

2.2 Learning and Development

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Policy Statement

The Learning and Development department is a central function of Bryn Melyn Care Ltd and recognises the importance of close collaboration with other departments in order to meet the needs of the organisation best, ultimately, in order to meet the complex needs of the young people residing with us. We strive to develop and maintain a structured and comprehensive programme within a culture of continuous learning and development modelled on meeting the needs of employees at all levels of Bryn Melyn Care. We do this through a programme that equips staff to deliver best (reflective) practice and lead young people towards positive outcomes.

The learning and development programme maintains enough flexibility to be able to respond to areas of specialist learning or need that may arise or be requested by staff in order that their learning will enable them to best promote young people's safety, stability, growth and development. Whilst also being structured and progressive enough to support workers to acquire the knowledge, skills and develop the understanding and attitudes necessary to enable them to perform their job roles to the highest standards.

1. Learning and Development Overview

The Company will endeavour to provide its workforce with a progressive and role-appropriate learning and development programme. Whilst the learning and development department holds responsibility for the overarching programme, expectations within the sector and Bryn Melyn Care include an understanding that individuals take some responsibility for their own learning. Learning opportunities exist through traditional classroom teaching/learning, seminars, direct team support (relevant research papers, DVDs, or other presentations may be used as supportive materials), coaching, mentoring, on-line and distance learning, supervision, experiential learning and reflection.

We utilise specialist internal and external staff to ensure we support our workforce to meet the complex needs of our young people. Organised classroom and workshop events should form only a

part of the whole developmental spectrum - both the classroom and workplace should be utilised as learning environments. Learning opportunities should be incorporated as part of wider staff development programmes, including work based coaching, participation within a culture of reflective practice and an openness to share good practice with colleagues - including applying theory to practice, role modelling and assessment/review. Structured yet flexible opportunities allow a range of learning activities to be pursued, to suit the breadth of learning styles that exist across our workforce. Activities should be strongly related to regulatory requirements, best practice and the ethos and values of Bryn Melyn Care.

The Company will provide opportunities for staff to participate in various courses accredited through recognised bodies as well as qualifications within the Qualification and Credit Framework. Since 2010, we have been supporting and encouraging staff to undertake a degree in Therapeutic Child Care, initially as a foundation degree, before the final year at BA (Hons) level. In addition, the level 3 and 5 Diplomas within the Qualification and Credit Framework are expected qualifications that staff will be supported to achieve as appropriate to their role, responsibilities and development plan.

Our 'Learning and Development Protocol' is available from each establishment within the organisation. The document is three-fold as it highlights the responsibilities of trainers, learners and the learning and development department in relation to learning and development events/activities. All staff should familiarise themselves with the content of this protocol, which outlines the processes for communicating learning and development related information.

Additional copies can be requested from the learning and development department.

Learning and development opportunities are detailed in a regularly (monthly) updated Spreadsheet and distributed to staff via homes and managers, together with other relevant information, which includes data on staff attendances at past events and staff allocations for future events.

Managers and individual members of staff are both accountable in ensuring staff access appropriate learning and development opportunities to meet individual and organisational needs, whilst complying with the regulatory expectations to keep up to date with statutory training.

Staff who fail to maintain their statutory training requirements may not be able to work until they have met those requirements, as we endeavour to exceed minimum standards expected by the regulators and sector.

The learning and development department will be responsible for the management of the programme, the budget and the provision of learning and development opportunities, in consultation with the appropriate Director. All staff are encouraged to actively discuss their learning and development needs with their supervisors, who are responsible for deciding whether this information is passed on to the learning and development department for consideration. Additional opportunities may be organised this way for individual staff members, as part of their professional development plan and for whole teams as appropriate to the needs of the young person they care for.

The completion of a learning and development CPD Request form should be forwarded to the learning and development manager on the occasions that staff are seeking access to learning and development opportunities outside of the current learning and development programme. They may be asked to complete a Training Agreement which would secure a commitment from the employee to repay the costs involved if they leave the Company within a specified period.

The learning and development department will evaluate the quality, efficiency and effectiveness of the programmes offered through various means and in consultation with other senior managers where applicable. Contributions from all staff are welcomed as part of this continuous improvement process and staff should forward their constructive thoughts and opinions in writing to the learning and

development manager if they have suggestions or feedback they wish to share. Staff are encouraged to comment using the evaluation forms given to delegates after each centrally organised learning event, in the knowledge that this will be seen and acted upon where required by the learning and development manager. Opportunities for the workforce to communicate thoughts, suggestions and/or feedback concerning learning and development issues are actively encouraged by the department.

It is incumbent on the staff member in collaboration with their line manager to ensure they attend learning and development events. Absences from events will be considered in line with the Misconduct section of the organisation's Disciplinary Rules Policy (2.3) and the relevant sections within their contract of employment, as applicable.

