

Polisi Dysgu a Datblygu Learning & Development Policy

(Sept 2023)



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1. Introduction

This policy supports the organisation to achieve its stated aim in the Transformation Strategy (December 2022) of *'Further development of a learning and 'can do' culture'*.

The aim of the policy is to ensure fair and effective use of resources to maximise the learning of individuals, services and the organisation.

2. Policy Statement

In order to develop a learning organisation, we will make the following commitments:

- To ensure that the priority areas for learning reflect the organisation's aims, objectives and performance as well as our core values.
- To manage resources available to maximise learning.
- To be fair in the identification, planning and delivery of learning so that it reflects the needs of learners.
- To evaluate the impact of learning on organisational priorities, identifying potential improvements
- To provide professional advice and support to leaders and managers in order to support them to support learning.
- To offer a range of learning solutions, focussing on those areas that will lead to continuous improvement and provide a high quality service.
- To monitor the effectiveness and equity of the planning and delivery of learning across the Council.
- To support staff all staff to achieve Essential Skills - numeracy, literacy, digital skills and Welsh language.
- To support staff on a learning contract, e.g. Graduates, Apprentices and trainees
- To ensure that staff have equal access to support for learning (including time and resources)

3. Scope

This Policy applies equally to all employees of Carmarthenshire County Council, including agency workers, those undertaking learning under a service level agreement or as part of the social care workforce. The principles of the policy support the elected members programme.

Employees managed locally by schools are beyond the scope of this policy.

The policy will take into account legislation and partnership agreements for formal learning programmes.

4. Organisational Priorities

4.1. Essential Learning

There are a number of areas of learning that we require employees to complete in order to meet corporate objectives or legal requirements. We will support this by a variety of flexible means, recognising prior knowledge and skills.

Essential learning may be organisation wide or relate to a specific role, and may be delivered in a range of formats including e-learning or face to face. We will provide alternative formats where required for employees with specific needs.

The following are examples (though not an exhaustive list) of essential statutory learning required to be undertaken by all employees:

- Welsh Language Awareness
- Equalities & Diversity
- Data protection / GDPR
- Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV).
- Behavioural Standard in the Workplace
- Mental Health in the Workplace
- Whistleblowing
- Safeguarding
- Fraud Awareness

All essential learning will form part of an employee's learning record and will be accessible via ResourceLink self-service / LMS.

4.1.1. Welsh Language

We are committed to supporting employees to develop Welsh language skills. We will fund and support Welsh language development up to the level required for the employees role. Learning above this level is considered personal development and we will support this where possible.

The chosen method/delivery should be designed to suit the learner, manager and requirements of the role and we will work with managers to find an effective method of learning. Managers have a responsibility to monitor the progress and improvement of employees through Learning Agreements to achieve the level required for the role. Should an employee's language skills not improve over an agreed period of time it may be necessary to refer to the Capability Policy for further support.

To support the Welsh Language Standards, we will:

- Provide training in Welsh in specific occupational areas
- Provide relevant training in Welsh on using Welsh in the workplace
- Provide opportunities for staff to receive basic Welsh lessons
- Provide development opportunities for managers on using the language
- Provide opportunities for employees to follow further Welsh Language training
- Develop awareness of the language within the organisation
- Maximise opportunities to use Welsh in the workplace

4.2. Work Based Learning

Work Based Learning is the development of skill within and directly related to the workplace. We recognise the value of Work Based Learning and the opportunities that it provides. There are a number of specific programmes that enable staff and potential staff to engage in this type of learning

4.2.1. Graduate Programme

Graduates joining the organisation as part of our programme join on a specific Learning Contract which reflects the nature of the role. As part of this contract the graduates will be entitled to:

- Experience working across the organisation, for example supporting projects that are identified to deliver the Transformation Strategy
- Relevant qualification
- Access to corporate programmes - in addition to the professional qualification graduates will be offered will be opportunity for learning through and in-house programme, which includes the opportunity to undertake **mentoring** from senior managers.
- Support into employment via coaching and learning interventions such as 'get that job'
- Support to achieve a minimum of Level 3 Welsh by the end of the two year programme

4.2.2. Apprenticeships

As an organisation, we are committed to supporting the recruitment and development of apprentices. Apprenticeships can provide an opportunity for people to develop vocational skills and they will be supported throughout the programme (typically 18-24 months) to prepare for the world of work.

Apprenticeships can either be via specific Apprenticeship posts or staff undertaking Apprenticeship to further develop their skills.

