

Learning and Development Strategy



1 Introduction

This document sets out the learning and development strategy for CityWest Homes.

Learning and development is the cornerstone of CityWest Homes' success, it is the key enabling process that allows every person we employ to achieve their potential and a route by which we create a skilled and flexible workforce that can satisfy both internal and external customer needs.

The strategy is designed to ensure that we are investing in key learning activities that are aligned with the Delivery Plan and have maximum impact and demonstrate value for money. The process identifying learning needs, and the effective evaluation of learning are therefore essential elements of the strategy.

2 Aims of the strategy

Business goals and objectives should drive learning and development activities. The strategy aims to move towards learning as opposed to training as identified in the evaluation process. This will require engagement and commitment from all levels of CityWest Homes. The strategy itself provides a systematic approach to development, which:

- Increases individual and group adaptability and improves functional flexibility.
- Improves performance and meet organisational needs
- Extends the skills base and competency levels
- Increases commitment and motivation
- Is inclusive by valuing diversity
- Encourages everyone to take ownership of their own learning in line with CityWest Homes Delivery Plan.
- Promotes workshops as the preferred learning intervention for CityWest Homes.

3 Underlying Principles

All learning and development interventions should reflect City West Homes' visions, values and culture. This ensures that values are reflected in content, preparation and delivery.

CityWest Homes encourages and enables all staff to take responsibility for their own learning and development and for contributing their skills, knowledge and experience to help others develop.

CityWest Homes aims to integrate learning and work, recognising that continuous development in the workplace will contribute to CityWest Homes becoming a learning organisation.

Staff are encouraged and enabled to take personal responsibility for their learning and development HR will provide guidance support and tools to allow people to actively manage their own and others learning and development

4 How needs are identified

Learning needs are identified from three levels:

- **Organisational Objectives**

At an organisational level learning and development needs will be identified from external changes and corporate objectives.

- **Line Managers**

Will have the responsibility of proactively identifying learning needs for their team and individuals within their team. Individual needs will be identified through discussion of day-to-day problems, regular supervision sessions, team meetings and the annual performance review.

- **Staff**

By taking responsibility for their own learning and development needs, individuals are able to identify their own learning needs. These should be discussed with line managers in day-to-day discussions, supervision sessions, team meetings and the annual performance review.

5 Plans for learning and development

All learning should be linked to CityWest Homes' competency framework, this will provide a common language to be used to discuss performance and therefore development needs. Staff will understand why they are learning what the point of it is and how it applies to work.

Personal Development Plans will be produced after annual and mid-year performance reviews.

6 Learning and development opportunities

We need to focus on the most effective as an organisation need to question whether we can afford to invest in a wide range of learning activities that are not making any impact on CityWest Homes' effectiveness.

In order to make decisions about which programmes should be run evaluative information is necessary to support these decisions.

Evaluation of CityWest Homes' current learning activities show that learning interventions, which adopt an engaging interactive style, tend to be more successful in transferring and understanding learning. Content is more flexible and through effective debate the understanding of relevant issues is enhanced. CityWest Homes will continue to promote learning by understanding and doing and to provide mechanisms to share that learning within the organisation.

To achieve this objective, future learning and development programmes will focus on the following learning interventions.

- Workshop sessions
- Action Learning Sets
- External qualifications
- Short external courses
- On the job coaching
- Lunchtime briefings

In addition teams and individuals will take responsibility for identifying opportunities to meet special requirements as appropriate.

CityWest Homes supports and funds external qualifications training as appropriate. Details of entitlement to funding, day release and study leave can be found in the current learning and development programme manual.

7 Induction

All new staff will participate in a structured induction to both CityWest Homes and their respective job. All members of staff will attend the two half-day corporate induction run by human resources and will have the opportunity to meet with the Human Resources Officer or Human Resources Assistant on their first day as part of their induction. Line managers will also have the responsibility for ensuring that a full induction is undertaken and the individual is settled within their job and the organisation.

8 Access and Equality of Opportunity

Workshop venues will be accessible for people with disabilities and provision will be made for people with different needs e.g. hearing and sight impairment.

Applications for all learning activities with funding implications will be made to Human Resources using the learning and development form. This form requires both individual and line manager input.

Decisions about funding will be based on organisational priorities and equal opportunities considerations and will be within approved budgets.

Learning and Development opportunities are open to all staff. No members of staff have been refused training by HR to date however, we plan to strengthen monitoring of applications for all learning activities.

9 Monitoring and Evaluation

Impact analysis will be used as an evaluation tool whereby Senior Management and line managers decide what a learning activity should achieve before it takes place, as a result both line managers and HR are in a better position to evaluate whether its objectives have been achieved. In becoming more outcome focused and understanding what it is we want to achieve from a learning event, the more scope there is for learning and development to achieve organisational objectives.

Evaluation and review will be built into all Learning and Development intervention and managers will be encouraged to conduct their own evaluation of learning and development in addition to Human Resources.

The Human Resources Officer will produce an annual evaluation report to the Executive Team and Board based on the outcome of annual reviews, Learning Needs Analysis and organisational objectives. This will inform the next planning cycle.

10 Implementation and review process for this strategy

Implementation of this strategy will commence in January 2006 and all aspects will be in place by April 2006. The Executive Team will monitor the strategy and its implementation, to ensure its relevance and impact on current organisational objectives.