

# Learning and Development Policy

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Owner:	Head of Human Resources
Author:	Deputy Head of HR
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**Alternative Formats**

This documentation can be made available in alternative formats such as large print, Braille, disk, audio tape or in an ethnic-minority language upon request. Requests for alternative formats can be made to the Probation Board using the following contact information:

Deputy Head of HR  
Probation Board for Northern Ireland  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
3 Wellington Court  
Ballymena  
BT43 6EQ

E-mail: [admin.learning&development@probation-ni.gov.uk](mailto:admin.learning&development@probation-ni.gov.uk)

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## **1. Application of Policy**

The Board has a wide range of policies which may apply to different categories of people.

The application of this policy only applies to employees of the Probation Board for Northern Ireland. An employee is any person under a current contract of employment with PBNI, including fixed term contracts.

This policy applies to the design, delivery, implementation and evaluation of learning and development for all staff.

## **2. Rationale**

PBNI is committed to ensuring that all staff have access to learning, development and training opportunities which enable them to be suitably knowledgeable and skilled to carry out their role within the organisation.

PBNI also recognises the value of being a “learning organisation”. This will ensure that learning is self-driven and that all learning and development undertaken is relevant to an individual’s learning in the context of their role as well as being relevant to PBNI’s objectives identified in the Corporate Plan. The ultimate goal is to enhance the competence and professionalism of PBNI staff, thereby improving the level of service the organisation can provide.

PBNI staff should be aware that, in order to increase the efficiency of their personal contribution to the achievement of agreed objectives and priorities, training, learning and development will be an integral part of the process. The ‘learning organisation culture’, embraces the benefits of, and encourages the uptake of learning and development opportunities for all.

PBNI appreciates the importance of a planned and systematic approach to learning and development for all members of staff.

As an organisation committed to working in partnership, PBNI participates in a framework of collaborative work including universities, professional bodies and multi agency partnerships in the delivery of a range of courses including the NI Social Work Degree. As a Social Care Council designated Practice Learning Provider, PBNI offer a number of placement opportunities to students on their third year of the NI Social Work Degree.

## **3. Policy Aim**

To ensure that the mechanisms are in place to equip PBNI staff with the necessary knowledge, skills and attributes required to deliver the objectives identified in the Corporate Plan, Business Plan, team plans and individuals objectives within available resources.

## 4. Policy Objectives

- 4.1 To ensure learning and development is directly linked to organisational business objectives, taking account of identified priority skills needs.
- 4.2 To ensure learning and development is appropriately resourced to meet priority skills needs.
- 4.3 To ensure learning and development is appropriately resourced to meet commitments to agreed partnerships.
- 4.4 To ensure access to learning and development opportunities are equitable and fair and ensure there is an open and transparent process for selection of staff on learning events.
- 4.5 To support the drive towards maintaining and continuing professionalism.
- 4.6 To evaluate learning and development in terms of both delivery and impact on the achievement of objectives at all levels of the organisation.

## 5. Procedures

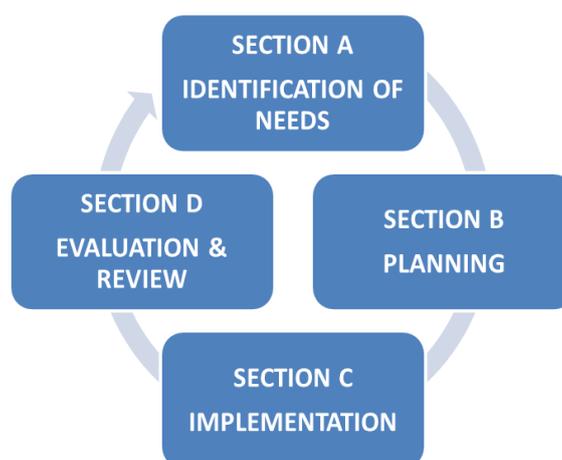
There are accompanying Learning & Development procedures which support the application of this policy

## 6. Structures/Mechanisms

PBNI has identified a 4 stage 'Learning and Development Cycle' which will align its objectives, with individual and team objectives and learning and development needs within the organisation.

The four stages of the cycle, as shown below are:

- A. Identify organisational learning and development needs
- B. Plan learning and development interventions
- C. Implement learning and development needs
- D. Evaluate learning and development



PBNI will identify individual and organisational learning and development needs in three main ways;

1. Corporate and Business Plans
2. Team Business Plans
3. Individual Objectives

### **6.1 Corporate Plan (3 Years) and Business Plan (Annual)**

The Corporate Plan specifies the strategic themes, accountability arrangements, guiding principles and values that PBNI will work towards over a 3 year period. In order to implement the Corporate and subsequent Business Plans, Learning and Development is essential for all staff. Corporate learning and development needs should be identified between January and March each year following agreement of the annual Business Plan which details the objectives for each business year.

