

LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT POLICY

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Approved by	SMT
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Audience – Training and Awareness Method	A briefing will be sent to all managers to include in team meetings and a specific brief will be sent to Authorised Training Representatives to ensure they understand the full responsibilities of their role. This will also be covered in the ATR meetings.
Effective Date	January 2015

Internal References	Equality and Diversity Policy
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External References	Data Protection Act 1998
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Comments	
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LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT POLICY

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1. LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT POLICY STATEMENT

Blackwood will develop all employees in order that they have the knowledge, skills, capability and engagement necessary to meet current and future organisational needs. This policy reflects the culture of continuous learning and development within Blackwood. By ensuring this culture is embedded in our workforce, we are able to deliver high quality services across our organisation. We will align all our Learning and Development activities to the People Strategy and work within the latest Investors in People framework. This ensures that we provide managers and employees with the opportunity to develop their skills in line with organisational strategies and values.

2. KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

2.1. Blackwood's Responsibilities

- To foster the culture of learning and development within Blackwood, we will ensure our People Strategy is clearly communicated across the organisation providing opportunities for all our employees.
- To identify the current and future training needs of employees and link these to cost effective, value adding training programmes.
- To provide an effective induction programme for all staff in all roles across the organisation. This will ensure each individual has a thorough and clear understanding of Blackwood, their role within the organisation and their responsibilities, underpinned by the company values. All staff will be provided with mandatory training relevant to their role plus ongoing refresher training as required. All mandatory training will be completed within the individual's probationary period
- To provide ongoing training support to ensure continuous improvement in skills and knowledge, and the development of an attitude and approach conducive to attaining Blackwood's business goals.
- To encourage and support employees to undertake further studies in subject areas which are of benefit to themselves and their role within Blackwood. This includes specific requirements of all professional bodies e.g. Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) and Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC).
- To encourage managers to work with employees and develop individuals by comparing the needs of Blackwood with the outcomes of both formal annual Performance Reviews and ongoing personal reviews, identifying and meeting training and development requirements as a result of this process.
- To involve, in so far as is practicable, customers in developing training programmes in aspects of service delivery, which directly affect service users.

2.1.1 Board Members' Responsibilities

Blackwood is dedicated to providing training and development to Board Members to ensure that they have a good understanding of Blackwood's activities and that they acquire and maintain the skills and knowledge required to carry out their responsibilities. It will be the joint responsibility of Human Resources and Business Services to ensure an appropriate induction programme is designed for new Board Members and that present and future training needs for current Board Members are identified, and delivered in accordance with Blackwood's Board Learning and Development Policy.

2.1.2 Line Managers' Responsibilities

Line managers are responsible for promoting and encouraging learning and development. More specifically they are responsible for ensuring that employees successfully complete their induction and mandatory training in their probationary period. During induction the line manager and employee take joint responsibility for ensuring that training needs are identified and a training plan is implemented. Once employees are confirmed in post, the annual performance review process will commence in line with the annual cycle, along with regular supervision and one to one meetings. Line managers should take responsibility for identifying gaps in individuals skills set against their job profile and inform HR or the Authorised Training Representative (see Section 2.1.4) of any training or development required.

2.1.3 Employees' Responsibilities

Employees will take responsibility for their own personal development and attend training sessions and learning activities that are arranged. Employees must be up to date with current policies and procedures and ensure that they raise training gaps with their manager through one to one meetings, supervision, performance reviews or through informal feedback. It is important that the employee then implements the learning that they have gained as soon as they return to the workplace and raise any concerns that have arisen as a result.

2.1.4 Authorised Training Representative (ATR)

The ATR is responsible for overall training and development of employees within their unit or department, in conjunction with the HR Officer; they should source, book and administer training requirements. They will liaise with their line manager to keep within the constraints of their budget and purchase best value services. The ATR will keep local training records including training logs. They will ensure all employees within their area of responsibility are inducted and adequately trained to provide a high level of service.

