













Next steps



- Planning/resourcing with Executive and Corporate Team
- Development of project plan
- Collection of statistical data
 "Gap analysis"
- Integration with Service Planning
 Continuous consultation

Part 4.8: Appendix A

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The National Joint Council for Local Government Services for England, Wales and Northern Ireland (referred to as the NJC in this document), representing employers and trade unions are committed to good practice in training and development. The NJC recognises that employees are essential to the provision of high quality public services.
- 1.2 The 2004 pay agreement contained new training and development provisions in Part 2 Para 3 and Part 4.8 of the Green Book. Part 2 Para 3 of the National Agreement sets out how authorities will develop local Workforce Development Plans closely linked to service delivery. It states that training and development should be designed to meet the corporate and service needs of authorities both current and in the future, taking into account individual needs of employees. It also states that training and development should take into account the full range of learning methods, enable access to learning for all employees and that the needs of part time and shift workers need particular consideration. In addition, authorities should establish local partnership arrangements to include recognised trade unions, to develop their workforce development plans and to promote and support the statutory Union Learning Representative role.
- 1.3 Part 4.8 sets out guidance around workforce development planning, apprenticeships and trainees, skills pathways and individual development.
- 1.4 The NJC has produced this document to support the implementation of the NJC agreement and, in particular, to promote the benefits of workforce development and to show how partnership working between employers and trade unions can support successful workforce development. It provides practical advice to support working together to develop the local government workforce.
- 1.5 References are made throughout to supporting case studies, websites and other useful documents. Website links are provided for further details of the case studies used.

2. Why Workforce Development is Important

- 2.1 The pace of change in local government has never been greater, driven by advances in technology, changing customer expectations and demands, and new Central Government requirements, including the Efficiency Review. New skills are needed to improve performance, to cope with a changing environment and to make the most of new technology.
- At the same time, The Government's National Skills Strategy seeks to raise educational standards and attainments, supported by the Learning and Skills Council's vision that "by 2010, young people and adults in England have the knowledge and skills matching the best in the world and are part of a truly competitive workforce".
- 2.3 Forward thinking authorities and trade unions have recognised that a skilled workforce is key to achieving the requirements of the modernisation and change agenda. This requires a longer-term commitment to investing in developing the workforce. It can

only be done successfully in partnership between the authorities and the trade unions, if resources and expertise are to be maximised and used efficiently. **Union Learning Representatives (ULRs)**, were created to support the development of staff, recognising that some members of staff are more likely to make their learning and development needs known to a trusted member of the trade union, than a manager (see Para 6 below).

- 2.4 Part 4.8 includes a comprehensive list of all the elements to be considered in the production of a workforce development plan.
- 2.5 Many authorities are beginning to recognise the link between developing their staff, and improvement in performance, and strive to be **Learning Local Authorities**¹, many of them pursuing Investors in People accreditation or Public Sector Excellence Model status. In its Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) 2004, South Tyneside Council achieved a score of "Excellent", jumping two grades from "Fair". Their HR Manager has stated that there is a clear link between their success and their commitment to development of their workforce. Trade unions were involved at an early stage and were instrumental in establishing an open learning resource centre (see South Tyneside's Workforce Development Plan 'Building Capacity Focussing on Priorities' on the EO's website:

http://www.lg-employers.gov.uk/pay and workforce/planning/index.html

3. What is Workforce Planning and a Workforce Development Plan?

- 3.1 Workforce planning is the process of assessing what staff and skills the authority currently has, assessing what will be needed to provide services in the future, say in 3-5 years' time. The workforce development plan sets out the plan of action the authority intends to take to address any gaps, whether that be upskilling existing staff or recruiting more. The process works from both top down, with the council and the top level managers steering the organisation according to its vision and values, and from bottom up, assessing the needs of the individual and the frontline services.
- 3.2 The plans should be integrated into or linked to existing plans and strategies such as the Corporate Plan, HR Strategy, Learning and Development Plans and produced as part of the business planning process so that resources such as time and money are identified to carry out the plan.

