

# **Training and Development Policy**

## **March 2016**

### **1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE**

Wireless Group PLC is committed to ensuring that all staff have access to learning, development and training opportunities which enable them to be suitably knowledgeable and skilled to carry out their role within the Company, and to develop their talents in ways that fit with the Company's development to meet its strategic objectives. Wireless Group PLC considers it appropriate to base training and development opportunities on the requirements of the business. Therefore, decisions about investment in staff training and development will always be made having regard to the needs of the business as well as the staff member's individual needs.

The Company regularly reviews its level of investment in staff training and development to ensure not only that adequate resources are being provided but also that training and development activity is delivering a benefit to both the staff member and the business.

Wireless Group PLC aims to ensure that:

- Each member of staff understands what his or her work role involves
- Each person is developed as appropriate, to enable them to achieve their work objectives
- Staff are prepared and equipped to deal with changes in Wireless Group PLC

Wireless Group PLC believes that effective training and development benefits the individual and the Group as a whole, and contributes to the achievement of Wireless Group PLC's business objectives. These benefits include:

- High standards of work performance
- Greater understanding and appreciation of factors affecting work performance
- Sharing ideas and dissemination of good practice
- Effective management and implementation of change
- Building strong and effective teams
- Increased motivation and job satisfaction for individuals
- Professional development
- Greater understanding of Wireless Group PLC's business

This policy applies to Wireless Group PLC staff members. However, Wireless Group PLC will offer relevant development opportunities to freelance and independent contractors working with the Company as appropriate.

### **2. AIMS**

The main aims of this policy are to:

- Ensure that staff members are supported and enabled to meet the changing demands of the Company so that the Group achieves its strategic objectives
- Facilitate staff member development and/or personal development through assisting staff members to broaden, deepen and thereby further enhance their existing skill base
- Provide a working environment where continuous learning and development takes place to help staff in their roles, increase motivation and enhance staff retention

### **3. PRINCIPLES OF THE TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT POLICY**

- Training and development can be defined as any activity designed to help individuals become more effective at their work by improving, updating or refining their knowledge and skills. It encompasses a range of activities including, for example, involvement in various projects, attendance at training courses, conferences or seminars, visits to other organisations, work shadowing, formal study, coaching and mentoring.
- Wireless Group PLC believes that training and development is a continuous process. There is an expectation that staff will keep abreast of developments within their own area of expertise.
- The responsibility for identifying training and development needs and carrying out agreed training and development activity is shared between the Line Manager and the staff member. Wireless Group PLC will encourage and support appropriate training and development. Reasonable time and financial support may be allocated.
- Line Managers are responsible for providing support and guidance in relation to the training and development of those reporting to them, particularly in relation to the identification of training and development needs and making sure that appropriate action is taken as a result.
- Each member of staff is expected and encouraged to take ownership and responsibility for their personal development in relation to their work, within the framework of support provided by Wireless Group PLC. This includes analysing their own skills, aptitudes and potential development needs, as well as having a positive attitude and proactive approach to development.
- Wireless Group PLC will monitor and evaluate training and development activity to review and improve provision. All staff are expected to participate in the evaluation of training and development.

### **4. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES**

Wireless Group PLC is committed to ensuring equality of learning opportunity, hence no staff member will be excluded from learning on the grounds of gender (including gender reassignment), marital status, family status, religious belief, disability, age, racial grounds (race,

colour, nationality or ethnic origin), sexual orientation or membership of the traveller community. Part time and fixed term staff members will have equal access to learning and development opportunities appropriate to their role. (For further information please refer to Wireless Group PLC's policies on Equal Opportunities and Dignity at Work).

## **5. THE RANGE OF TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES**

### **5.1. Types of Training and Development Activity**

There are many different types of activity that contribute to an individual's development and staff members are encouraged to consider the range of opportunities available to them.

- Some activities are undertaken with the specific aim of enhancing skills and/or imparting information. Examples of these include attending a seminar or training course, undertaking a qualification, reading, work-shadowing and mentoring.
- Other activities offering the potential for development may arise in the course of normal work activity. Examples of these include being involved in a project where the individual acquires new skills or knowledge or discussing how to deal with a particular problem with a colleague. In these situations, learning is far greater where the opportunity is identified in advance, with attention drawn to identifying the generic skills or general principles that will be developed and considering how they may be applied in other similar situations.

A more comprehensive list of development opportunities is provided in Appendix 1.

