

report

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| meeting | NOTTINGHAMSHIRE AND CITY OF NOTTINGHAM FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY | |
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REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of the report is to request that Members consider the Learning and Development Strategy and its appendices for the implementation of learning and development throughout Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 There are significant changes affecting the way that the workforce is developed throughout the Service as a result of the Integrated Personal Development System (IPDS). In order to implement these changes a strategy has been outlined along with a policy statement which will indicate the type of nature, roles and responsibilities with regard to workforce development.

2.2 The Learning and Development Strategy is therefore proposed to identify and underpin the approaches to be taken with regard to learning and development throughout the Service, which will include support to Elected Member training as necessary, therefore ratification is sought from the Fire & Rescue Authority for the policy and appendices outlined in this report.

3. REPORT

The report as attached including appendices.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

Workforce, learning and development constitutes a major risk control for an organisation as complex as a fire and rescue service. Consequently, this strategy will strengthen the existing risk control framework.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

6. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

There are no personnel implications arising directly from this report

7. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The Equality and Fairness Officer has offered comments to the strategy which have been taken on board.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Members approve the implementation of the attached strategy as outlined.

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS FOR INSPECTION

None

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Nottinghamshire & City of Nottingham Fire Authority

LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

October 2005

**Nottinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service
www.notts-fire.gov.uk**





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1. Executive Summary

The driver of this strategy is the desire to develop a workforce that is equipped and able to fulfil their roles and to deliver the Government's Modernisation Agenda. Through its consultation paper, *The Fire & Rescue Service of the Future*, the government recognises the workforce as a key resource and that its contribution is essential to the delivery of the Agenda.

To deliver this challenging "people" agenda requires a well-trained and competent workforce which must be supported at a strategic level by the CFA. All stakeholders recognise that the current level of provision needs to increase if fire and rescue service personnel are to be able to acquire and maintain new skills and to realise their full potential.

The Integrated Personal Development System (IPDS) is a major initiative to provide a framework that will allow the Service to implement "best practice" human resource development processes. The Nottinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service recognises the benefits of the IPDS and its implementation across the Service is a key issue for this strategy.

The implementation of the IPDS will further clarify the nature of learning and development inputs required for Nottinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service. There will be the creation of development programmes that underpin the roles, including those of the elected members of the CFA which are outlined in the principles of IPDS and throughout the Service, opportunities to re-examine local, regional and national delivery will emerge.

The Learning and Development Strategy is a key action point for the Service Human Resource Strategy and is to be realised through the Service planning process of Nottinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service and the Combined Fire Authority (CFA) in association with the Learning and Development Manager.

2. Vision, Mission, Values and Strategic Aims

Vision

The vision of Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham Fire Authority is to ensure that Nottinghamshire becomes a safer place to live and work by ;

“putting safety at the heart of the community”

Realising and releasing the potential of the people employed by the Service contributes to the successful achievement of this vision. The vision of a learning and development strategy for Nottinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service is:

“A Fire & Rescue Service fully equipped with the skills, knowledge and understanding to make its full contribution to building a safer society by integrating local, regional and national development opportunities with the needs of individuals and the Service as a whole.”

Aims

The aims of Nottinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service are;

A quality public service

Efficient and effective support mechanisms for the delivery of that service

Mission

Our mission in the creation of this strategy is:

“Modernising learning and development to deliver a safe and competent workforce”.

Values

The “Fire & Rescue Service of the Future” document sets out a number of guiding principles that describe the kind of Service we are striving to be. These principles are based on a number of key values. To realise these values the people working within the Service should:

Place safety first.

Take responsibility for personal performance.

Have a shared sense of direction through teamwork, partnership and collaboration.

Respect diversity and have a commitment to equal opportunities.

Be accountable, transparent and committed to continuous improvement.

In addition, the Service will strive to embrace the Core Value for the Fire and Rescue Service nationally which are described as;

We value: **I**NNOVATION

We value: **P**EOPLE

We value: **D**IVERSITY

We value: **S**ERVICE

These values are built into the new occupational standards, which are an integral part of the IPDS. By working towards these standards, we can embed the values into the roles of all staff.

Strategic Aims (Learning & Development)

In seeking to deliver a co-ordinated approach to Learning and Development across the Service a number of strategic aims emerge;

To support and build partnerships with key stakeholders that will deliver quality assured, consistent and best value solutions for learning and development.

To secure high quality learning and development opportunities that will contribute to a safe, effective and competent workforce.

To seek recognition for individual achievement of competence that will contribute to the development of transferable skills, knowledge and understanding.

To establish new processes for career development that will take account of individual potential, qualities and attributes.