¹ Authorities that create a supportive climate and encourage learning for all their employees. For details see the EO website: http://www.lg-employers.gov.uk/skills/lifelong/framework.html

4. Why is Workforce Planning and Producing a Workforce Development Plan Important?

- 4.1 There are many clear advantages to workforce planning and the production of a workforce development plan. There is strong evidence that investment in the development of employees has a beneficial effect on the performance of the organisation.
- 4.2 Authorities need to anticipate occupational skills gaps to avoid shortfalls in services due to shortages in key groups of staff such as Social Workers, Planners, Occupational Therapists, Environmental Health Officers, Trading Standards Officers, Building Control Officers and Librarians.
- 4.3 Workforce development provides an opportunity to address inequalities in the workforce profile and take action to remove barriers to progression that directly or indirectly discriminate, enabling everyone to achieve their full potential. The workforce development plan should set out the action the authority intends to take to redress imbalances.

Case Study

Manchester City Council successfully ran a coaching programme specifically aimed at developing black principal officers to enable them to gain more senior management positions. As a result of the programme 3 of the 4 who participated have secured higher graded jobs. The programme started with an assessment centre, following which all participants received feedback and were supported in identifying priority development needs.

Every service area now has a black staff group who meet regularly. These groups feed into the service top management teams. These teams are responsible for ensuring priority development needs are supported. There is also a corporate group who looks at cross cutting themes from the service groups and seeks to develop corporate development interventions. Recently four internal conferences have been held for all members of these black staff groups. The "Developing the Workforce" sessions were part of an impact assessment of the black staff groups on the approach to black staff development.

- 4.4 There are many other benefits to workforce planning and workforce development, such as those listed in Part 2 Para 3.3. This states that the objectives for training and development programmes should include the following:
 - To enable Councils to attain their strategic objectives via investment in their employees.
 - To promote equity of access to learning.
 - To encourage employees to develop their skills and level of responsibility to the maximum of their individual potential.
 - To widen and modernise the skills profile of employees to maximise their versatility, employability and so, job security.
 - To enable employees to raise productivity, quality and customer service in pursuit of sustainable improvement

5. How Can It Be Done?

- 5.1 In Part 2 Para 3.4, both sides agreed that authorities should establish local partnership arrangements, with recognised trade unions, to develop their local workforce development plans.
- 5.2 There are many good examples of joint working between the employer and the trade unions. One of the keys to success is having all key stakeholders/partners involved at an early stage, and in June 2004 in Newcastle, the trade unions wrote a submission to the council's first workforce development plan. It made a number of recommendations such as that every member of staff should have an individual learning plan (ILP), that barriers to learning should be identified and removed and that targets and commitments should be made on access to learning (for full document see UNISON's website http://www.unison.org.uk)
- 5.3 The Employers' Organisation has a number of case studies on its website showing different ways of workforce planning and development depending on the size and structure of your authority and the particular issues it faces. The key is to remember this is about a process and not just the production of a document.
- Part 4.8 lists all the elements that need to considered in a workforce development plan such as:
 - Employer commitments and targets such as release for staff to attend training, percentage of payroll spend per head on development, number of days training and so on.
 - Employer provisions for the release of Union Learning Representatives (ULRs) for training in their role as ULR, joint training with managers, and for consultation with staff around learning issues (see Para 6.7 below)
 - Learning Partnerships
 - An appraisal scheme providing each employee with an individual development plan
 - Data on workforce profile and access to development opportunities by grade, gender, ethnicity, disability and training outcomes
 - Links to assessments such as CPA, Best Value Reviews, Social Services and Ofsted inspections.
 - Links to National Occupational Standards
 - Skills pathways and generic skills frameworks
 - Links to the National Skills Strategy and other initiatives such as Skills for Life (Get On), Modern Apprenticeships and New Deal, NVOs and so on.
 - Lifelong Learning
 - Career advice and work with Connexions, schools and careers advisers on local government as a career
- 5.5 For full document see the EO's Workforce Development Plan Guidance on the EO website:
 - http://www.lg-employers.gov.uk/pay and workforce/planning/index.html

Case Study

At Nottingham City Council the take-up of training was very low and people were having difficulty finding the time for training or appropriate opportunities. Nottingham City Council and the unions addressed the problem by reaching agreement on minimum entitlements to training for all staff. The initial target was two days per employee per year and this rose to three days over the following two years. This entitlement is written into the council's HR strategy.

