

Post Entry Training and Education Policy

Introduction

The Comhairle aims to support employees in the acquisition of skills and knowledge, and the development of competencies for continuous improvement in performance and the effective delivery of services to meet the Comhairle's strategic objectives.

It is the policy of the Comhairle to support and encourage employees to pursue courses of study leading to recognised professional and technical qualifications to the mutual benefit of individual employees and the Comhairle.

Identification of Training Needs

Training needs are routinely identified through the Performance Appraisal process and incorporated into departmental training plans. Chief Officers are responsible for managing approved training across their services to ensure both current, and future, workforce needs are met.

All learning and development opportunities must be appropriate to the needs of the Comhairle and are subject to the availability of financial resources, all requests will be considered on this basis.

Authorisation

Employees must obtain prior approval from their line manager through discussion. Line Managers will discuss learning and development opportunities with their direct reports before any employee attends training.

To qualify for financial assistance it will be necessary to have the authorisation of the relevant Chief Officer of the Department as to the course of study to be undertaken. Continuity of assistance will be subject to satisfactory performance on the part of the employees concerned.

Agreements

Where the Comhairle is covering the costs of an employee's training course or qualification (this being a course or qualification, rather than one day course or workshop) a written agreement will be made that if the employee leaves the Comhairle's employ during or having completed the course, the employee will be expected to reimburse the Comhairle as per the agreement.

Where the Comhairle provides financial assistance towards training, appropriate agreements will be drawn up by Human Resources specifying the extent of reimbursement and/or continuation of employment period. Employees will be required to sign a formal Training Agreement prior to commencing training.

Authorising managers are required to notify Human Resources, giving at least 4 weeks' prior notice of the commencement of the training to allow sufficient time for the agreement to be concluded.

Details of Financial Assistance

When an employee is pursuing an approved course of study, they will be eligible for financial assistance, prescribed course fees and other approved educational expenses arising from an employee's attendance at a course will be met by the Comhairle.

Costs relating to accommodation, travel, subsistence are to be agreed in advance and claimed in line with the Policy on the Payment of Travelling Expenses and the Reimbursement of Expenditure.

It will be open to the Comhairle, where considerable financial outlay is concerned, to require an undertaking

that the employee will remain in post, in the service of the Comhairle, after completion of the training in question, for a period of three years.

Where financial assistance is given for the full purchase cost of reference books these books will, upon completion of the course or relevant section of the course, become the property of the Comhairle and will be placed in the appropriate departmental library.

Study Time

Employees granted supported learning and development opportunities must be prepared to, and able to, undertake independent private study in their own time. This may include study and/or attendance at evening and weekend classes.

Where possible, subject to the needs of the service, employees will be given the opportunity to attend day release and appropriate block release courses leading towards approved qualifications.

All employees receiving release and/or financial assistance for approved courses will be granted 1 day's paid leave for attendance at examinations on the day of the examination, should the exam fall on a normal working day.

Continuation of Employment

When considerable financial outlay is involved in training employees for a qualification, the Comhairle will require employees to commit to remain in post, in the service of the Comhairle, after completion of the training, for a period of three years. The Comhairle reserves the right to reclaim the expenditure incurred should an employee leave their post and/or the Comhairle's employment earlier than the period stipulated.

It is recognised that movement within a service or the wider Comhairle may be mutually beneficial, in such instances, and with agreement from relating Chief Officers, there will be an exemption applied relating to the recovery of training expenditure from an employee.

Liability for Refund of Assistance

If employees leave their post or employment at any time, for any reason, including dismissal, once the training has been agreed and paid for by the Comhairle, they are required to refund the Comhairle 100% of the cost of training, this includes leaving before commencement of the training if it has been paid for and during the training taking place.

Employees should also be aware that funding can be withdrawn and employees will be required to repay the full amount received if they; fail to take the relevant examinations; fail the course, do not make satisfactory progress in their studies e.g. failure to attend lectures; non-completion of coursework and/or discontinue the course before completion.

Since considerable financial outlay is involved in training for recognised qualifications, the Comhairle will require employees to remain in post, in its service, subsequent to completion of the training, for a period of three years. The Comhairle reserves the right to reclaim the expenditure incurred should employee's leave their post or the Comhairle's employment earlier than the period stipulated as follows:

- 100% of the training costs
If you leave your post within 1 years from the date of obtaining a recognised qualification
- 50% of the training costs
If you leave your post within 2 years from the date of obtaining a recognised qualification

- 25% of the training costs
If you leave your post within 3 years from the date of obtaining a recognised qualification