A series of **strategic objectives** for Nottinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service underpin these aims and inform the service planning process. These objectives are outlined in section 6 of this document.

3. Nottinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service : The Broader Context for Learning and Development

The Government's change agenda has challenged the service to redefine its role. Public and political accountability have driven the process of change; the service is currently moving from a reactive role of intervention to a proactive role of prevention – this has brought about a need for cultural change and the development of new skills.

This strategy recognises that the potential to improve the quality, flexibility and effectiveness of the fire and rescue service lies in equipping people with essential skills for their work and creating within them a confidence and a desire to extend their contribution through personal development.

Access to quality training and development opportunities, for Fire Service personnel and the ongoing development of members of the Combined Fire Authority, has always been the strategic intent of Nottinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service via the provision of a central training budget. Considerable human resources are already invested in the delivery of training and development. This provision has historically taken the form of trainee Fire-fighter courses and continuation training at the Service Training & Development Centre.

Additionally the funding of progressive development opportunities for Service Managers using a variety of providers has ensured continuing professional development.

The Service has committed considerable resource and effort to focus on the range of new development needs identified initially through the original HR Strategy, and subsequent external drivers for change. However, the needs of support services employees and part time operational staff must be reviewed in light of the increasing and changing demands being placed upon it. Therefore, the adoption and management of the performance appraisal scheme is essential to the meeting of the strategic aims and objectives of the organisation.

In setting the context for this strategy a number of other **key drivers** must be considered these are:-

The Integrated Personal Development System

The Integrated Personal Development System (IPDS) is designed to encompass the development needs of all fire and rescue service employees from the point of attraction and entry to retirement. It embraces the full range of activities and its intention is to enable people to attain and maintain the level of competence required for the demands of their role.

This strategy recognises National Occupational Standards (NOS) as the foundation of competence and that the IPDS is a framework for its delivery. The strategic aims of this strategy have been designed to deliver the IPDS to a consistent standard across Nottinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service with a particular emphasis on the following components:

Workplace Assessment

This strategy, ([appendix 1](#)) will give direction and support to the implementation of workplace assessment processes and procedures.

Development Objectives and Programmes

This strategy proposes that the NOS form the basis of all future development programmes and recognises that programmes are required for the *acquisition, application and maintenance of skills, knowledge and understanding*. This strategy also recognises that there is a need for flexible delivery and targeted personal development based on individual and organisational requirements.

Quality Assurance and Awards

This strategy recognises that quality assurance systems are required to ensure the consistency, transferability and integrity of development opportunities.

The use of Awarding Body systems to provide access to recognised qualifications allows the Service to embed already established systems of quality assurance into its learning and development processes. These quality assurance principles and criteria, set by Awarding Bodies (e.g. Edexcel, Institution of Fire Engineers), require organisations to take ownership of and implement processes that will manage their learning and development resources, support their personnel, facilitate effective communication and manage quality control by putting in place an appropriate organisational structure to review policies and procedures.

Under these arrangements, the systems adopted must be able to withstand external audit and scrutiny by the Awarding Body. For this reason, the approach adopted aims to utilise the attainment of recognised qualifications in order to quality assure the IPDS implementation and to give external recognition to our learning and development programmes.

Assessment of Potential

This strategy recognises Assessment Development Centres as the future process for access to development opportunities associated with career progression. In particular, there is a need to specify the processes for replacement of the Statutory Promotion Regulations.

Personal Development Reviews and Records

This strategy places value on a personal development and appraisal review and record system for the Nottinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service and the Elected Members of the Combined Fire Authority. This will allow the assessment of individual, local, regional and national development needs.

National, Regional and Local Delivery

Through regional working, the Service seeks to encourage collaboration between the East Midlands Regional Fire and Rescue Services, the Fire Service College (FSC) and other providers to create learning and development opportunities that benefit individuals and the Fire and Rescue Service as a whole.

Under the quality assurance arrangements being developed to support the implementation of the IPDS, in particular the workplace assessment arrangements, a collaborative approach between the five East Midlands Services, and their IPDS teams have been adopted. In order to meet the quality assurance criteria outlined this strategy recommends that where accredited learning and development programmes are adopted, the Service taking the 'lead' role will be responsible for the communication and maintenance of all awarding body Quality Assurance arrangements.

Nottinghamshire Fire & Rescue recognises that due to the extensive fire ground facilities available, the Fire Service College in Moreton in Marsh is well placed to provide development opportunities to enable operational Service Managers to develop incident management skills in a realistic, albeit simulated, working environment. However, in order to embrace a wide range of opportunities for all employees and CFA members, alternative providers will be sourced. For the development of 'people skills', a management development strategy will incorporate opportunities for employees across the Service. All programmes delivered by the FSC will be integrated within the wider strategy for learning and development in Nottinghamshire Fire & Rescue.