They also thought about how they could make training and development more attainable and have developed a wide range of activities, including work-shadowing, guided reading, project work and a variety of IT-based programmes.

For further details of this and other case studies go to www.unison.org.uk

6. Learning At Work and the Union Learning Representative

6.1 Union Learning Representatives (ULRs), who gained statutory recognition in the Employment Act 2002, were created to support the development of staff, recognising that some members of staff are more likely to make their learning and development needs known to a trusted member of the trade union, than a manager. This is especially true in the case of skills for life needs such as numeracy and literacy. ULRs can be particularly valuable where sections of the workforce are sceptical or have difficulty articulating their needs. ULRs have a significant role to play in engaging employees who have traditionally missed out on learning and development opportunities, such as shift/part-time workers, people from minority ethnic backgrounds and women.

6.2 The role of the ULRs is to:

- Help individual union members to analyse their learning and development needs
- Provide members with information and advice on learning and development
- Promote the value of learning and development to their members
- Broker learning opportunities
- Assess the effectiveness of learning and development
- Other activities that promote and support learning
- 6.3 The TUC, UNISON and GMB have all produced useful information on the role of Learning Representatives and Learning Advisers (see Annex A).
- 6.4 Good practice in the development of ULRs is emerging from those authorities that welcome the benefits that learning can bring to their workplace. It is anticipated that by 2012 ULRs will have introduced more than 500,000 people in the workforce to learning.
- 6.5 The trade unions have a range of resources they can bring to the partnership, such as programmes of training and development including distance learning programmes, access to the Union Learning Fund and experience from authorities across the whole country via union support networks. Many of those who take on the role of Learning

Rep or Learning Adviser will have experienced work based learning, and be able to advise and support employees who are seeking to develop.

- Organisations that take learning seriously will use the involvement of ULRs in a positive way. They may set up a learning committee or steering group involving employee representatives, union representatives, training and HR representatives and departmental representatives, where relevant. Together the employer and the trade unions can come to a "learning agreement" which formalises their commitment to learning (see Lincoln City Branch case study at Para 10.3). A learning agreement might include:
 - The specification of the number of learning representatives and the amount of time off to which they are entitled
 - The establishment of procedures for dealing with questions of time off
 - Facilities available for use by union learning representatives
 - The establishment of a joint learning committee
 - The undertaking of learning needs surveys
 - Regular promotional activities regarding learning
 - The dissemination of information and learning opportunities
- 6.7 A model learning agreement can be found on the TUC's website www.learningservices.org.uk

Case Study

Denis, from Knowsley Council, thought he and his fellow refuse collectors were treated as "second class citizens" when it came to learning. Knowsley's Equal Project Action Researcher engaged him with her enthusiasm for making change and he starting taking the situation in-hand, organising learning opportunities for both himself and his workmates.

Following the success of this he spoke at a couple of project meetings to partner organisations and as his confidence grew Denis trained as a Union Learner Rep and completed a 'Stepping Out' course, certificating him in the art of management. From his experiences he has now gone on to promote learning and resource provision within his workplace, even running his own Learning at Work Day within his depot.

Denis is currently working with the steering group he set up to forward an on-site learning resource centre for his colleagues.

For more information see the Campaign for Learning website <u>www.campaignforlearning.org.uk</u>

7. Overcoming Obstacles to Learning at Work

7.1 This section addresses some commonly cited reasons from both the individual and the employer against engaging in learning and development activity. ULRs have a significant role to play in overcoming many of these obstacles, as is illustrated in the case studies throughout this document.

