

TRAINING UPDATE

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This paper updates EMT and the HR Committee on corporate training undertaken since April 2020.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 Over lockdown we have been pleased to be able to prioritise our commitment to assisting our employees through a much larger and fuller range of training opportunities that we would normally offer. This has been because we appreciate the challenging and changing times we are in, and that investing in our staff to help get them through has been of paramount importance.

2.2 We have been able to benefit from the flexibility of training providers newfound availability and remote training ability. This has led to large cost savings and has meant we can stretch our budget further.

3. OVERCOMING NEW CHALLENGES

3.1 Arranging this volume and range of training within our existing HR resources has had its difficulties, such as sheer volume, ICT platforms, working with trainers to ensure they could present in a way that works for us, and employee availability especially those with childcare responsibilities where frequent breaks are required, but we have overcome all of these together in the following ways:

- The introduction of the Learning module on the HR Hub has enabled employees to book their spaces on the programmes quickly and easily and has made the administration and management of this volume of courses possible
- We have worked closely with training providers to ensure they have been able to use Skype effectively
- We have used time slots that parents have said work best
- We have put in place slightly longer sessions with reasonable breaks, so that other commitments could be accommodated as well as attending the sessions

4. TRAINING UNDERTAKEN

4.1 Below (in 4.2) is a table of all the corporate training we have organised across the Council since lockdown, all of which has been very well attended and has received very good feedback. Further details on the sessions are given below the table separately.

(Please note: Online sessions are much better run with smaller numbers to be successful, and numbers were purposefully limited)

4.2 Table of training undertaken

Course title	Number of sessions	Number attended
Mental Health Awareness for Managers	3	11
Wellbeing & Mindfulness techniques	2	22
Mental Health First Aider	1	10
Managing employees remotely	3	13
Brief Bite Mental Health Awareness for managers	2	TBC
Brief Bite Embracing Equality & Diversity	3	41
Brief Bite Homeworking	1	9
Brief Bite Managing Performance	1	7

Brief Bite Sickness & Absence Management	1	6
Brief Bite Performance Reviews on the Hub	2	62
Excel Introduction	4	32
Excel Intermediate (external)	3	15
Dealing with difficult behaviour and situations	1	8
Developing your leadership brand	1	9
Delegation and Motivation	1	9

4.3 **Mental Health and Wellbeing**

A key focus has been, and continues to be, on Mental Health support for all staff.

In addition to our existing 13 mental health first aiders, we were able to source an online provider and run another mental health first aider course. We now have an additional 10 mental health first aiders, taking our total to 23 fully trained staff across all services, including operational areas.

We have offered a blended mix of sessions for employees and managers, in various formats and using various trainers (including the HR Team). Feedback has shown that this has provided very useful support to those who wished to take part, giving skills for now and into the future too.

4.4 **Excel**

Many of us may rely on assistance from others for skills such as excel tips – working remotely removes this. The Excel sessions were packed with really useful tips and techniques that I am sure many of us will use regularly and rely more upon our own skills.

4.5 **HR Brief Bites**

The HR Team had to quickly adapt to virtual training sessions to deliver our Brief Bite modules via Skype. We were entirely new to this in March, but by April were hosting well attended sessions. We learnt how to share our PowerPoint presentations, add in 'poll questions', and use a virtual whiteboard. We received good feedback from our sessions and are now confident and ready to run a further set of sessions in the autumn. We have continued to run our standard Brief Bites, but we also added some new modules due to the pandemic, which will now remain part of our programme – these are the 'Managing Mental Health' and 'Homeworking' modules.

4.6 **Embracing Equality & Diversity sessions**

During 2019/20 the HR Team delivered this short 45-minute powerful session to all operational teams. We then started some sessions for office-based staff prior to lockdown. We have now started offering these sessions remotely and will continue to roll out further sessions with the aim that all employees will have attended this by the end of the year.

4.7 **Management Development online courses**

We have accessed some key management skills via online sessions. This has enabled new managers and those requiring a refresher the opportunity to develop their skills from home and without any delay to enhance their skills. This has been especially valuable to those new to managing staff in recent months, where they had not previously undertaken management training skills sessions.

4.8 **Apprentices**

Our apprentices continue with their studies online now, with the exception of three Grounds Apprentices. The studies are over virtual programmes, and most apprentices have been able to continue studies seamlessly. However, the Level 5 Management students have experienced difficulties as they are on a mixed organisation programme, all other organisations have allowed Zoom access but this has not been available to our students from home and we have had to find different ways of working around this.

The Grounds Apprentices will commence their apprenticeship training in September through Sparsholt College. This has been delayed from the proposed May start. This will be a blended mix of online and socially distanced 'onsite' training.

5 CONCLUSION

5.1 This details the training this year so far, and we will continue our commitment to developing our employees where possible throughout the rest of the year and into the future.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are direct financial implications related to this report, however we have been able to utilise the budget better as training courses are cheaper online and do not incur further expenses; therefore we are able to reach more employees and offer more courses to benefit our workforce.

7. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 The online nature of the training has meant no employees or trainers have had to leave their homes to undertake the training, making it much greener for the environment.

8. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are no crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

9. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Training is available to all relevant employees and all have the technology to undertake this.

9.2 Out of the 29 sessions ran, attended by 254 employees, the following breakdown is given:

64% were female

94% were white, 2% were BME, 4% declined to answer

1% were under 20, 13% were between 20 – 30, 25% were 31 – 40, 29% were 41 – 50, 28% were 51 – 60, 4% were over 60.

10. EMT COMMENTS

10.1 EMT were supportive of the training conducted and supported this moving forward.

11. EMPLOYEE FORUM AND EMPLOYEE SIDE COMMENTS

Employee Forum Comments:

11.1 None submitted

Employee Side Comments:

11.2 None submitted

12. RECOMMENDATIONS

12.1 That the HR Committee acknowledge the training undertaken and continue to support training throughout the year and into the future.

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