The identification of the resources and facilities that are required for learning and development across Nottinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service will take place through the revision and creation of development programmes to suit the needs of the organisation, especially taking into account those employees who work within the retained duty system, and IPDS. This places an emphasis on personal development, modular programmes, workplace assessment against the National Occupational Standards, and systems of quality assurance (e.g. Awarding Body criteria) will be established in order to ensure that these needs can be met. Opportunities for local and regional provision will emerge from this process. A key component of the strategy is to avoid duplication of effort and inefficient use of resources through the formation of collaborative arrangements to deliver realistic scenarios and simulations.

It is anticipated that as the draft role maps for Elected Members becomes available, personal development reviews and subsequent development programmes to meet the identified needs of Combined Fire Authority members will be commissioned and designed accordingly.

With the introduction of the IPDS, there is a move towards a modular approach to learning and development. This creates opportunities to build flexible development programmes and allows the Service and the Authority to utilise provision available from the wider world of education and training. To date there has been limited use of further education colleges and other training establishments. This strategy will seek to address this by exploring areas of fire and rescue service provision from which training can be delivered by external providers and agencies.

To ensure the effective and efficient use of resources, consistent delivery and quality assurance there is a need for the management of:

- Standard setting and maintenance.
- Training methodology
- Policy development and review
- Quality control
- Evaluation and moderation
- Recording systems

To support these arrangements, the maintenance of the current strategic partnership encompassing all East Midlands Regional Brigades, administered by the Regional Co-ordinator (Workforce Development), the national IPDS working groups, the FSC and directed by the Chief

Fire Officers Association, Personal and Organisational Development Group (CFOA PODG) is vital.

The existence of an East Midlands Workforce Development Co-ordinator, funded by the regional Services via a joint funding arrangement, is fundamental to the continued success of this partnership as the Service moves towards the full implementation of the IPDS.

In order to be responsive to the diverse nature of the workplace, Nottinghamshire requires more flexible and accessible quality learning environments. This strategy therefore recognises the need for new and alternative delivery methods that widen the access to learning and development opportunities, for example, e-learning. Nottinghamshire Fire & Rescue will seek to expand the use of this and other flexible delivery methods, such as distance learning, in its creation of development programmes under the IPDS framework.

Fire and Rescue Services

In addition to a more proactive role in all aspects of Community Safety, the Service is also expected to respond to a variety of emergency incidents including:

Major transport incidents.

Chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear exposures.

Severe weather conditions.

Explosions and collapsed structures.

This strategy recognises that there are arrangements in place to implement a programme of initial training in the use of new equipment and techniques created by the "New Dimensions" Task Group. However, to embed these activities into the Service through continuation of skill, knowledge and understanding, this strategy proposes that future development programmes take note of the expanding role of the Service in these areas.

Lifelong Learning

The Government has a national policy and strategy to widen participation in lifelong learning. In the development of a learning and development strategy for Nottinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service, it is important to recognise the wider world of education and learning to ensure that Nottinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service plays its part in the lifelong learning agenda. Initiatives are already in place to provide further opportunities to access learning, including work with the University of Nottingham. This has already proved positive, being accessible to both operational and non operational staff and it is the intention to develop this partnership approach further.

There are a number of strands to this, however the following components have the greatest influence on this strategy:

Union Learning Fund

The Fire Brigades Union and Unison are working with the Learning & Development Manager to explore the opportunities available through the Union Learning Fund with the key objective of developing and promoting a lifelong learning strategy for its membership. The aim is to engage with non-traditional learners by establishing a network of learner representatives in all aspects of

Nottinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service. The work undertaken as part of this project will complement personal development beyond workplace competence and will necessitate close working partnerships with all project members.

E-Learning and Desktop Learning

There is a need to develop a range of learning activities which are available to all employees regardless of their working patterns. An increased facility for a blended approach to learning will mean that development will become available on-line and via the Intranet to ensure that access for all is achieved.

Vocational Qualifications/Core Skills

Through its accredited centre status with Edexcel and the Institute of Leadership and Management, Nottinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service has the potential to offer access to vocational qualifications to employees across many aspects of the Service. Vocational qualifications offer people access to nationally recognised learning and development opportunities that will provide core skills for their role and allow their achievements to be recognised both internally and externally. Vocational qualifications will allow the Service to integrate workplace performance with the wider world of education and training.