8. Lack of Time

- 8.1 Many people feel too busy to take time out to reflect and learn. Part-time employees, shift workers and casual and temporary workers may have particular difficulty in getting time for training as they are likely to have family, caring or other commitments on their time. Research shows this is particularly true of single parents².
- 8.2 However, people who do not engage in active learning at work find their skills soon get out of date, and they get overlooked for key projects, promotion and other benefits, thus compounding the problem.
- 8.3 There are many examples of training and development that can be undertaken in a flexible way so that busy people can learn at more convenient times. Some examples include:
 - online learning
 - distance learning
 - modular learning tools such as the EO's Management Tracker see EO website: http://www.lg-employers.gov.uk/publications/fullpublications/management_development_tracker.html
- 8.4 Employers can do a lot to support staff who are trying to juggle commitments outside work and who have limited time opportunities to study, by having flexible working arrangements. There are an increasing number of employers implementing work-life balance initiatives with clear success. For example, East Riding tackled a difficulty in retaining staff in their Benefits Section by implementing different shift patterns and allowing staff to work from home. In South Yorkshire, the four local authorities—Barnsley, Doncaster, Rotherham and Sheffield worked in partnership with the Learning and Skills Council and the trade unions, using Objective 1 funding from the European Social Fund to carry out a study on work-life balance. They produced a document called "South Yorkshire's Balancing Act...creating better work-life balance within local authorities" containing case studies from each authority.
- 8.5 Education providers can work with staff and employers to become more flexible about when and where they provide learning support. Breakfast and after school clubs can help people with child caring commitments.
- People who traditionally miss out on learning opportunities such as women, ethnic minorities and people who speak English as a second language, older people can be an untapped resource for an authority. Enabling these people to learn can help to address recruitment and retention problems, as well as developing the workforce more equitably. Including equality as a standard requirement in management development is

² Women's Attitude to training survey by Campaign for Learning 1998

good practice. This should cover non-discriminatory behaviour as well as statutory requirements and should link to the authority's progression through the Generic Equality Standard. Monitoring of access to learning by gender, ethnicity, grade and so on is also good practice.

9. Cost/Lack of Money

9.1 Part 2 Para 3.2 states that, "Employees attending or undertaking required training are entitled to payment of normal earnings; all prescribed fees and other relevant expenses arising. Employees are also entitled to paid leave for the purpose of sitting for required examinations. When attending training courses outside contracted daily hours, part-time employees should be paid on the same basis as full-time employees. (Assistance for other forms of learning, for example that directed at individual development, will be locally determined). Qualification training can be expensive and authorities may require repayment of all or part of the costs incurred should an employee leave the authority before a reasonable time period has expired. The authority's policy in this regard should be made explicit."

Case Study

Brighton and Hove City Council is working with a range of partners to increase work-based development opportunities available to both front line workers and managers that are both useful and cost effective. Their "grow your own" approach has let to some creative solutions.

Initiatives include:

- A work-based management development programme in partnership with University of Brighton
- Introduction of a work based Diploma in Social Work in partnership with UNISON and the Open University, which includes a book allowance from UNISON
- Creation of a Learning Centre at the depot in partnership with GMB
- Introduction of a range of computer based learning packages to support the development of e-skills

See UNISON website http://www.unison.org.uk/for full case study

- 9.2 The Part 4.8 guidance encourages authorities to identify external funding opportunities. Many of the local authorities featured in this guidance were able to find additional funding from outside the organisation, some went to their local Learning and Skills Council, others worked with providers who were funded by government and were able to offer their programmes at a discounted rate, and still more were able to access the Union Learning Funds (see http://www.dfes.gov.uk/) by working in partnership with their union representatives. Others were funded by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) Capacity Building Fund (see website http://www.odpm.gov.uk).
- 9.3 Authorities need to look at the risks and pitfalls of *not* investing in their staff, and how this affects performance. They should look at the longer-term savings and efficiencies that can be made through workforce planning including:

- More efficient use of existing resources by using existing staff to coach and mentor others and using existing development opportunities such as secondments.
- Saving on recruitment costs by better staff retention and more efficient recruitment methods online recruitment, joint recruitment and so on.

Case study

Boston Borough Council's UNISON branch Education Co-ordinator decided to get to grips with Skills for Life when he became a ULR. He was able to secure funding from the LSC to set up a learning centre and to arrange the local college to deliver courses.