2. Definitions

Training: Activities to increase or change employee's knowledge, skills, understanding and attitude to improve performance in their current job.

Learning: The acquisition of knowledge or skill.

Development: Activities to increase or change employee's knowledge, skills, understanding and attitude, including in preparation for doing a different (usually a more responsible) job and increasing the level of performance and competency of staff members within their current role.

3. Staff Support

We value the support and development of our employees. All members of staff should take part in formal Supervisions on a regular basis, in line with their level of experience and role. Informal opportunities are always available from colleagues and staff that are more senior. More experienced members of staff are expected to undertake work based coaching with new employees during their induction and probationary periods, encouraging collaborative thinking and reflective practice.

Our learning and development programme incorporates an induction programme, closely linked to the Department for Education and Care Council for Wales' Induction Frameworks. It includes a period of shadowing, time for reflection and line manager consultation and coaching, in which the Vision and Values of Bryn Melyn Care can be understood. The learning and development programme also incorporates specific courses to be undertaken beyond induction and confirmation in post stages.

Newly appointed unqualified staff, (without the required regulatory qualifications) are expected to be signed off for completion of their induction within 12 weeks of their start date and will be enrolled for the appropriate qualification once receipt of the completion certificate has been received by the learning and development manager. For new staff who have the regulatory required qualification, specific induction documents exist to help them to demonstrate their knowledge and competence within their new role and to evidence their orientation to the organisation. Completion of those should be within 4-6 weeks of their start date, unless otherwise agreed. Senior managers will seek reasons for non-completion within this timescale and an extension to the staff member's probationary period will be considered, alongside what additional support may be necessary to aid their completion. Key Performance Indicators for registered managers will incorporate expectations for supporting new staff and their completion timescales.

Further learning opportunities should be planned and agreed in consultation with the inducted members of staff by their line manager, leading up to and beyond their annual Appraisal and incorporated within recorded Personal Development Plans. Registered managers must ensure, under the Children's Homes Regulations 2015, that their staff:

- a. Undertake appropriate continuing professional development;
- b. Receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience; and
- c. Have their performance and fitness to perform their roles appraised at least once every year.

For further information about the induction of new employees, see **Section 8, Induction**.

Beyond induction, bespoke learning and development programmes have been tailored to meet the learning needs of those in deputy manager and registered manager roles. These staff will complete some or all of these programmes depending on their previous knowledge, experience and training and as directed by their line manager or more senior staff.

4. Aims

- a. To provide opportunities for staff to engage in a programme of learning and development so that high performance standards can be achieved;
- b. To create a heightened expectation of all employees' abilities and potential in themselves and in their managers, reflected within a culture of continuous professional development and high aspirations;
- c. To identify and develop human potential at work, regardless of where it is found;
- d. To encourage employees to develop themselves and to assist with that process where it also benefits the company;
- e. To encourage and support employees' progress only by their ability and performance, not by prejudice or stereotyping;
- f. To help the organisation develop and respect (and work within) government policies, legislation and good practice guidance to that end;
- g. To continuously question our practice as knowledge, skills and experience grow, so as to raise levels of best practice, care and support to vulnerable children.

5. Responsibilities

The primary responsibility for learning and development of individuals or groups rests with individual staff and their immediate manager. All managers must, therefore, make regular appraisals of every employee and groups/teams reporting to him/her to identify:

- a. Their strengths, weaknesses and potential;
- b. Their hopes and aspirations for performing their role to the best of their ability and any future career development;
- c. Changes in job content, or temporary transfers, which would improve performance or develop potential by "on the job" experience;
- d. Opportunities for coaching/mentoring by the manager to raise performance standards and extend knowledge and skills;
- e. Formal or informal learning and development activities/courses, both in-company or external, which will help to improve performance in the present job;

- f. When an individual is keen to take on a broader or more responsible job, learning opportunities that will give essential knowledge and develop skills and attitudes to support an effective start in the new job;
- g. Learning or development related to job or future job prospects specifically wanted by an individual, which can be met by self-help (reading, studying etc.) augmented by coaching from a manager.

It is desirable that each manager should have as one of his/her ongoing objectives, the training of at least one immediate subordinate as his/her potential successor.

This does not mean that the succession will occur or be apparent to others, but it does mean that a body of well-trained people with a good breadth of experience will be developed within the organisation with which to fill positions that are more senior.

6. Systems & Processes

To ensure that the correct priorities are given to learning and development activities and that the best possible use is made of available resources, an extended programme will be produced by the department and distributed throughout the organisation. The structure of the programme will be determined by the senior management team in consultation with other department managers and will reflect the short, medium and long-term commitment to workforce development. Priority will be given to learning that enables best practice to be driven forward, in line with Company strategy and to encourage outstanding service provision to the young people and other stakeholders.