4. Responsibilities and Stakeholder Maps

In the realisation of this strategy, the following responsibilities are placed on key stakeholders:

The Chief Fire Officer to maintain a collaborative partnership with, and across, all five East Midlands Fire and Rescue Services and the Fire Services College.

The Learning and Development Manager to establish a system for co-ordinating a strategy for learning and development.

The Nottinghamshire Fire & Rescue IPDS team to work in partnership with the other East Midlands Services' and the IPDS Regional Co-ordinator to create systems and processes for IPDS implementation.

The Combined Fire Authority to support the implementation of the IPDS as a framework for personal and organisational development.

Through the Head of Human Resources, the Service Strategic Management Team to value, plan and support staff development as an integral part of their strategic planning process.

Individuals to value and take responsibility for their own learning and development and to recognise their role in the achievement of organisational objectives.

5. Implementing the Strategy

The strategy will be realised through the service planning process of Nottinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service (Learning and Development Managers), the Strategic Management Team, Performance Management Group and the related planning processes of Nottinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service.

The strategic objectives outlined in section 6 of this document are the overarching statements that give a broad indication of the work to be undertaken and are the basis on which the Learning and Development Policy statement, Managers Guidelines and Employees Guidelines are formed. Service plans are the working documents that allow these objectives to be met through the production and implementation of detailed action plans.

The strategic objectives, listed in section 6, will be contained within the Service planning process of the Learning and Development Team for 2005-2006, but individual components will have short, medium and long term actions assigned to them. Therefore, the service planning process for the next 3-5 years should have this strategy at its foundation.

A key component of service planning is that specific action plans are subject to regular audit and review.

A collaborative approach to implementation is the key to the success of this strategy. In particular, Nottinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service, the other East Midlands Regional Services and the East Midlands Regional Co-ordinator should continue to work together to ensure best value, consistent and quality assured, learning and development opportunities for Fire and Rescue Service personnel in Nottinghamshire.

6. Strategic Objectives (Learning and Development Team)

In order to contribute to the organisations' strategic aims of;

A quality Public Service,
Effective and efficient support mechanisms for the delivery of that service,

the following objectives are identified as the responsibility of the Learning and Development Team and will be realised through the service planning process of Nottinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service.

6.1 To support and build partnerships with key stakeholders that will deliver quality assured, consistent, and best value solutions for learning and development we will:

Continue to engage and consult with key stakeholders and committees.
Seek continued support for the development of the Accredited Centre structure from the Chief Fire Officer to facilitate a regional partnership approach to learning and development across the East Midlands Fire & Rescue Services.
Research, and build partnerships with, further education establishments and other stakeholders from the world of education and training.

6.2 To secure high quality learning and development opportunities that will contribute to a safe, effective and competent workforce we will:

Revise the existing Fire-fighter development programmes and ensure that the learning outcomes are clearly mapped to the achievement of the National Occupational Standards (NOS).
Create a blended learning solution for the delivery of supervisory (crew and watch) management programmes that combine incident management with generic management development inputs.
Research appropriate management development programmes for middle and strategic management roles (station, area, group and brigade management).
Research appropriate programmes for people in Fire Safety roles (in line with the NOS).
Research appropriate programmes for people in specialist roles (in line with the NOS).
Consult Fire Authority Elected Members on programmes to support their role development
Research, make recommendations and implement appropriate development programmes for people in support roles.
Implement quality assurance systems.
Implement effective evaluation and review systems.

6.3 To seek recognition for individual achievement of competence that will contribute to the development of transferable skills, knowledge and understanding we will:

Research and implement processes for the recognition, approval and/or credit rating from awarding bodies for development programmes relating to individual roles.
Implement workplace assessment processes and procedures to support the delivery of Vocational Qualifications where appropriate.
Design and implement processes that take account of previous learning and experience (Accreditation of Prior Experience and Learning).

6.4 To establish a framework for local and regional development that takes account of individual and organisational needs we will:

Develop Nottinghamshire Fire & Rescue Services' Service Development Centre as a Regional resource for learning and development.

Define the resources and facilities required for the delivery of development programmes in accordance with the philosophy of the IPDS (as programmes are reviewed).

Provide support to, and guide the development of, local and regional training provision through the development of collaborative working.

Research and develop flexible delivery methods that will support wider local access to development opportunities (e.g. modular packages, e-learning, distance learning).

Direct the development of an East Midlands wide Personal Development Planning and Record system that will allow the assessment of individual and organisational development needs.

6.5 To establish new processes for career development that will take account of individual potential, qualities and attributes we will:

Seek to ensure that representatives from Nottinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service are included in the national work to establish Assessment Development Centres.

Ensure that arrangements are in place to facilitate the development and progression of employees following the withdrawal of the Statutory Examinations process.