The results of this partnership approach are already providing rewards - working with Boston Borough Council, Boston College, and the Learning and Skills Council has opened up training opportunities to all Boston Borough Council Employees. This will improve staff confidence and skills and so build a stronger workforce who is happier both in and out of work.

10. Fear of Learning

- 10.1 Sometimes individuals don't feel confident about returning to a learning environment. They may have had bad experiences of learning perhaps at school. Others may have low levels of self-confidence and will worry about keeping up with others, or that they don't have the "right" qualifications or necessary skills.
- 10.2 Authorities should try to ensure that there is someone that people in this situation can talk to before the programme begins. They should ensure that the trainer(s) knows if any of the people have a special need, so that their needs can be built into the planning for the programme.
- 10.3 ULRs may be able to assist individuals to build confidence by assuring people that they can do it, providing information on the programmes in advance and by putting people in touch with others who have succeeded. They can help by using their experience and mentoring role to encourage both individuals and management. They can acknowledge different styles of learning and non-training learning. Evidence from the Campaign for Learning's Equal Project has proved that individuals, who are allowed to study non-work-related subjects initially, become more motivated to learn other, work related, skills.

Case Study

In January 2004 Lincoln City Council became one of the first Local Authorities in the country, and certainly the first in the East Midlands, to sign a Learning Agreement. As part of their commitment to lifelong learning, the Unions and the council worked together, with the LSC, to provide taster sessions in a wide variety of subjects, both work and non-work related, to encourage people to start learning again. Subjects covered were as diverse as Digital Photography and Head massage; basic IT and Flower arranging.

It gave a large number of employees the confidence in their ability to learn and many signed up for work related courses.

For further information go to http://www.unison.org.uk

- 10.3 In 1998 the National Adult Learning Survey by the DfES (www.DfES.gov.uk) found that 15% of adults said they didn't need training to learn for the kind of work they do. A further 13% said they were too old to learn. Some employers may discriminate against older people in training, as there can be an unspoken assumption that investment in training for older people is economically imprudent.
- 10.4 Training at work can sometimes be poor quality and irrelevant to an experienced workforce and this can lead people to feel that they don't want to bother with training. Badly managed change can leave a demoralised workforce reluctant to undertake training and development activities.
- An important aspect of planning to overcome these obstacles is to ensure that the training and development activities result in direct benefits to the individual employee as well as the local authority. Training which leads to certification, new skills, and/or a more interesting way of doing the job is likely to be more attractive to demoralised workers than something that they think it just a "bums on seats" exercise.
- 10.6 Authorities should find champions who are keen learners from within the workforce to encourage others to attend. They should publish success stories in their authority's staff newsletter and involve Union Learning Representatives, in selling the benefits of training to people who feel that they do not need to learn more.

Case Study

Staffordshire County Branch's initiative to offer educational opportunities for what is considered a traditionally low-skill sector of the workforce has paid off in helping craft a real working partnership with Staffordshire County Council's Cleaning Services. The partnership actively delivers training opportunities and laid the groundwork to develop a team of learning representatives and advisors.

The Union, the Workers Education Association and the council have provided essential training for over 2000 cleaning services staff, 96% of whom are female, part-time workers.

The training has improved health and safety, cost efficiency and retention of staff. There has also been a rise in the number of employees requesting further training, eg. NVQs.

The icing on the cake was winning in the West Midlands Workforce Development Awards 2004.

The full case study can be found at http://www.unison.org.uk/

11. Lack of Information

- 11.1 Much of the language that is used in the training and development world has developed into a mysterious jargon. NVQ, GNVQ, IiP, LSC,³ and so on are all mysterious acronyms to most people. The difference between the expressions "learning", "education", "training" and "development" is not clear, and often these words are used interchangeably.
- 11.2 The range of qualifications is confusing. The Campaign for Learning lists 16 different types of qualifications including NVQ's, University Degrees, school qualifications

³ National Vocational Qualification, General National Vocational Qualification, Investors in People, Learning and Skills Council