From time to time, updates to the systems and process used to plan, evaluate, budget and communicate information related to learning and development will take place. The learning and development department has responsibility to ensure opportunities are in place to promote continuity of learning for staff, in conjunction with line managers and the rest of the senior management team.

Where possible, we will develop individual's knowledge and skills in order to enable them to contribute to the delivery of any in-house learning and development opportunities on the programme. Any individual involved in this has ultimate responsibility to ensure resources and information used are up to date and to keep abreast of any changes or updates relating to their field of knowledge. The learning and development manager and other senior managers will consult with staff and management groups to assist them in identifying training and development needs and advise them how best they can be met.

7. Implementation

Before planning any learning and development activities or events, the trainer/manager must be sure that the need exists, the time is right and that the selected method is appropriate to the needs of the delegates and/or the organisation. This should be discussed with the learning and development manager and/or other appointed senior staff members before the event is confirmed.

Before each employee undertakes learning and development activities, whether work based or classroom based, the manager (or course presenter) should brief him/her thoroughly about the objectives of the sessions and how learning may be applied, monitored and assessed afterwards, as relevant. The maintenance of a culture of reflective practice should link closely with learning and development opportunities, to determine:

- What is necessary to improve staff performance in terms of increasing knowledge, acquiring skills and/or performing best practice to support young people and the organisation?

- What learning and development opportunities are available for this person/group?
- What are the most effective options in providing these opportunities, taking account of the learning styles of individuals/groups?
- How will the learning be evaluated and impact on practice be evidenced?
- How will the practice of staff on a daily basis be enhanced after undertaking organised learning and how will the young person benefit from this enhanced/improved practice?

Good practice in Learning and Staff Development requires managers to discuss what learning has taken place with their employees after the learning and development activity has taken place and how the member of staff believes that their practice can be improved as a result. The application of theory to practice should be part of this discussion and the context of how this will provide a better service to the young person or other stakeholders identified. Managers should then create opportunities for the new knowledge and skills to be demonstrated and may wish to monitor and assess their impact on staff performance, service provision or improved outcomes for young people. Within a culture of lifelong learning, the context of classroom training should not be seen in isolation, but rather as one opportunity amongst many to improve service delivery and enhance practice.

8. Induction

Success in the job and continued service to the company can often be influenced by the impression given to a new employee during the first few weeks after joining the company. A comprehensive, high quality induction and orientation to the company and to the job are, therefore, crucial. It is also crucial to the success of the company's preferred method of one-to-one working with young people.

Each group within the company has a detailed Induction Schedule. It is for the Line Manager concerned, in consultation with HR/learning and development, to ensure that the details of the relevant schedule are made known to the new employee and that they are supported throughout the process to a point of successful completion. Upon completion of an induction programme, their manager must review the member of staff's progress and competence, so that future learning needs can be identified, planned and recorded accordingly. Managers should consult the inductee about this, along with those responsible for delivering the induction, and may consider reports from those who have directly observed the staff member during their induction programme.

Where members of residential staff have no previous experience or relevant qualifications in line with regulatory expectations, induction is completed once their line manager has signed off the appropriate Induction Completion Certificate and a copy (along with any other relevant certificates) forwarded to the learning and development department, where central copies are stored. The learning and development manager will inform the Human Resources department of this on receipt of the signed induction certificate. This will also lead to arrangements being made for enrolment on to the level 3 Diploma for Residential Childcare (2015) or equivalent and will be the prompt for managers to ensure that their staff member applies for Care Council for Wales registration.

Staff joining Bryn Melyn Care who have previously completed the CWDC induction (or equivalent) or who hold the regulatory required qualifications, will access whole or part of the induction programme as required in agreement with the senior management team. The content of the programme may change from time to time as amendments are agreed and improvements identified.

The induction programme is a formal period of training provided by our learning and development team and includes some work shadowing. The formal training has a cost attached to it, which the Company may seek to recover from new starters if they fail to complete the probationary period.

9. Attendance

In addition to managers training potential successors (**Section 5, Responsibilities**), the company will maintain a succession plan for key posts. Whilst there is no guarantee that any person named therein as possible successors will in fact succeed to the post, this plan is helpful in identifying recruiting, training and development needs for long term continuity and survival purposes. It is company policy to promote from within wherever possible.

Bryn Melyn Care provides its staff with a very comprehensive and effective learning and development programme; receiving regular feedback from a wide range of sources including training providers, inspectors and staff themselves which suggests that we are a leading employer in the sector in this respect. Inevitably, learning and development provision is expensive and therefore we monitor attendances to ensure that we utilize these resources in the most efficient and effective way possible.

Completion of statutory learning and development is a regulatory requirement in the children's workforce for residential care workers. As individuals, our staff must meet continuing professional development (CPD) expectations as part of their registration with the Care Council for Wales. More than this, continuous professional development, alongside personal development within an organisation that values lifelong learning, is essential, in order that our workforce can develop the knowledge and skills necessary to provide excellence for the young people we care for.