Create an environment whereby individual potential can be measured objectively.

6.6 To establish a process of validation and evaluation for training and development which takes account of both individual and organisational development and progress we will:

Establish and maintain a skills analysis in order to have an overview of the needs of the organisation.

Conduct regular 'audits' of the training processes.

Establish regular contact with individuals following a training intervention.

Ensure that a review of ongoing training is carried out annually in accordance with the organisational planning process.

A summary of this strategy is contained within the Learning and Development Policy statement and is supported by the Guide for Managers and Guide for Employees with regard to the implementation of this strategy. These documents can be found as appendices to this strategy.

Nottinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service
Workplace Assessment Strategy
(including assessment for ADCs)

Introduction

The successful implementation of the IPDS will require a robust methodology in place to assess the competence of individuals within the workplace. To this end, it has been determined that protocol for the initial 'roll out' of assessors will be strategically managed throughout the Service.

The role maps require evidence of occupational competence as defined by the standards, through relevant workplace activities. Assessment of knowledge should be integrated with the assessment of performance wherever possible and appropriate.

As the Accredited NVQ Centre and in conjunction with the Awarding Body, Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service will quality assure, implement and review these Assessment Strategy arrangements in the light of the prevailing requirements of the regulatory authorities.

Assessment of performance and knowledge in the workplace

All evidence must be derived from performance in the workplace, with the exception of those units of the rolemap identified by the awarding body which allow for simulated evidence. This will clearly offer a challenge to the organisation in terms of it's ability to provide opportunity to individuals to meet the demands of their role map.

Simulated working conditions

Simulated conditions must provide as close to possible realistic and achievable evidence. These simulated activities should be referred to the Learning and Development Manager for verification PRIOR to them being used to confirm an individual's competence.

External Quality Control

Independent assessment

This will require candidates to present a balance of evidence which must include a substantive component which has been assessed by someone who is independent from the candidate. Substantive is defined here as a primary piece of outcome evidence from one or more units of competence. Independence is defined here as a competent job holder who is qualified as an assessor (L20 or A1) but will not act as the candidate's primary assessor.

The requirements for occupational competence of assessors and verifiers

Assessors

In the case of NVQ related assessments, all assessors and candidate assessors, approved by the Accredited Centre will have sufficient occupational competence to ensure an up-to-date working knowledge and experience of the principles and practices specified in the standards they are assessing. In addition, those managers who are required to assess but will not be assessing NVQs will be trained to the Best Practice Assessor level of competence.

Sufficient occupational competence is defined as:

- Having held a post for a minimum of one year within the last two years which involved performing the activities defined in the standards
- or have recently been in a role more senior to that which is being assessed.

Or

- Being an experienced trainer or instructor of at least one year's standing in the competence area of the standards;

And for both of the above:

- Having demonstrated updating within the last year involving at least two of the following activities:
 - ◆ Work placement
 - ◆ Job shadowing
 - ◆ Technical skills update training
 - ◆ Attending course
 - ◆ Studying for relevant units
 - ◆ Study related to job role
 - ◆ Collaborative working with the Awarding Body
 - ◆ Examining
 - ◆ Qualifications development work
 - ◆ Other appropriate occupational activity as agreed with the internal verifier.

All assessors will have a sound working knowledge of the content of the standards they are assessing and their assessment requirements. Assessors will either hold the relevant qualifications for assessors of the national occupational standards or have a development plan indicating progress towards that qualification.

Assessors of Assessor-Candidates are required to have achieved their relevant assessor unit(s) before they can start to assess Assessor-Candidates. Similarly, Assessors of Internal Verifiers candidates need to have achieved their own Assessor and Verifier Units before they can start to assess Verifier-Candidates.

Internal Verifiers

All internal verifiers will have sufficient experience of having conducted assessments of the specific national occupational standards they are verifying in or an appropriate and related occupational area.

Sufficient occupational competence is defined as:

- Having been an assessor for the standards being assessed, or for a set of standards in a related occupational area, for a minimum of one year within the last two years;

And

- Having demonstrated updating within the last year involving at least two of the following activities:
 - ◆ Attending Awarding Body verification training courses;

- ◆ Studying for learning and development units;
- ◆ Undertaken study related to the role
- ◆ Worked collaboratively with Awarding Bodies;
- ◆ Qualification development work
- ◆ Other appropriate occupational activity as agreed with the external verifier

All internal verifiers will have direct responsibility and quality control of assessments of the occupational standards or the quality assurance of the assessment process within an assessment centre which has been approved by an Awarding Body.

