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## **Learning and Development Policy**

### Aims and principles of this policy

Green Routes recognises the importance of effective learning and development in assisting it to achieve its objectives. These are to provide high quality training and work experience in horticulture to young adults with learning difficulties, enabling them to develop potential life-changing social and personal skills.

Employees, volunteer mentors and other volunteers of Green Routes are critical to the success of the organisation and Green Routes is committed to providing access to opportunities for appropriate learning and development to enable them to perform to the best of their ability, in order to help the organisation to achieve these objectives.

Green Routes commits to offering learning and development opportunities to all employees and volunteers irrespective of :-

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage or civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex or sexual orientation
- hours of work

We recognise that learning and development activities take a number of different forms.

### Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the Development Manager and the Board member for line management to:-

- communicate the organisation's objectives and values to all employees, volunteer mentors and other volunteers.
- work with the employee / volunteer mentors to identify their developmental needs and link these to the organisation's objectives
- work with employees / volunteer mentors to identify solutions to the needs
- encourage employees and volunteer mentors to undertake and make use of learning and development activities
- review and evaluate the impact of learning and development for the individuals and the organisation

Employees and volunteer mentors have a responsibility to:-

- assist in identifying learning and development needs and opportunities
- undertake learning and development activities
- review and evaluate learning undertaken and its contribution to their personal development and that of the organisation.



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### Identifying Training Needs

Employees together with their line manager will identify learning and development needs. The way in which this can be done may include

:-

- On recruitment / appointment to a new role
- During induction to the organisation
- Upon changes to an existing role
- Upon internal promotion
- Upon the introduction of new systems / projects or enhancement to current working practices
- In response to user feedback or changes to user requirements
- On an on-going basis during regular line management meetings
- On an on-going basis through annual appraisals
- Through ad hoc one-to-one discussions between line manager and employee.

A Continuous Professional development (CPD) plan will be developed during annual appraisal or when roles change and this will be the basis for on-going discussion and review e.g. during regular line management meetings. In the appraisal process both parties have a joint responsibility for identifying strengths, development needs and possible ways of meeting these needs.

The aims of this needs identification will be to highlight individual strengths or areas of performance which need development or further training.

The Development Manager will also work with volunteer mentors to identify learning and development appropriate to the role.

Before any learning activity is undertaken this should be agreed between the individual who is to receive training and their line manager. The manager should first be certain that sufficient funds exist in the staff training and development budget to pay for the training. If there are competing demands for the limited funds this should be referred to the Board Member responsible for HR and the Treasurer for the decision.



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### Forms of learning and development

Learning and development can be provided in a number of ways, which may include

:

- External training
- In house training
- Induction training
- On job training
- Work Shadowing
- Studying towards vocational or professional qualifications
- Coaching and mentoring
- Attendance at seminars, forums, conferences, workshops
- CPD ( reading, research, shared learning )

### Mandatory and Core Development Activities

#### Mandatory development activities

Depending upon roles there may be some legally required training or development activity which Green Routes must provide and an individual employee or volunteer mentor must undertake.

#### Core development activities

There will be some core development activities which Green Routes will require employees and volunteer mentors to undertake and which other volunteers may also wish to undertake.

These include :-

- Induction training
- Awareness training
- Health and safety
- First Aid
- Mentor training

### Study for Professional Qualifications for employees

Green Routes may provide support for employees to acquire relevant professional qualifications as we recognise the benefits gained for both the organisation and the individual.

Support may take the form of: e.g. financial assistance to pay for the course, exam fees, time off for the study and costs of books.

The following conditions apply where support is provided:

- This support will only be considered following successful completion of probation
- If an employee leaves the organisation within a year of achieving the qualification then they will be expected to repay all of the course fees. If they leave within two years, they will be expected to pay 50% of course fees.
- If an element of the qualification is failed, line managers will decide whether it is possible to continue providing financial support.



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#### Membership of professional bodies.

Where employees are required to hold membership of professional organisations to carry out their role they will be responsible for funding their own subscription.

#### Evaluation

It is important that the benefits of the learning and development activities are evaluated to establish the long and short term impact on the individual and the organisation's performance.

Evaluation of training activity take place through the following means :-

- Completion of evaluation form
- Follow up discussions during line management meetings
- Discussions during employee appraisals
- Cascading information through team meetings
- Entry in personal development / learning plan

Aspects considered during evaluation include :-

- Whether objectives have been met
- Quality of training
- Value for money
- Recommendation of activities to others
- Appropriateness of timing
- Agreeing any further learning needs
- What needs to be done to enable the individual to use any new skills
- Any appropriate actions

#### Review of policy

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Trustees to ensure it remains up to date and reflects the needs and practices of the organisation.

Date and signature of adoption by the Board: 26/03/2015

Reviewed and approved by Trustees at meeting on 28/10/2021