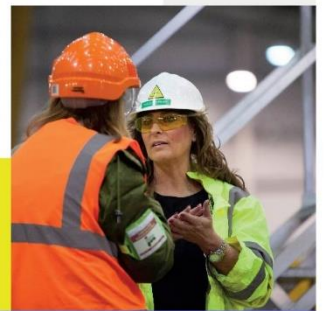


# SKILLS AND DEVELOPMENT POLICY



*In line with our Vision and Values Transport for the North (TfN) wants to ensure that the appropriate support and investment in learning and development is available for employees to be the best that they can be. 'Making a difference' and being 'driven to succeed' are key values and behaviours that require energy, drive and passion to innovate and continuously improve. TfN values the contribution all employees make to achieving our vision and will provide appropriate learning interventions as an enabler to personal and organisational success.*

## **1. Introduction**

The development of all our employees is central to the success and achievement of Transport for the North's (TfN)'s Vision and strategies. We recognise that success will only be achieved by releasing and realising employees' potential.

TfN's learning processes aim to ensure that those who have identified gaps in knowledge, skills or behavioural application receive the right experiences and development required to perform and progress.

TfN will define learning and development requirements and provide necessary interventions to build competence and capability to ensure employees become responsible for their own development.

TfN is committed to ensuring equality of opportunity. No employee will be excluded from learning and development on the grounds of gender, age, marital status, disability, racial grounds, sexual orientation, religion, belief or any other protected characteristic, responsibility for dependants, trade union membership or employment status.

Learning and development is a self-directed, employee-led, work-based process leading to increased competence and flexibility.

## **2. Aims**

The main aims of this policy are to:

- support and aid the delivery of strategic objectives through the development of employees;
- provide and demonstrate a fair, equitable and consistent framework and commitment to continued professional development;
- ensure employees take responsibility for their own learning and development by providing the necessary resources and tools;
- enable employees to broaden, deepen, further enhance and utilise behaviours, knowledge and skills.

## **3. Methods of learning**

A learning 'intervention' can be defined as any event that is undertaken to initiate learning to take place such as courses, coaching, reading etc. Employees, with their Line Manager, should include all methods such as

this in their Personal Development Plan/review as part of the Annual Appraisal Process.

#### 4. **Systems and tools**

To focus learning and development on the achievement of objectives and to meet personal development needs systems and tools have been introduced to ensure efficient and cost-effective delivery.

Employees are required to take part in the Annual Appraisal Process that:

- Provide an opportunity for two-way discussion around previous performance and development against objectives and targets;
- Link TfN's strategic aims through an Integrated Planning Process to individual objectives, targets and development;
- Assesses employee competence, using role profiles set against best practice behaviours and skills, these link to our organisational values that aid in the identification of development to support performance;
- Develops a Personal Development Plan to support employees in meeting the required level of competence and support their talent for future career opportunities.

Line Managers in dialogue with employees are primarily responsible for defining, sourcing and ensuring fit for purpose learning interventions are identified for their employees. TfN's Skills & Development Manager or Skills Officer will aid Line Managers in the identification of suitable learning and development interventions and offer professional guidance on how to ensure all such interventions meet individual, team and organisational needs.

TfN's Online LEARN system containing bespoke and off the shelf material in the Learning Management System and e-learning platform (Lynda.com) offer an alternative and complementary option for employees to obtain the skills and knowledge they require to perform effectively. These tools offer a personalised e-learning dashboard and library with unlimited access 24 hours a day with the ability to monitor your progress therefore allowing employees to take control of their own learning and development. Any additional training, e.g. 'on the job' with buddies, mentors or coaches can also be captured through the dashboard and added to the learner's profile.

As a further complementary learning tool TfN also has a number of 'kindle' devices pre-loaded with an extensive range of business related resources which are available for loan from the HR & Skills Team.

#### 5. **Application process**

All learning and development undertaken must be linked to the employees Personal Development Plan.

The process for applying for learning and development interventions is contained within **Appendix A**.

## 6. Financial considerations

The Head of HR will allocate, through the annual integrated planning process, a central learning and development budget based on strategic priorities. Funding and study leave guidance is contained at **Appendix B**.

## 7. Responsibility and authority

Employees are required to drive their Personal Development Plan through participating positively in performance reviews; identify opportunities for self-development; attend booked interventions; record their development; evaluate their development; participate in lifelong learning and share their learning back into the organisation. In departments where Apprentices are employed it is particularly important that knowledge sharing takes place to support their ongoing development journey through knowledge acquisition.

Line Managers are responsible for reviewing employees at regular intervals through the Annual Appraisal Process; support the development of Personal Development Plans; provide equality of access to development; evaluate learning and development; monitor the increase in skills and the effectiveness of their application. Appraisal Reviews and PDPs should be recorded appropriately in TfN's on-line PERFORM system.

Departmental managers are responsible for collating their departments plans; monitoring progress on delivery; ensuring there is a robust process in place for authorising applications for learning and development.

Operating Board Members are responsible for signing off their section plans; monitoring progress on delivery; informing the Head of HR of corporate or departmental generic development requirements prior to the commencement of the annual integrated planning process.

The Head of HR is responsible for liaising with Operating Board Members to meet section learning and development needs; developing learning and development strategies, processes and interventions that meet the strategic aims of the TfN; providing support to Line Managers through the Skills & Development Manager; supporting the delivery of the Performance Management process; delivering, monitoring and reporting back performance against the Corporate Training Plan.