All internal verifiers will have a sound working knowledge of assessment and verification principles as defined in the national standards for internal quality assurance and the particular internal verification requirements. All internal verifiers will either hold the relevant qualification for internal verifiers of national occupational standards, or have a development plan indicating progress towards that qualification.

Internal Verifiers of Assessor-candidates are required to have achieved their Internal Verification unit before they can start to internally verify Assessor Candidates. Similarly, Internal Verifiers of Internal and External Verifier candidates need to have achieved their own Assessor and Verifier Units before they can start to internally verify Verifier-Candidates.

Assessment of Competence for Progression From Development Role To Competent Role.

The full NVQ route may not be appropriate for all individuals. In this instance it will also be necessary to employ robust assessment. The requirement is that in order to demonstrate competence, employees must show evidence against the National Occupational Standard (NOS) Assessment of this evidence will be carried out by a qualified assessor (or candidate assessor) in the manner described above. It is expected that all individuals who are in a development role will have an agreed development plan which will be compiled following the relevant ADC process by an ADC assessor, the individual and their line manager.

The process will be as follows;

- ◆ The individual will demonstrate potential through an assessment development centre
- ◆ They will then work with their manager and an assessor to produce a development plan
- ◆ If required, the individual will undertake a temporary role in order to develop the skills necessary and to collect evidence of this work.
- ◆ Once sufficient evidence is collected, the employee should, in discussion with their line manager, contact the Learning and Development Manager to arrange for assessment to take place. This assessment will be carried out by a candidate or qualified assessor as described above.

It is anticipated that much of this assessment process will involve gathering evidence through Professional Discussion and Workplace Evidence.

Maintenance of Competence

The maintenance of an individual's competence will be carried out through the day to day involvement in activities. Electronic recording of these activities must be carried out which ideally will be done by the individuals themselves, although this system is not yet fully available. Clearly there must be a managerial perspective on the ability of each individual. This must be assessed and reviewed regularly through a

performance management or appraisal process which should ideally be evidence based. The introduction of the Personal Development Review (PDR) process, which has been written to demonstrate the pursuance of the National Occupational Standard and the Personal Qualities and Attributes, will provide the opportunity for this managerial assessment of performance.

In addition to the PDR, it is proposed that *risk critical* areas of competence be identified and that those areas will be subject to annual refresher type development activities.

Assessment Development Centre Process

All individuals involved in the assessment of potential through the Assessment Development Centre (ADC) will be qualified assessors, i.e. D32/33 with demonstrated CPD, A1 or working toward, and/or Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development qualified or a Fire Service Examination Board experienced examiner with demonstrated upskilling to include competency based interviewing. Additionally it may be necessary, dependant upon the route taken nationally regarding psychometric tests, to license a number of assessors in this specific area.

The Initial Test of Potential may be administered either locally or regionally by a person deemed suitable by a Lead Assessor, or member of the ADC regional Project Team.

Following the ADC process, it is expected that all individuals who demonstrate potential for the role will have an agreed development plan. This development plan will be jointly produced including the employee, an ADC assessor and the employees' line manager. A copy of this plan will be held on the employees personnel file, and a copy will be sent to the Learning and Development Manager for co-ordination and planning purposes. Where Workforce Development Plans exist within a Service, it is expected that successful individuals will be offered a place on a development programme in accordance with Service needs. It must be recognised that success at the ADC itself is not a selection process and therefore individuals, neither candidate nor management should not assume an 'as of right' promotion as a result of the ADC. Where vacancies arise or exist, an open and transparent selection process must be pursued. Candidates who are in a development role following a positive ADC should be given the opportunity to apply.

For progression between roles eg Crew Manager to Watch Manager, there will be an 'in band' progression interview which will be subject to a vacancy being available, and the individual having taken part in the recognised development programme for supervisory manager. This process will be repeated through the Middle and Strategic Manager ADC's.

The Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service Learning and Development Policy Statement

Learning and development are critical to the overall effectiveness of the Fire and Rescue Service in times of rapid change so that employees are able to adapt and respond appropriately.

This policy statement has been produced in response to National Initiatives and local needs and to support the service in the achievement of its targets.

The Fire and Rescue Services nationally are required to provide a written learning and development policy statement that should be communicated to all employees.

The purpose of this policy is to: -

- Confirm the service's commitment to learning and development.
- Set out the service's learning and development priorities.
- Identify priorities leading to a strategy and plan of action.
- Outline the resource requirements to meet the service's learning and development needs.