3. KEY OPERATIONAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Induction

The aim of the induction programme is to allow new employees to orientate themselves in Blackwood, to understand key policies and procedures, to develop working relationships and to understand their role and who they should seek support from. Job specific training is likely to be variable in relation to each individual's skills set measured against their job profile, person specification and competency profile and will be determined locally. This will include learning and development to improve performance within a specific area or in line with service user requirements.

The line manager is responsible for ensuring an appropriate induction is completed within their service in the agreed timescales with any additional training needs identified and implemented. For the full induction procedure see Appendix One Section 5

3.2 **Re-Induction**

Blackwood has a culture of continuous improvement, meaning that work practices may change over a given period. If an employee has been away from their role for a period of time, either due to absence including maternity leave or secondment a second induction to the department, tailored to the individual, will take place to ensure that the employee is made aware of any changes to their role, department and working practices. This will ensure that the employee settles back into their role quickly.

3.3 **Mandatory Training**

All mandatory training must be carried out as a requirement set by legislation - a list has been devised to ensure that all employees are trained in the same basic requirements. The list of mandatory training for Care and Housing Support can be found at <G:\Human Resources\1. HR Open Folder\Training\ATR Meetings\Mandatory training Updated Guidance 2014-15 AMB.doc>

3.4 **Performance Review**

Blackwood is committed to developing and growing individuals during their time with the organisation. A key part of that development journey is the Probationary Period review meetings at 1, 3 and 5 months, and the Annual Performance Review. These meetings provide an opportunity to dedicate time on a 1:1 basis to the individual's performance and development including: recognising achievements, identifying development opportunities, discussing the employee's career aspirations and planning for the future.

The Annual Performance Review form and process guide can be found on the links below; <G:\Human Resources\1. HR Open Folder\03. Appraisals and Reviews\Appraisal Process 2014\Annual Performance Review form 2014 v1.0.doc>

<G:\Human Resources\1. HR Open Folder\03. Appraisals and Reviews\Appraisal Process 2014\Annual Performance Review 2014 Guidance Notes v1.0.doc>

3.5 **Supervisions, 1:1's and Coaching Support**

On-going coaching and mentoring is key to strong individual and team performance. Support and supervision is a 2-way process that is planned in advance and occurs every 6-8 weeks. This dedicated time between employees and their line manager ensures that progress is being made against the employee's objectives. Coaching and mentoring ensures employees benefit from the practical experience of others as well as exploring new learning and growth themselves..

3.6 Team Meetings

Regular team meetings are essential for sharing ideas and achieving business outcomes together, they should be used as a forum to discuss all relevant matters that involve the team and the service that we provide. All employees are asked to interact constructively by listening to others, respecting their views and playing an active part in identifying any conclusions or actions as required.

4. FURTHER EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Blackwood encourages all employees to continue to improve their educational and professional standards to ensure that they are competent, confident and capable in delivering high quality services. This may be achieved through various learning and development activities. Employees should approach their ATR or line managers with a completed Employee Learning and Development Form if they wish to undertake external training or qualifications <G:\Human Resources\1. HR Open Folder\11. Forms Templates\Training & Development Forms\Employee Learning and Development Application Form.doc>. Individual cases will be considered on their merits and will take into account the relevance of the proposed course, budgetary implications and equal opportunity. Information about further education and professional development is included in the bullet points below:

- Registration of Professional Bodies - Where specified and agreed Blackwood will fund the requirements of all professional bodies.
- Scottish Vocational Qualification (SVQ) - In order to comply with SSSC requirements, and to maintain the highest standard of care to our service users, Blackwood recognises the value of the SVQ as a training and development tool and will aim to ensure that all employees undertake the relevant level for their position in line with SSSC registration requirements. All employees must demonstrate a willingness to learn and commitment to the process; this will be discussed following the SVQ's assessor's visit.
- Financial Assistance in terms of Scottish Qualifications Authority registration and course fees may be administered in accordance with Blackwood's Further Education Procedure see Section 2.6.2.
- Learning Agreement - An employee who is undertaking a course of further education, professional development or a Scottish Vocational Qualification level 3 and above will be asked to sign a learning agreement which must be drawn up either by the HR department or ATR. This will specify Blackwood's resources and commitment being offered to the individual and the conditions under which the individual employee is expected to proceed. A copy of the signed agreement will be retained in the employee's personnel record by HR.
- Continued Professional Development (CPD) – Once an employee has achieved the agreed level of learning for their role they are expected to maintain their qualification by keeping themselves informed on any changes to legislation and continue to develop themselves professionally. Employees are expected to keep a record of what they have learnt, how they did this, how many hours the learning took and how they plan to put this into practice within the workplace. This will be reviewed each year in line with Annual Performance Reviews and can be used as evidence of learning for professional bodies.

5. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Any learning activity that is funded through Blackwood must be monitored to ensure that they are meeting the objectives of the individual, unit and Blackwood at large. Training records & relevant material from in-house and external training will be maintained locally and at Head Office. It is the responsibility of the ATR's to maintain accurate training records for evidence, cross-reference and budgetary purposes.

6. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

Blackwood is committed to equal opportunities for all employees and service users and prides itself in the fair treatment of all while recognising each person's individuality. The Equality and Diversity policy can be found here; <G:\Policies, strategies and guides\02 Document Library\Human Resources\Appendix B - Equalities and Diversity Policy.doc>

7. POLICY MONITORING AND REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years or at any significant changes within Blackwood.

APPENDIX 1 - LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT PROCEDURES

1. Learning and Development Process

For any academic course of study, attendance at a training course or conference, it is the employee's responsibility to ensure that they commence the application process at a sufficiently early stage.

The employee will complete the first section of the Employee Learning and Development Application Form and then give it to their manager to complete the next section.

The line manager will check that the application is relevant to the employee's/department's objectives, that there is the appropriate budget to pay for the training and commit to reviewing the learning with the individual after the event has occurred. Where necessary the line manager will discuss the application with the employee. When the manager has satisfied themselves that the course is appropriate they will sign and date the form to authorise the course to be booked. A copy of the form will then be taken to be discussed post event and the original will be passed to the HR

Where the line manager is not able to support the application, they will give their reason to the employee before passing the form on to the HR Officer/ATR. Should the employee feel that the application should have been approved they may approach HR to discuss this further.

Once the HR Officer/ATR receives an approved form they will check that both sections of the application form have been completed fully and accurately. If any parts of the form are not fully completed the HR Officer/ATR will return the application form to the employee or their line manager with a request for the required details before processing the application further.

On successful completion of the approved form, the HR Officer/ATR will arrange for formal booking for a place at the event/course of study. Where the booking arrangements require the course fee to be submitted with the booking the HR team/ATR will prepare this in accordance with financial procedures.

If the course is not available for any reason, the HR department/ATR will advise the employee and their line manager and alternative arrangements will be discussed. The HR department/ATR will advise the employee and line manager when the course is booked. The HR department/ATR will then ensure the individual's training record is updated.

If information gained in the training/event is of interest to other members of the team, the line manager may ask the employee to cascade this to colleagues. This could occur by circulating copies of handouts, a summary or by preparing briefing sessions using the knowledge sharing template. <G:\Human Resources\1. HR Open Folder\11. Forms Templates\Training & Development Forms\Sharing Information Template 2015 v1.0.doc>

2. **Right to Request Training**

The right to request time off to undertake study or training is available in Blackwood. This right entitles employees to apply for time off without pay to participate in work-related training that they think will make them more effective at work and improve business performance. To apply employees must submit a written request. Employees can only apply if they have worked for Blackwood for at least six months and have not made a request in the past 12 months. The employee's line manager will then meet with the employee within 28 days to discuss the request. The line manager must discuss this further with HR before sending the employee a written, dated notice of our decision within 14 days of the meeting. Blackwood must consider requests seriously and can only refuse them on specified business grounds. If refused the response must specify the relevant reason why it is not approved and if approved, Blackwood are not legally required to fund the training or allow the employee paid time off.