In line with our aim of maximising the use of resources (and the organisation's contribution under the Apprenticeship Levy), staff are encouraged to explore the opportunity of accessing funded apprenticeship as the first option when looking for accredited qualifications.

4.2.3. Work Experience

The aim of work experience is to help people gain an insight in to the possible career opportunities within the Local Authority. Unpaid work experience participants will be able to shadow staff for up to a maximum of four weeks.

Where the work experience applicant is under 18 years of age, their parent or guardian must provide written consent for the applicant to undertake the work experience placement.

5. Service Priorities

5.1. Prioritising within Departments

Where an application for learning that incurs a financial cost is made within a department for learning, then the service should prioritise in a way that reflects its aims and objectives. The four levels of priority are identified below:

1. Learning to meet legal requirements or to reduce an identified risk (legal / risk)
2. Learning to maintain existing services (job specific development)
3. Learning to enhance services or meet future needs as identified in the Business Plan. (business / workforce planning)
4. Learning that provides individual members of staff with the opportunity for individual development (personal development)

Where an employee is required to conduct a programme of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) in order to maintain a professional or vocational status so that they can carry out their employment duties (e.g. a practicing Solicitor, Electrician or Social Worker), we will support formal development activities.

5.2. Departmental Learning Policies (including Social Work Professional Development)

Certain professions carry specific learning requirements which must be met in order to maintain professional accreditation (for example Social Workers). If this is the case a specific departmental policy will be developed.

This policy will be held by the Departmental Learning & Development Representative.

6. Individual Learning

One key feature of a learning organisation is that individuals take ownership of their own learning. It is therefore expected that all employees will:

- Assist in identifying their learning needs.
- Make best use of the learning opportunities
- Support the evaluation of learning activities
- Actively apply what they have learnt to improve their performance at work.
- In addition, any staff with particular knowledge and skills, are encouraged and will be supported to assist the learning and development of their colleagues.

It is important that the learner and their line manager agree the objectives of their learning through one-to-one discussions. These can then be recorded on a Learning Log. It is desirable for all employees to retain their own learning log to record all of their development.

7. Valuing learning

In line with our Core Values, employees are required to make a commitment to the learning. This contribution may take the form of sharing of knowledge with colleagues, volunteering to undertake corporate projects to benefit the wider organisation. In some cases this may also mean a financial contribution.

Support is subject to the availability of resources within the department and each application will be considered on its own merits and in accordance with the prioritisation principles in [5.1](#)

We acknowledge that some development requires longer term support that leads to formal qualifications. Where this is the case, the Council will support employees as far as possible. There are a range of methods in which support could be provided which may involve the Council's part or full financial support and / or indirect methods, such as changing working pattern or providing time off.

7.1. Recovery of course costs and non-attendance

Many learning and development courses are well subscribed, and employees not attending or arriving late can cause disruption and deprive others of the opportunity to attend. It is important therefore to ensure that people who have places confirmed attend and, if they fail to do so or arrive late, charges will be applied as shown in [Appendix 2](#).

We aim to support attendance at learning wherever possible, so if you are having a problem with attendance then please contact us as soon as possible.

Learning and development courses delivered by external trainers will be charged a full course fee as per above, or an administration fee for non-attendance [or arriving late and asked not to participate].

7.2. Learning Agreements

Employees undertaking learning over a period of time may be required to use the Learning Log [Appendix 1](#) to ensure that the benefit of the learning is evaluated. This should be kept up-to-date for review at any time.

The learning agreement ([Appendix 5](#)) shall clarify support agreed for specific learning events. In the absence of a learning agreement, the matrix in [Appendix 4](#) will apply.

7.3. Funding of Higher Level Qualification

Higher level qualification can require significant financial and non-financial investment. In order to prioritise the use of resources effectively services may choose to prioritise this funding by use of a panel. Sample documents to support this process are included in Appendix 3. In the case of Social Care Workforce Development Programme funded qualifications this will be managed via the Learning & Development Team.

7.4. Support for Learners

We are committed to providing support to learners to ensure that they are able to maximise the potential from a learning event, however this support will differ depending on the type of learning that is undertaken. A matrix identifying the support available for learners is identified in [Appendix 4](#).

More detail on each of these is given below:

Work Time - *Identifies whether a learner will be entitled* to undertake learning within work time. Learning that relates directly to an employee's job role will usually be permitted during working hours, though there may be a case for learners undertaking study in their own time if the learning relates to their career development. If it is not clear which of these categories the learning falls into, the learner should agree with their manager on a case-by-case basis.