### **6.2 Team Business Plans (Annual)**

Learning and development needs will also be identified through team planning following the publication of the Business Plan. Team planning involves using the Corporate and Business Plans to identify specific objectives & targets for each team in PBNI.

Unlike the organisational learning and development needs identification described above, more specific learning and development needs will be identified for each team in this stage. Training themes from the team planning process should be forwarded by the Area/Team Manager to the Deputy Head of HR who will analyse the learning priorities and add them to the TNA for approval by the Directors

### **6.3 Individual Objectives/Personal Development Plans (PDP's) As required**

A critical part PBNI's Performance and Development Review process is the creation of development plans for each member of staff. At this stage the plans and objectives that have been developed in the earlier stages of the process cascade down and feed into personal development plans in order that managers and their staff can discuss individual learning and development needs. The individual, having looked at the objectives for their team for the coming year, will be able to identify their own strengths, any areas of development in relation to the work that they will have to undertake and will be able to discuss with their managers how they think they will need to be developed, in order to meet the targets and objectives for their role.

Development needs should be identified, discussed and agreed by the individual and their line manager throughout the year during supervision, appraisals and ad hoc meetings. Development needs may be delivered by L&D staff or purchased externally, training needs may be fully funded by PBNI if resources are available. These training needs are noted on the Annual Objective Setting and Personal Development (Form 1) and then forwarded by Managers to the L&D team for inclusion in the training needs analysis and for discussion with the Directors.

The attainment of skills and knowledge should not necessarily focus primarily on the pursuit of formal qualifications but may be achieved through attendance at learning events, project working, job coaching, secondments, job rotation, job enrichment etc.

Although the stages above focus on planned events, this does not exclude staff, managers or teams requesting other training where specific needs arise during the course of the year however by forward planning it is hoped to reduce the number of ad hoc training requests received by the L&D team.

## **7. Secondments**

It is recognised by PBNI that secondments can be constructive and beneficial to the organisation and its staff. Secondments can provide individuals with the opportunity to enhance or develop skills and develop their understanding and knowledge of particular areas of work that are relevant to their current or future role. Additionally secondments may help develop valuable and rewarding relationships with external organisations and the communities served by PBNI. All secondments will be dealt with as noted in the PBNI Secondment Policy and Procedure.

## **8. Responsibilities**

- 8.1 The organisation will ensure learning and development is appropriately resourced to meet priority skills needs and commitments to agreed partnerships.
- 8.2 The Deputy Head of HR will plan and implement training according to training needs identified and agreed by the Directors at organisational level, team and individual level.
- 8.3 Line managers will support their staff to take responsibility for their own learning and development.
- 8.4 All staff will take responsibility for their own learning and development including attendance at training for which they have been nominated to attend.
- 8.5 Line managers will ensure that staff training needs are reviewed monthly during the supervision process. Staff attendance at training must also be discussed at these sessions.
- 8.6 Line managers will contribute to the identification of individual staff and team learning needs.

## **9. Resources**

Learning & Development team  
Learning & Development budget  
Learning and Development Centre

## **10. Communication and Training**

This Policy and accompanying procedures will be available on the intranet.

## **11. Monitoring and Evaluation**

The operation of the policy will be monitored by the Deputy Head of HR.

Evaluation of the operation of the policy and supporting procedures may be carried out on behalf of the Head of Human Resources.

## **12. Review**

This Policy will be reviewed 4 years from date of approval.

Interim reviews may also be prompted by feedback, challenge or identified best practice.

## **13. Implications of Non Compliance**

Breach of the Board's policy and procedures by employees may merit consideration under the Board's Disciplinary Policy.

## **14. Contacts, Enquiries and Advice**

If you require any further information on this policy you should contact:

[Gayle.mcgurnaghan@probation-ni.gov.uk](mailto:Gayle.mcgurnaghan@probation-ni.gov.uk)

## **14. Data Protection**

Staff of PBNI should be aware of their obligations under the Data Protection Act (2018) and Freedom of Information Act (2000) as set out in the Board's separate policy statements on Data Protection and Freedom of Information.

In short, all information held by PBNI, including the personal information of employees and service users, will be fairly and lawfully processed to enable PBNI to comply with its legislative and policy responsibilities in this area.

All staff of PBNI are responsible for applying the correct Data Protection principles when dealing with the information that they process and hold.