3. **Further Education Procedure**

- 3.1 The overall level of financial and other support will be determined by Blackwood when course approval is given. Blackwood may limit the overall level of financial assistance (including time off) it is prepared to fund and may not cover all such costs. An employee should not make any firm commitment without prior approval in writing from their line manager and HR. Each individual case is considered on its merits

In defining financial assistance, Blackwood includes, but is not limited to; direct payment to the educational or administering body, examination fees, expenses relevant to the course of study and granting of paid or unpaid time off. Excess travelling expenses incurred as a result of attending a day release course may be reimbursed. Overnight expenses may also be reimbursed. Excess travelling expenses are defined as the difference between the daily cost of travel as a result of attending a course and the normal cost of travel from the employee's home to place of work (one return journey per day) both by public transport. The general level of any such assistance will be determined when course approval is given and dependent on individual circumstances.

Prior approval is required by the line manager for the purchase of books, tools or equipment, the cost of which will be met by Blackwood up to a specified limit which will be determined when course approval is given. On completion of the course, Blackwood may require the books to be returned to HR for reference or loaned to future students unless other arrangements are agreed. Tools and equipment may also be required to be returned to HR or may be kept on loan, at the discretion of HR until such time as the employee leaves Blackwood's employment. The employee concerned must rectify any loss or damage to books, tools or equipment. The employee will meet the cost of any books, tools or equipment not approved by Blackwood. No provision is made for the refund of subsistence costs

- 3.2 Special leave with pay can be granted for the purpose of final revision preceding a certified examination (not a class examination). The study leave permitted will be equivalent to one day's leave for each full day on which the employee is sitting examinations. Similarly a half-day's leave will be granted for each half day on which the employee is sitting examinations. Paid leave of absence to sit examinations will be granted on the same basis.

Blackwood may additionally grant time off work for subject study purposes to those employees undertaking correspondence or distance learning courses. The time away from duties may be at the place of work, if such arrangements can be made, or away from the place of work.

Leave of absence to attend an approved course will involve no loss of salary or wages. The employee will be paid normal salary in accordance with the appropriate conditions of service.

- 3.3 Any abuse of the benefits or facilities afforded to complete an approved course of study for which financial assistance has been made, without good reason or bring Blackwood into disrepute, may result in a withdrawal of assistance for that course of study by Blackwood, and may also require the employee to repay part or all of the course registration, examination fees and professional membership. This could also be treated as a disciplinary matter if determined to be in breach of Blackwood's Code of Conduct.
- 3.4 If Blackwood agrees to support employees in training and development activity, especially extended training or college education, we are making a very substantial commitment. We expect the commitment of employees to be no less. We recognise that employees may undertake a course in good faith, but find that for various reasons the course is not achievable. It is important to address this at an early stage. If employees find that they are unable to pursue a course, or that they are having unforeseen problems, they should discuss this with their line Manager at the earliest opportunity. We will view sympathetically problems which have been explained providing employees have tried to address the situation and are working hard to resolve the situation. Blackwood may reclaim the cost of registration, course and examination fees if it is decided that the employee has not made satisfactory progress either by irregular attendance at college or insufficient application to the course of study and there are no extenuating circumstances.
- 3.5 If an employee withdraws from a course of study or fails to sit an examination without the permission of their line manager or HR, Blackwood may also reclaim the cost of registration, course and examination fees.

If an employee leaves the service of Blackwood for any reason within two years of the completion of the course of study or without completing the course of study, the Association reserves the right to reclaim the costs based on the following scale.

0 - 6 months	100% of the full costs
6 - 1 year	50% of the full costs
1yr - 2 years	25% of the full costs

Where an employee fails an examination, their line manager or HR may allow the employee to reset the examination and may reimburse the examination fee. If the employee is also required to repeat the course of study this will be done at evening classes and financial assistance, as appropriate, may be granted. Where there are no evening classes available, the employee may be allowed time off work but may be responsible for payment of all fees and expenses.