1. Commitment to Learning and Development

The Service:

- Fully accepts its responsibility to make resources available to provide learning and development opportunities that will maximise the potential of its workforce.
- The enterprise, initiative and creativity of employees is crucial to the future development and success of the service.
- Requires managers to ensure that learning and development needs are identified to enable the effective investment of the Service's resources in the learning and development of its employees.
- Recognises its responsibility to provide equal access to relevant learning and development in accordance with equal opportunities legislation and existing policies.
- Accepts the need to provide appropriate guidance and development for Elected Members.
- Recognises that continuing investment and commitment to lifelong learning are vital to the organisation if quality services are to be provided, maintained and continually improved and for the recruitment and retention of quality employees.

2. Learning and Development Priorities

Employees' learning and development requirements are:-

- Those which are necessary for employees to be able to carry out their jobs effectively.
- Those which will enable employees to continue to improve their current job performance, gain job satisfaction and prepare them for future job roles

- It is essential to the maintenance and improvement of the individual and service standards.
- Those which keep employees up to date with changes in law equipment or practices which are job related
- Learning and development in the current and future use of technology.
- Career development and re-training
- Positive action opportunities for under represented groups within the Service.
- Those which are required for employees to keep up to date with new legislation, new technology, changing standards, practices and policies.
- Activities that will prepare employees for future roles and responsibilities

3 Implementing the Policy - Developing a Strategy

The service recognises that the learning and development needs set out above must have equal importance if the Service is to be successful in achieving its business objectives. Training needs must be prioritised within corporate strategies and within budgetary constraints.

The Strategy will address:-

- Induction training that ensures new employees are provided with the necessary information.
- How emphasis will be given to learning and development that relates to continual improvement in the quality or performance of the Service and the development of service action plans to achieve this.
- Professional and skills training in areas where:-

The service has statutory obligations.

It prevents inefficiency or waste.

It enables employees to meet their responsibilities in completing continuing professional development (CPD) required by their institutes or professional bodies.

- Opportunities for managers and supervisors in accordance with the management development strategy.
- Communication skills and training to create an organisation that is able to communicate effectively both internally and with the community and business it serves
- Learning and development in the current and future use of new technology
- Career development and re-training
- Career development and positive action strategies

4 Resource Requirements

The Service will provide a budget for learning and development that enables it to achieve its business objectives, and in particular will take into account the following factors:-

- the identified training needs of employees and Elected Members
- those training needs that are essential to progress the adopted strategies of the Service.
- the direct costs of learning and development from such areas as employee time, course fees, hire of external providers, hire of facilities, training materials, travelling and subsistence.

The indirect costs of learning and development such as employees' salaries and wages and the effect on services by employees' absences whilst undertaking training.

Nottinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service Learning & Development Policy Statement, Managers Guidelines

Introduction

The Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service Learning and Development Policy Statement clearly sets out its commitment to the provision of learning and development for employees and elected members. It outlines the actions required to implement the Learning and Development Strategy.

The Service recognises the value and importance of its major resource, the people it employees, and that the initiative and creativity of those employees is crucial to the future development and success of the Service's activities.

In order to achieve this success and maintain a quality service, everyone has a role to play in implementing the Learning and Development Strategy.

Roles and Responsibilities

The following framework sets out an agenda for action.

Combined Fire Authority Members have the responsibility to:

- Allocate sufficient budgetary resources to enable the Learning and Development Strategy to be implemented
- Provide support for the direction of learning and development within Nottinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service
- Seek reports on the effectiveness of the policy and its contribution to organisational development

The Chief Fire Officer has the responsibility to:

- Advocate the adoption of the policy
- Advise and encourage all managers to implement the policy
- Review and monitor how the training budget is spent
- Review and monitor the policy and evaluate its impact
- Report and advise elected members on the progress of the policy
- Ensure all employees are aware of the departmental and Service objectives

Heads of Service have the responsibility to:

- Ensure that training and development activity is based on achieving both departmental and Service objectives
- Produce a strategy to implement the policy
- Develop an action plan to ensure learning and development priorities are met
- Promote the policy to all departmental employees
- Ensure that Personal Development Plans at individual and departmental level are consistent with the policy and with the Organisations' core objectives.
- Monitor and review how money on development is spent in their department

- Report and advise the Chief Fire Officer on the progress of the policy within their department

Managers have the responsibility to;

- Tell all employees about the Service's Learning and Development Policy and implement it in accordance with their departmental strategy
- Make sure all employees have access to appropriate learning and development opportunities
- Offer regular reviews to identify employees' learning and development needs
- Work with all learning providers so that needs are met in the most effective manner
- Be aware of and promote the range of learning and development opportunities available to all employees
- Encourage employees to take responsibility for their own learning
- Help employees apply their learning at work
- Ensure that learning and development plans are evaluated at individual and departmental levels
- Ensure employees are aware of the objectives of the department.
- Ensure that the organisation receives value and return on investment for all development initiatives