Individual members of staff, who do not attend learning and development events, as they have been allocated, face the prospect of direct action against them being taken. The following procedure will apply:

- i. Where a member of staff appears on the monthly learning and development Spreadsheet as not attending and not pre-notifying their absence, Senior Managers will liaise with the relevant Registered Manager to investigate the reason for both the absence and the failure to inform the learning and development department. Senior Managers will communicate the outcome of their enquiries to the learning and development department;
- ii. If the explanation is judged to be unacceptable, a standard letter will be sent to the member of staff warning them that further non-attendance may lead to more formal action under the Company's Disciplinary Procedure;
- iii. If there is similar non-attendance/non-notification during the following six month period, formal action will be considered by the Regional Manager, and may lead to a written warning. Ultimately, persistent breaches of the disciplinary process could lead to dismissal.

We hope that it will not be necessary to invoke this procedure. However, as we strive to become the leading provider of specialist residential care for children with complex needs, we recognise that achieving this needs the full commitment of individual staff members, departments and the organisation as a whole in order to improve the quality of service continuously that we provide to young people and other stakeholders.

10. Commitment

Successful learning and development requires dedication to its achievement from all concerned. It is always easy to find short-term excuses not to do it, but this is damaging to the success of the company, the care of the young people and to the job satisfaction of individuals in the long term. The learning and development manager will report to and consult with the Company Directors to encourage appropriate commitment from everyone. Data will be available for other managers to aid them in their understanding of the efficiency of their own and other departments, and to highlight the commitment of their staff to learning and development events.

When an individual has been allocated to a learning and development event, he/she should only be withdrawn in the most exceptional circumstances and with the agreement of one of the senior managers. Therefore, when planning or disseminating training information, line managers must consider carefully how they will cover their job during the employee's attendance at an Event and make appropriate arrangements as required, in order to support their staff to attend and ensure safe supervision of their young person continues.

It is the manager's role to ensure that the employee is aware that persistent non-attendance at learning and development events that he/she has been nominated to attend, is a disciplinary matter which could result in loss of earnings and ultimately dismissal.

It is the learning and development department's role to keep a record of attendees and non-attendees for centrally organised events. Course leaders should ensure attendance records and evaluations are completed for each event and passed to the learning and development department as soon as possible after the event.

Training alone does not make a person competent at any job; that comes from experience and the ability to reflect on practice and improve knowledge, skills and understanding of all aspects of one's role. Advancements in job roles will always be governed by satisfactory performance and the achievement of competencies and objectives, not solely by qualifications and other theoretical considerations.

11. Priorities

Implementation of this policy must take account of the costs of learning and development and of the ability to release people from their jobs without interfering with the running of the organisation. It is possible that in any year, more learning and development needs will be identified than can be fulfilled immediately for these reasons. Priorities will be decided primarily, though not exclusively; based on the benefit they will bring to the organisation in terms of meeting the regulatory requirements, supporting staff development and meeting organisational priorities.

12. Budgets and Expenditure

The organisational learning and development programme will include a central training budget for approval by the Directors. This will include some allowance for meeting needs arising throughout the year, as well as those identified in the annual planning exercise.

External training funded by the organisation is subject to reimbursement if an individual leaves company employment as outlined in contracts of employment as follows:

Training and Qualifications

You are required to attend any training course when requested by the Company. Failure to do so could mean that you do not fulfil regulatory or statutory requirements and would not be authorised to work. If this happens you will not be permitted to work until you have completed the training and the consequential time off will be unpaid.

You are required to attain and subsequently maintain the qualifications and level of competence required by the regulatory authorities and by the Company for somebody fulfilling the position. These requirements may be subject to change from time to time, in which event such changes will be communicated to you. Should you not reach or maintain the required qualifications or level of competence, you will not be allowed to remain in post and demotion or dismissal may result.

If the Company financially assists you in obtaining a professional or vocational qualification (including any training which is a statutory or legal requirement for your position, for example Level 3 Diploma for a Care practitioner) and you leave the Company's employment within a period of three years, then the Company will deduct from your salary or other payments due to you a proportion of the costs incurred in acquiring the qualification (including the cost of any Company paid time for yourself and any trainer or assessor) as follows:

During the first year	100% of the full costs
During the second year	75% of the full costs
During the third year	50% of the full costs

Staff who are required under legislation to gain specific qualifications for their role and who wish to seek financial support from Bryn Melyn Care in pursuing them, will need to provide details of their request to the learning and development manager or other senior manager.

Travel and Subsistence

Travel to and from training events - See latest information on the current Company's 'Staff Expense Claim Form'.

Subsistence will be provided in line with current Company guidance, subject to periodic change.

End