You will have the right to request that the Council allows you time to undertake training. However, you do not have the automatic right to be paid for the time spent training if a request is agreed.

When undertaking a flexible programme it is important that the amount of work time to be granted for learning should be agreed between the learner and the line manager at the beginning of the programme.

Where paid leave is allowed, attendance at an event is treated as attendance on duty. This applies equally to part-time employees and those on shift work that attend learning events outside their normal working hours who will be given the equivalent time off in lieu.

Absence from a learning event because of sickness must be reported and if necessary certified. Unauthorised absence from an event or course will be treated as unauthorised absence from duty.

Graduation Ceremonies: Paid attendance at graduation ceremonies is at the discretion of the manager.

Study Leave - *Identifies whether a learner will be entitled to additional time off to study for examinations or complete assessed work*. Learners who are eligible for study leave will be entitled to up to 1 day's leave per examination, or piece of assessed work, with a maximum of 3 days leave in any financial year. Support will not normally be available for exam resits or coursework re-submission. Exceptional circumstances will be considered; permission should be sought from the line manager.

Travel Expenses - *Identifies whether a learner will be entitled to claim travel expenses to attend learning & development events*. In the interests of the Authority's

commitment to reducing costs, congestion and pollution, it is important that staff are encouraged to share lifts as much as possible when attending a learning event away from the workplace. Entitlements for residential courses are as per the 'Staff Travelling, Subsistence & Sundry Expenses policy.

Subsistence Allowance - *Identifies whether a learner will be entitled to claim subsistence* when attending a Learning and Development event. Subsistence will be paid as per the 'Staff Travelling, Subsistence & Sundry Expenses Claim Form Guidance Notes', available on the Intranet.

Payment of Fees - Fees eligible for payment are as follows:-

- Enrolment fees.
- Registration fees.
- Examination or assessment entry fees & one re-sit examination.
- Residential fees.

Assistance for Books/Equipment - For some courses, employees may be required to purchase set text books. We hold an extensive range of text books and learning materials, both departmentally and corporately (with the Learning and Development team). In order to ensure best use of resources, learners are encouraged to utilise the existing materials where this is appropriate and practicable. We may assist learners on identified learning routes to finance the purchase of texts to a maximum of £75. Once the learner has completed the course, they may be required to make any purchased textbooks available to new learners if appropriate. This will be subject to copyright restrictions and will not include distance-learning material, which must be purchased separately for each individual.

Use of Resources - Learners will be entitled to reasonable use of resources. These will be available within the office environment, but the learner will need to identify with their line manager times when they are able to access the resources. We will not cover the cost of postage.

8. Accessing funding

Appeals

We recognise that on occasions, an individual may feel disappointed by a decision which has been made in relation to a learning and development request, or the amount of financial and/or non-financial support they have received. If an individual is aggrieved and wants to revisit such a decision, they should speak with their line manager in the first instance. It is recommended that a compromise be sought where possible, for example, where financial contribution is not possible, the learner and the department may agree paid time to attend the course but not payment for the course itself. It should be acknowledged that not all learning and development opportunities can be met and a lack of resources is sufficient reason to refuse applications for funding or access to leave.

Should the learner remain dissatisfied, the learner may request a process review. This request must be submitted in writing, to the Learning & Development Manager, (LandD@cararthenshire.gov.uk) within 14 days of receipt of the written decision declining the learner's request.

The process review will be undertaken by the Head of Service for the employing department and a nominated representative from Learning & Development. The process review will consider whether a fair process and prioritisation of the departments training budget has been applied in line with the Learning Policy.

An appeal meeting will then be convened within 14 calendar days of receipt of the letter of appeal. The employee will be entitled to be represented at the appeal by a companion i.e. a recognised trade union representative or work colleague. Where an employee chooses to be accompanied and the companion is unable to attend, the meeting should be rearranged to take place within 7 calendar days of the original proposed date for the appeal meeting.

The decision of the appeal meeting will be notified to the employee within 14 calendar days of the meeting being held.

8.1. Union Learning Representatives

Union learning representatives are employees who are elected in accordance with the rules of a trade union recognised by the Council and their main function is to advise union members about their training, educational and development needs. It is important that we work collaboratively with Union learning representatives to ensure that their respective learning activities complement one another and that the scope for duplication is minimised. The entitlement for time off is covered in the Council's Trade Union facilities agreement.

9. Monitoring and Evaluation

Without the monitoring and evaluation of learning it is impossible to establish if learning has been of benefit to the individual, the team or the Authority.

It is important that scarce Learning resources are used to best effect. We measure the effectiveness of learning interventions using a variety of methodologies.