- such as GCSE/A Level; A/S Level, access courses, ONC, HND professional qualifications, management qualifications. There are many more. Employers will be asking themselves, "is this a qualification that is valuable for us to use?", and employees will be asking, "will this be valuable to my career/prospects?"
- 11.3 There may be many more opportunities for work-based learning than the individuals are aware of, and Union Learning Representatives can help by demystifying and guiding employees to valuable programmes and/or qualifications
- 11.4 A number of methods of skills auditing using most up to date IT systems are currently being piloted.
- 11.5 In the North West region, EO with Halton, Macclesfield, Blackpool and Wirral Councils are piloting a skills auditing system. Findings will be published on the EO website later in 2005.
- 11.6 ULRs can help by adding their knowledge of workforce issues to that of employers and managers. Managers may also need training in conducting appraisals and identifying development needs.
- 11.7 EO has a number of tools on its website to support training needs analysis. Information gathered from authorities on spend on training and development, days per head and other indicators are collated to form the People Skills Scoreboard produced annually by the EO. This can be used for benchmarking purposes.

12. Fear That Staff Will Leave

- 12.1 Managers sometimes fear that if money is spent on training the workforce, they will leave and take the new skills with them. In practice it is employees who lack development opportunities who are more likely to leave.
- 12.2 A common plea from those who have had training is to be allowed to use their new skills in the workplace. If an employee can use the new skills they have acquired and feel valued for doing so, they are likely to be more motivated to stay with the employer.
- 12.3 Employers fear that their trained workforce will be "poached" by other organisations. This is something that is actually experienced by many authorities. Some employers have tried a "golden handcuffs" approach requiring the employee to stay for a set period of time or pay the training fees back if they leave early. However, it might be more practical to try building a range of different options, to encourage staff to stay, into the workforce development plan, such as career progression pathways and succession planning, secondment opportunities and good people management practices that make employees feel valued.
- 12.4 Organisations need to ensure that their approach to evaluation provides them with data on this aspect of the "return on investment", in order to establish whether it is really true that people leave, or just a myth. They need to check the organisation's turnover figures and consider is there a high staff turnover, are there reasons for this, and are they being tackled?

13. In Summary

- 13.1 This NJC Guidance illustrates some of the action that can be taken to overcome obstacles to learning at work and workforce development. It is clear from the case studies that much can be achieved through strengthening partnership working between trade unions and employers with benefits to all concerned. The individual's life can be enriched, inequalities tackled and untapped skills and resources accessed. At the same time the employer benefits from having a skilled and professional workforce able to perform well and deliver improved services efficiently and effectively.
- 13.2 Many of the Regional Employer Organisations have a long history of providing training and development and there are discussions on workforce development at Provincial Council meetings.

Sources of Information

For more information about the workforce development agenda the following websites may be useful.

Employers' Organisation for local government - www.lg-employers.gov.uk

Regional Employers Organisations - http://www.lg-employers.gov.uk/links/index.html

TUC Learning Services - www.learningservices.org.uk

GMB - www.gmb.org.uk

TGWU - www.tgwu.org.uk

UNISON - www.UNISON.org.uk

Improvement and Development Agency - www.idea.gov.uk

Campaign for Learning – www.campaignforlearning.org.uk

Learning and Skills Council – www.lsc.gov.uk

Workers Education Association – www.wea.gov.uk

Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development - www.cipd.co.uk

Learndirect - www.learndirect.co.uk

The following publications may also be useful:

"The Learning Rep" available from TUC Learning Services: Tel: 0207 467 1309

"UNISON Workplace Learning Partnerships" pack available from UNISON Open College 1, Mabledon Place, London WC1H 9AJ

Lifelong Learning – a branch guide Available from UNISON Open College 1, Mabledon Place, London WC1H 9AJ

Trade Union Learning Representatives – The Change Agenda – CIPD CIPD House, Camp Road, London SW19 4UX

"South Yorkshire's Balancing Act.... creating better work-life balance within local authorities" - produced jointly between the LSC and local authorities. For copies contact Pam Walton - email address: cmb@sheffield.fg.co.uk