### **5.2. Drawing on the Expertise and Experience of Others**

Where possible, development activities will draw on the knowledge and skills of existing Wireless Group PLC staff. This has the advantage of allowing advice, guidance and on-the-job training to be given in a way that is directly applicable to the work context, and highly relevant to the staff member. Various people may be involved in supporting the development of others; in particular a person's Line Manager, colleagues, networking contacts, mentors etc. Development by these means may take many forms, including, for example, one-to-one discussions, seminars, secondments, hands-on demonstrations, team meetings and coaching.

Wireless Group PLC is committed to sharing the learning and lessons gained by staff throughout relevant teams, for example; giving time in team meetings to share core lessons from training.

## **6. RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **6.1. Staff Members**

Wireless Group PLC believes that staff member development is most effective when the individual staff member takes responsibility for identifying any opportunities for self-development which will enhance work performance through increased skills and knowledge.

This includes taking an active role in planning one's own personal development, undertaking agreed development activities, and evaluating the effectiveness of these.

Learning needs and opportunities will also be identified by the Line Manager in conjunction with the staff member.

## **6.2. Line Managers**

Line Managers are responsible for assisting staff members in identifying learning needs and for ensuring that they review these with staff on a regular basis.

Line Managers have an important part to play in encouraging/facilitating their team members' involvement in training and development activities, both as participants or organisers, and in providing guidance/feedback with regard to the skills and knowledge required for their current role.

Line Managers have a responsibility to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of learning for staff members who have undergone training and development. Line Managers should seek feedback on any training, including quality and cost effectiveness. Line Managers should also ensure that staff members implement the skills that they have gained through training and ensure that feedback on training is shared with the Company through the HR Department.

## **6.3. Senior Management**

Senior management is responsible for actively encouraging training and development as a means to enable Wireless Group PLC to meet its business objectives, and for ensuring that resources are made available for this purpose.

## **6.4. The Human Resources (HR) Department**

The HR Department has a facilitation role in relation to training and development. This includes:

- Providing the tools to support training and development
- Advising and encouraging individuals and those with line management responsibilities on training and development matters
- Coordinating the delivery of certain training and development activities that are organised centrally
- Sourcing and recommending potential development solutions
- Managing the centralised budget for training and development and ensuring consistency of allocation
- Maintaining records with regard to the development of Wireless Group PLC staff
- Providing feedback to providers on training effectiveness to improve development solutions

## **7. KEY PROFESSIONAL AND SKILLS BASED LEARNING**

Wireless Group PLC prioritises learning that focuses on areas which:

- Enable the Company to fulfil its strategic objectives
- Pertain to any Company statutory/contractual obligations
- Are essential in order to generate and maintain revenue
- Enable effective responses to and management of legislative changes
- Ensure IT skills meet business needs
- Are essential to ensure the quality of service provision
- Enable staff members to meet their responsibilities in completing continuous professional development required by relevant professional bodies
- Enable management development for those who have people management responsibilities

## **8. CORE LEARNING**

### **8.1. Training and Development Opportunities**

The Company provides a range of training and development opportunities for staff. These include:

- Training relating to the enhancement of skills for a staff member's current role. As mentioned above this can include internal and external courses providing technical or specialist training relating to the skills that staff members require for their role i.e. job shadowing, mentoring, coaching, secondment etc.
- Training leading to a professional or academic qualification. The Company encourages staff members who wish to do so to pursue continuous professional development and where appropriate to gain further qualifications (please refer to Wireless Group PLC's Further Education Policy)
- Management training, including supervisory skills and leadership development programmes

There are specific areas of learning which are essential for all staff members and cover a rolling programme of needs which have been identified as part of a continuous programme of learning and development. Core learning will therefore cover the following areas:

### **8.2. Induction**

All new staff members are given a timely programme of induction including introduction to all policies for the Company. This is an essential part of staff learning and development, and integration into the working environment.

An effective induction process is important for settling new members of staff into Wireless Group PLC and ensuring the smooth transition of those who move to roles in other departments/teams. It involves both ensuring that the person has the necessary skills and knowledge to perform their role effectively, and familiarising them with the detail of the work that they will be performing. The Line Manager is responsible for monitoring the progress of the new member of staff, and for ensuring that any development needs are identified and met.

### **8.3. ICT (Information and Communication Technologies)**

It is important that all staff members are given opportunities to enhance their ICT skills base. The Company is committed to ensuring that all staff members have competent grounding in the use of ICT in the wider context of their professional roles. Staff members are encouraged to become familiar with the intranet, internet, email, other electronic facilities and computer software packages at their disposal. Relevant initial information and training will be provided on commencement in the role or when any technology changes occur.