Employees have the responsibility to:

- Prepare for and contribute to the identification of their learning and development needs through the Personal Development Review process
- Make the most of all learning and development opportunities and apply this learning to their work
- Support the development of other employees
- Participate in any process to gather feedback on learning and development offered by the Fire & Rescue Service locally and nationally
- Understand that priority for learning and development must support the achievement of departmental and corporate objectives

Learning and Development Section have the responsibility to:

- Set the criteria for monitoring and evaluating how the policy is being achieved across the Service
- Provide support to help the organisation to implement the policy
- Assist departments to develop effective learning plans following the Personal Development Review process
- Provide a range of resources to support corporate, departmental and individual learning plans
- Assist managers to evaluate learning provision to ensure that the Service achieves good value and return on investment from its learning resources and development initiatives
- Share and promote good learning and development practices between other Fire and Rescue Services both locally and nationally, drawing on experiences gained from within the organisation and from other organisations
- Devise a list of approved providers for the external supply of training activities

Access to Learning and Development

The Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Services' commitment to equality and diversity requires that all learning provision be planned, delivered and monitored on the basis of equality of access for all employees including part-time workers. Resources for learning and development should be shared equitably across all

categories of employees and occupational groups. Additionally learning may be provided for those who are under-represented in the workforce as a priority or as a positive action.

Managers are responsible for ensuring that all employees have access to learning and development opportunities through the implementation of the Personal Development Review process. These opportunities must be relevant to their job role and to organisational and departmental business/service plans. Part time workers should not lose out in their learning simply because of their part-time status.

Equality of access

Equality of access refers to :

- Information relating to learning and development opportunities
- Selection for participation in learning and development activities
- Access to learning and development events.

All learning providers, internal and external, must ensure that programmes are free from barriers which restrict access or progress of individual employees.

Monitoring

It is the responsibility of the Equalities and Fairness Officer to ensure that selection for, and attendance on, learning and development programmes is recorded and monitored to ensure that equality of access is provided.

Monitoring information will be requested from all individuals undertaking learning. This information will eventually be stored in individual personal development records through the Computerised Learning Management System.

Identification of development needs

Identification of employees' development needs forms the basis of a successful Learning and Development strategy. The process of identifying learning and development needs must be approached in a systematic way which enables employees to discuss openly, the skills knowledge and personal development objectives required to perform effectively in their work

All managers should follow the framework as laid out in the Personal Development Review guidance which will enable the accurate identification of employee's' learning and development needs. The following of this framework will enable employees to meet regularly with their managers to discuss and review learning needs that are relevant to the employee and their current and future job roles.

Managers must consider appropriate methods of identifying learning and development needs which provide equality of access for all employees.

The P.D.R Process

A system of regular review and feedback between employees and managers will enable the production of personal and departmental development plans to support business objectives and service delivery targets.

This will involve:

- Managers offering regular, recorded, review meetings with employees to discuss learning and development needs
- The production of a written and agreed Personal Development Plan for every employee following their personal development review
- Production of divisional/sectional development plans to support the annual Service Plan

Meeting to Identify Training and Development Needs

It is recommended that where possible, meetings take place between employees and their line manager on an individual basis. The employee should be given sufficient notice to plan and prepare for the meeting and be given a copy of any forms that may be used to record details of the discussion.

Managers should prepare for the meeting by obtaining a copy of the employee's latest agreed job description or role map, and the departmental service/business plans. A suitable room should be used, preferably free from interruptions, and in a comfortable environment. Enough time should be allocated to discuss the employee's job role, personal objectives and their views of their strengths and development needs. Meetings will be informal and will be focused on identifying employees' training and development needs.

During the Review meeting the manager should:

- Explain the format of the meeting
- Check the employee's understanding and assumptions
- Ask open questions (how what, why) and listen to the employee's responses
- Encourage the employee to identify areas of strength and weakness in their current job role
- Not avoid difficult issues
- Ask employee to suggest relevant training and development activities to meet their identified needs
- Consider with the employee how the development will be applied in their work
- Summarise and check the employee's understanding of what has been agreed
- Provide employee with a copy of any documentation, e.g. development plan, personal development review form

The standard format for the Personal Development Review including notes for Reviewee and Reviewer, are located on the shared drive in the training folder and also on the intranet.

Review of Development Plans

Learning and Development needs should be reviewed with employees on a regular basis. Development Plans must be completed on an annual basis and a development review undertaken between employee and line manager as required by actions agreed in the plan. It is recommended that at least one review takes place during the year.