Where an employee fails the reset examination, having repeated the course of study the employee will not normally be allowed further time off work or financial assistance for further day release classes. HR has discretion to vary this condition depending on particular circumstances. If the employee is successful in the reset examination, a normal resumption of day release facilities will be granted. However where the employee fails at a further stage in the course of study, no further assistance will be given either to reset the examination or to repeat the course of study.

- 3.6 Where an employee is appointed to a different post within Blackwood, then the employee will be allowed to complete the academic year. Any further facilities granted will be subject to discretion.
- 3.7 Any employee undertaking a course of further education or professional development should be asked to provide regular updates to their line manager. In turn, comment should also be made on a student's progress at Annual Performance Review and one to one/supervision meetings, mentioning any achievements of note or concerns raised, this includes value for money and support required.
- 3.8 Blackwood will support any employee who wishes to open an Individual Learning Account. As the name suggests, the account can only be opened by an employee and is to be used to get discounted training in a wide range of learning and development activities. Any employee looking to attend further education or professional development is strongly encouraged to enquire about eligibility for ILA. More information on ILA's can be found at www.ilascotland.org.uk, their free helpline 0808 100 1090

4. **Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQ) Procedure**

- 4.1 Blackwood must comply with the qualification criteria set by the SSSC. A decision on applicants to conduct SVQ may be taken by local management in conjunction with the HR Department based on equal opportunities, management considerations and available resources. Each individual case is considered on its merits and the recommendation of the line manager.

Funding provision may be augmented by local enterprise companies and local colleges either through European Social Fund grants or by specific local initiatives. Advice and further information is available from the HR Department.

- 4.2 To facilitate the provision of SVQ's, Blackwood may enter into partnership with colleges that are registered as Vocational Qualification providers as defined by the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA). The advantage being that colleges can then oversee and administer the process, appoint an External Verifier who carries out registration procedures for each individual and provide professional advice and backup when required. They should be monitored to ensure that the agreed level of support for candidates.

The provision of SVQ may also be carried out in partnership with other organisations such as charities, local consortium groups, local authorities or care providers. In such cases Blackwood should ensure that there is adequate evidence to reinforce claimed success rates and the organisation has the capability to absorb Association employees into the programme and that they are accredited by the SQA to deliver vocational qualifications.

4.3 Blackwood encourages employees to undertake training at a level that will challenge their capabilities and promote an improved understanding of good practice. It is recommended that Support Workers with key-working responsibilities will undertake an SVQ at Level 3. Support Workers with no key-working experience should undertake an SVQ at Level 2.

5. **Induction Procedure**

5.1 When a job offer has been made and accepted, an Induction Programme will be drawn up by the Line Manager in consultation with the employee for use during the early stages of the new recruit's employment. Mandatory training guidance for each role must be followed. <G:\Human Resources\1. HR Open Folder\Training\ATR Meetings\Mandatory training Updated Guidance 2014-15 AMB.doc> Programmes will vary accordingly to the nature of the post being filled but will normally incorporate the features outlined below.

- The job role
- The workplace and Blackwood
- Association standards, codes of practice,
- Blackwood policies and procedures
- Pay and employment conditions
- Equal opportunities
- Health and safety
- Employee welfare

Although the line manager will be responsible for drawing up and coordinating the induction programme, the responsibility for learning is held by the new employee. For new employees in any role, especially those which required the use of IT, an assessment of skills should be carried out, and a detailed programme created. For care and housing support services the induction process is outlined

5.2 Blackwood aims to develop and improve continuously. In some cases, line managers may have to hold re-induction sessions with employees who have been away from their workplace for some time. This will be to ensure that any changed procedures and practices are passed on and managers are comfortable with an individual's capability and knowledge. These conditions would specifically apply to relief employees who are only rarely available for shifts or employees returning from long-term absence or secondment.

In these cases, some form of written note should be held with their local training file to indicate that re-induction has taken place. Particular emphasis should be given to Health and Safety matters, Manual Handling and Risk Assessment. However, there is for all managers and employees a requirement to ensure that they understand and apply new thinking in their work, and do not simply carry on as though nothing changes.