also in line with the Council's Employee Development Policy, it will be the role of line managers to authorise time off for Learning Representatives to fulfill their duties.

## **9. The Role of CPD Co-ordinators in Schools**

9.1 "A Teaching Profession for the 21st Century" identified continuing professional development (CPD) as a requirement and entitlement for all teachers.

9.2 Aberdeenshire Education and Recreation has responded by

establishing a network of CPD Co-ordinators who co-ordinate all aspects of CPD provision at school level. Their work is in turn co-ordinated by Education and recreation's CPD Support Officer.

9.3 The Support Officer will bring CPD Co-ordinators and Learning Representatives together to be trained, to share good practice and to help shape the future direction of CPD with the Education and Recreation Service.

9.4 The roles of CPD Co-ordinators and Learning Representatives should be complementary and supplementary and aim to further improve the quality of CPD for Aberdeenshire's teachers.

9.5 The Learning Representatives will work in conjunction with Education and Recreation's CPD Support Officer and the Learning and Development Manager to fulfill the role set out in 4.1 of this paper. In this way the roles will be complementary and supplementary.

9.6 Should the number of Learning Representatives increase within teaching unions, the model may be amended with the agreement of the teaching Unions and management via the Learning and Development Manager. The revised model would allow for Learning Representatives at school level and/or Community Schools Network role offering a complementary role with Community Schools Network CPD Co-ordinators.

## **10. Relationship Between the Corporate Development and Training Unit and Trade Union Learning Representatives and Advisers**

10.1 Responsibility for a corporate and consistent approach to the provision of effective development and training across the Council in line with corporate Aims and Objectives rests with the Learning and Development Manager. The work of Learning Representatives/Advisers will, along with that of others, make an important and helpful contribution.

10.2 The Learning and Development Manager and other managers from the corporate development and training unit will meet with nominated representatives from the recognised Trades Unions on a regular basis not less than once each year. This meeting will review progress, identify successes and concerns with a view to continued development.

10.3 Any concerns about the implementation of this agreement are to be raised with the Learning and Development Manager in the first instance.

### **Review**

This agreement will be reviewed after five years from the date of signing.

### **A Partnership Agreement between:**

Aberdeenshire Council (Employer) and (Union) Branch  
Employer Signatory Union Signatory

Also on ARCADIA

<http://arcadia.ad.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/Intranet/itradpub.nsf/0/13FA6CB9C95229498025705100431334?OpenDocument>