9.1. Evaluation

The value of all types of development is enhanced by reflecting on it afterwards. What have you learnt? How will this change the way you do things in the future? Managers have an important role in helping individuals to evaluate their learning.

9.2. Formal Evaluation

Some learning events will naturally include an evaluation process, however some forms of flexible learning may need a separate evaluation process if they represent a large commitment on behalf of the Authority.

The appraisal also provides an opportunity to review an individual's Learning Log and identify whether the learning has improved performance.

APPENDICES

1. Learning Log
2. Recovery of Course Costs & Non-Attendance Structure
3. Application For Higher Level Qualifications – Evaluation and Outcome Form & Application for HE Funding
4. Matrix of Learner Entitlement
5. Learning Agreement

Appendices

APPENDIX 1 – LEARNING LOG

Candidate Name:		Employee No.:	
Qualification Title & Level:			

Date	Agreed Learning	Key Learning Points	Manager's Comments

APPENDIX 2 - RECOVERY OF COURSE COSTS AND NON-ATTENDANCE STRUCTURE

Notice Period	Course Type	
	With Cost	Without Cost
More than 15 working days from first day of confirmed place on course	No charge	No charge
Less than 15 working days from first day of confirmed place on course	Charged per advertised rate ¹	No charge
Less than 5 working days from first day of confirmed place on course		£TBC administration fee ²
Non-attendance on any confirmed place on course [and arrives late and is asked not to participate] ³		
Notice of cancelled course by OD	No charge	No charge

¹ Substitute only exception.

² The Learning and Development Team will only accept the following **non-attendance exceptions** without your department incurring an administration fee, on notification by the applicant or line manager before or on the first day of a course:

- a) Sickness absence in line with the Council's Sickness Absence Policy.
- b) Emergencies in accordance with the Council's Time off for Dependents Policy and Procedures.
- c) Compassionate leave in addition to the Council's Time off for Dependents Policy and Procedure.
- d) Other emergency/reasonably unforeseeable matter in line with the Council's Time off Policy and Procedure.
- e) Employees who are on a rota on the day of the training to cover emergency calls eg Approved Mental Health Professionals [AMHPs].

³ Arriving late and being asked by the course provider not to participate will be subject to individual course content, course duration and the decision of the facilitator in accordance with the overall aims and objectives of the course. This also applies to leaving a course early without a valid reason ie in line with non-attendance exceptions.

APPENDIX 3 – APPLICATION FOR HIGHER LEVEL QUALIFICATIONS – EVALUATION AND OUTCOME FORM & APPLICATION FOR HE FUNDING

Application for Higher Level Qualifications Evaluation and Outcome Form

Section A: Background Information

Applicant Name:	
Post held:	
Has the Applicant successfully completed previously funded awards/qualifications:	
Date and title of last award/qualification:	
Level of Study:	
Details of other relevant awards/qualifications:	

Section B: Eligibility Criteria:

B.1	Is the applicant employed by CCC in a post relevant to the qualification they wish to study?	Yes / No
B.2	Has the application been approved by their line manager?	Yes / No
B.3	Is there evidence that the applicant can study successfully at the award/qualification level they wish to undertake?	Yes / No

If you have answered 'Yes' to all of the above criteria move on to Section C. If you have answered 'No' to some/all of the above, please use the space below to briefly explain your answer.

Section C: Priority criteria

		YES: High Priority	NO: Low Priority
C.1	Is the applicant already in a senior or management post without a relevant qualification / award?		
C.2	Is the applicant considering entering into a more senior or managerial role in the near future?		

Section D – Personal Statement

		YES: High Priority	NO: Low Priority
D.1	Does the application clearly evidence the candidate's commitment to undertaking the course/study?		
		Score	
D.2	Score out of 5 for the level of evidence provided within the application on how the course/study will be contributing to the professional development of the applicant (with 5 being high and 1 being low)		

Section D – Approval

D.1	The application is approved for funding	Yes	No
D.2	The application is to be put on a waiting list should a 2nd Cohort be available within the same financial year.	Yes	No
D.3	The application does not meet the criteria to be funded at the present time	Yes	No

D.4	Comments of Panel:		
D.5	More information is required before a decision can be made. Please state:	Yes	No

Signatures of panel members confirming decision:

Name:.....(please print)
Date:
.....(Signature)
Name:.....(please print)
Date:
.....(Signature)(please print)
Name:.....(please print)
Date:
.....(Signature)(please print)

Application for HE funding

Please complete all the sections below and return it to the address shown at the end of the form