## 8. Conclusion

The Skills and Development Policy provides guidance, advice and procedure to ensure employees' and Line Managers' work together collectively to facilitate learning and development that will meet the aims and objectives of the organisation whilst balancing this with the individual need of self-fulfilment and advancement.

This policy will be reviewed on a regular basis to respond to organisational change.

## **TfN – STUDY SUPPORT APPLICATION PROCESS**

Definition: Study support represents an opportunity for additional learning and development, beyond job related training, e.g. supporting the aspirations of high performance within the current job role and potential career progression. Interventions are sourced by the employee externally through the Higher Education Route or aligned to Professional Institutions or bodies relating to the core skills set for the role. A clear business case and return on investment must be evidenced. Learnings must be transferable in to business following the investment from the Training Budget. The following process outlines conditions for supporting applications.

### **1. All employees to:**

- Make themselves aware of and adhere to the Skills and Development Policy and positively participate in the Appraisal/Performance Review Process.
- Identify the cost of training and any additional fees and expenses. This should be identified at the time of request through the completion of a Personal Development Plan (PDP) (only costs indicated on the PDP can be claimed unless prior written authorisation is obtained from the HR Manager).
- Ensure the development intervention has been approved by their Line Manager and HR & Skills Team prior to attending.
- Complete an evaluation form after any period of development and return to the HR & Skills Team.
- Claim authorised expenses related to the development within one month of each singular event taking place.
- Inform their Line Manager and the Skills & Development Manager of the intention to withdraw from development – note fees may be recharged to the department or employee.
- Employees undertaking a professional qualification (other than to support organisational statutory compliance) will be required to repay course fees if they:
  - leave TfN during a course of development;
  - leave a course without good reason or failure to submit course work;
  - leave TfN within two years of completing a course of development.

Percentage to be paid	Employee Leaves
75%	Up to 6 months of completion
50%	Between 6 months and up to 1 year if completion
25%	Between 1 and up to 2 years

This does not apply to development that does not carry a recognised qualification or where leave was approved to support organisational compliance.

The candidate must inform the Skills & Development Manager if there are extenuating circumstances for a withdrawal from the course of study. Any monies that are owed will be deducted from the employee's salary.

## 2. Line Managers to:

- Define and source all learning and development interventions identified for each of their employees and ensure the required Personal Development Plan (PDP) is submitted to the Skills & Development Manager. Reasons for non-approval to be put in writing and returned to the applicant and a copy sent to the HR & Skills Team.
- Ensure departmental/team needs are met whilst employees are away from their duties on development.
- Ensure employees are aware of all elements of the Skills and Development Policy particular attention should be brought to the clause relating to repayment of fees if the development carries a recognised qualification.
- Carry out an evaluation following an intervention linking it with the employee's Performance review and PDP.
- Monitor development requests and ensure records are kept of all development undertaken.

## 3. Skills and Development Manager/Skills Officer to

- Administer the booking of Learning and Development interventions based on the information submitted via the Personal Development Plan (PDP).
- Obtain final authorisation from the Head of HR to applications submitted.
- Ensure procurement processes are adhered to with appropriate documentation raised and approvals obtained.

- Provide confirmation to the employee and Line Manager that the intervention is booked.
- Provide monitoring information to HR & Skills Team and HR & Mobilisation Director on learning and development interventions and evaluations carried out.



## TfN - FUNDING AND LEAVE GUIDANCE

TfN's Investment in Skills and Development must provide a return on investment through the increased performance and movement towards its strategic objectives.

### 1. Funding principles:

- All development applied for must be identified and approved in the Personal Development Plan.
- All costs (fees, expenses and subsistence) **MUST** be agreed and signed off before the commencement of development using the current Training Request Form obtained from the intranet.
- Any Textbooks recommended for development must be procured through the Skills and Development Team.
- Expenses will be reimbursed in line with TfN's standard conditions relating to travel and subsistence.

### 2. Fees Entitlement:

- The majority of budget allocated to learning and development will be allocated to those interventions that progress TfN towards reaching its strategic objectives. In these instances, the organisation will cover development fees.
- The organisation does recognise the importance of personal career development but believes this should be a partnership arrangement between TfN and the employee.
- Professional qualifications will be subject to an individual learner agreement and will require the employee to invest towards their own fees unless they have been assessed for and are studying as part of an agreed structured organisational development programme such as leadership, high potential, succession etc. Contact the HR & Skills Team for more details.

### 3. Development Leave:

National guidance for study leave is applicable to all development approvals, this list is a guide and not exhaustive contact the Learning and Development Team for further clarification.

Course	Study Leave Quota per annum unless specified differently
40 credit course	Up to 20 taught study days or equivalent for distance learning



30 credit course	Up to 15 taught study days or equivalent for distance learning
20 credit course	Up to 10 taught study days or equivalent for distance learning
10 credit course	Up to 5 taught study days or equivalent for distance learning
Programmes of study requiring minimal attendance (including masters, Degrees, Diplomas, top up or open learning courses)	Taught study days plus up to 6 hours per month (pro – rata for part time)
Masters Level	Flexible learning where possible to be agreed by line manager to a maximum of 50%
Doctorate	Flexible learning where possible to be agreed by line manager to a maximum of 50%
Examinations – if an employee fails and exam they can repeat this allowance once. Following this further resits must be undertaken in their own time.	½ day revision per exam ½ day to carryout examination
Conference (delegate)	Leave allowed
Conference (presentation)	Leave allowed
Short courses (up to 5 days attendance)	Taught study day(s)/session(s)
E - learning	Number of protected hours as per course guidance
NVQ's (external)	Off the job training days to secure underpinning knowledge- a maximum of up to 20 days or flexible working where possible



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