Applicant Name:	
Contact Details:	
Employee Number:	
Current post held:	
Date and title of last award/qualification attained:	
Details of other relevant qualifications:	
Details of course you wish to study	
Course Title:	
Course type:	
Mode of Study:	
Course provider contact details:	
Contact email:	
Website:	
Faculty:	
Subject Area:	
Please provide briefly information about the following –	
Overview of the course:	
Course Aims:	
Entry Requirements:	

Course Content:	
How is this course going to contribute to your professional development?	
Course cost (annually):	

Please return the completed form to:

LearningandDevelopment@carmarthenshire.gov.uk

APPENDIX 4 – MATRIX OF LEARNER ENTITLEMENTS

	Work Time	Study Leave	Travel Expenses	Subsistence	Payment of Fees	Assistance for books/eqpt	Use of Resources
<u>Internal Training Courses</u>							
Non-qualification, short courses	✓	n/a	✓	n/a	n/a	n/a	✓
Accredited courses	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	n/a	✓
<u>External Training</u>							
Non-qualification, short courses (including conferences, workshops & seminars)	✓	n/a	✓	✓	✓	n/a	✓
<u>Qualifications – Required for role</u>							
Academic qualifications	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Professional qualifications (part-time)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Professional qualifications (flexible learning)	✓	✓	✓	n/a	✓	✓	✓
Personal Development (incl. Qualifications)	a	a	a	a	a	a	a
<u>Individual Flexible Learning</u>							
Studying of manuals & internal documents	✓	n/a	n/a	n/a	✓	n/a	✓
CD's / DVD's / Podcasts / Webinars	✓	n/a	n/a	n/a	✓	n/a	✓
Distance learning & e-learning (incl. online courses)	✓	✓	n/a	n/a	✓	n/a	✓
Coaching / Mentoring / Shadowing	✓	n/a	✓	n/a	✓	✓	✓
Reflective learning	✓	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	✓	✓
<u>Group Flexible Learning</u>							
Structured discussions	✓	n/a	✓	n/a	✓	n/a	✓
Action learning	✓	n/a	✓	✓	✓	n/a	✓
<u>Welsh</u>							
Day or Evening classes	a	n/a	a	a	✓	n/a	✓
Distance Learning & e-learning	a	✓	n/a	n/a	✓	n/a	✓

✓ Required

n/a Not applicable

a Subject to agreement

APPENDIX 5 - LEARNING AGREEMENT

To be completed once approval for financial support has been granted

Candidate & Course Details:

Employee No.:	
Employee Name:	
Job Title:	
Department:	
Course Title & Level:	
Stage of course and year (if more than 1 yr):	
Name of College/ Provider:	
Start date:	
Total Cost of Course:	£

Agreed Learner Support:

Annotate details of agreement against each category

Financial Support Agreed by Employer:	£
Financial contribution by employee:	£
Work (paid) time to attend classes:	
Study Leave:	
Travel & Or Subsistence	
Books / Equipment:	
Use of Resources:	

I confirm that I agree to the following conditions:

1. To inform my line manager, my L&D Representative, and/or my tutor (where appropriate) of any problems or changes in circumstances that may affect my progress with the course;
2. To use any time allowed for studying for the purpose it was intended and keep an up-to-date Learning Log to provide confirmation of this (if a flexible learning programme is being undertaken);
3. To apply for any external funding that is available to specifically support this programme. If I am awarded additional funding, I will inform the Authority immediately and refund any costs that have been incurred on my behalf up to the amount of the award.
4. If I fail to make adequate progress at the end of the first year I understand I will be withdrawn from the course. This decision will be based on feedback from the provider of the course. It will be at the full discretion of Carmarthenshire County Council as to whether or not I will be required to repay the course fees.

By signing this agreement, I accept that if I leave the Authority within two years of completing this formal development course (other than moving to another authority or public sector organisation); I understand that I will be required to repay the assistance I have received on a pro rata basis as detailed below. I understand that individual exceptional circumstances will be taken into account, and that any decision concerning the amount to be repaid will be at the full discretion of Carmarthenshire County Council.

Time period	% Repayment of Funding Support Provided
Before completion of course	100%
Within 1 year of course completion	75%
Within 2 years of course completion	50%
After 2 years	NIL

I agree to abide by the Conditions of Assistance as laid down in the Carmarthenshire County Council Learning & Development Policy which I have read. A copy is attached to this agreement.

Signed : _____ Date: _____

For completion by the line manager:

Signed: _____ Date: _____
(Line
Manager)