#### **8.4. Health and Safety**

All staff members receive general Health and Safety training, and where applicable job specific training. Training is provided for fire wardens, first aiders and health and safety coordinators at each of the Company's locations.

#### **8.5. Equal Opportunities**

Wireless Group PLC is an equal opportunities employer, committed to providing equal opportunities to all employees. The Company ensures that appropriate and regular training is given to staff members with regard to equality of opportunity and ensures that Line Managers and supervisors are aware of their responsibilities and are appropriately equipped through training and development activities.

### **9. PLANNING TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT**

Any new training initiatives will be planned as a result of a training needs analysis. In addition, the Company is committed to reviewing training initiatives so that relevant training and development is provided for skills in specific job areas, where work procedures have changed or where new standards are introduced.

Development needs may be identified at several levels: those that apply to the Group as a whole, those at a departmental or team level and those which apply to a particular individual (or group of individuals).

Company training and development objectives are aligned to strategic objectives and priorities. HR will consult with senior management with regard to this. An example of a Company-wide development need would be a requirement for more advanced IT skills brought about by a new system, or the need for greater awareness of equal opportunities issues.

Group training needs will be identified through the planning and budgetary process.

At team level information is gathered from a variety of sources to identify training and development needs common to a group of staff. As above, responsibility for this lies with Line Managers and the HR Department, in consultation with senior management. Sources of information used for this purpose are likely to include discussions with Line Managers and staff – both formal and informal and team plans with regard to existing local priorities.

At the individual level, one to ones between the staff member and his/her Line Manager is the main vehicle for recognising and planning training and development. Line Managers are responsible for ensuring that individuals' training needs are followed through.

## **10. ACCESS TO TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT**

The extent to which a training and development activity can be supported by Wireless Group PLC will depend on a number of factors including:

- The relevance of the development need to achieving the strategic plan
- Financial costs
- Hidden costs – including, for example, the amount of work time required to complete the development activity
- Any additional cover required and the impact on colleagues
- The amount of development support that it is reasonable for any one member of staff to undertake in a given period
- Availability of funds in the training and development budget
- Parity with similar applications.

## **11. RECORDING, MONITORING AND EVALUATING LEARNING**

The Human Resources Department is responsible for ensuring that a central record of staff member learning is created and maintained, and that all learning and development activities are monitored and evaluated in terms of suitability, effectiveness and value for money.

Line Managers must update the HR Department regularly with regard to any training activities that their team members have participated in during the previous month.

All training attended will be recorded along with costs, including, for example; travel subsistence and expenses.

## **12. EVALUATION**

Training and development activities will be evaluated, in respect of their effectiveness from both a Company and a personal perspective. There are several ways in which this can be done.

Evaluation starts at the outset of the training cycle by identifying evaluation criteria both for the course and for the individual at the stage when training is applied for, or when delegates are invited to attend training. Both the individual and the Line Manager should take time to reflect on what both will notice has changed or indeed what will no longer happen, after the training that will tell both the individual and the Line Manager that the learning objectives have been successfully achieved.

The staff member and Line Manager should also agree how the training will be put into practice and what, if any, support will be required to implement the learning from the training undertaken.

This may mean for example, identifying particular work tasks or projects where the learning can be used and new skills practised.

The Line Manager and the staff member should meet to evaluate the extent to which agreed development activities have achieved the intended objectives and, where necessary, plan the next steps. Unplanned development opportunities that arise in the course of normal work activity should also be reflected upon in order to identify how this might improve future work activities.

On completion of any internal or external course the staff member may be requested to complete a course evaluation form and return it to either their Line Manager or the trainer. Analysis of the evaluation forms gathered will be undertaken by HR and used within the overall evaluation of training and development.

Line Managers are responsible for reporting on the effectiveness of any staff development programmes to the HR Department.

The Human Resources Department is responsible for analysing training and development evaluation forms and feedback provided with regard to the effectiveness of training and development activity and where necessary take follow up action. The evaluation data will inform future provision with regard to advising staff members on training and development solutions.

### **13. FURTHER INFORMATION**

If you have any further questions regarding this policy and the procedures for training and development please contact your Line Manager or the Human Resources Department.

### **14. REVIEW**

This policy will be reviewed and updated by Wireless Group PLC as required in line with best practice and current legislation.

## **Appendix 1**

### **Types of Activities That May Be Considered Developmental**

It is recognised that individuals have different learning styles and there are many workplace activities that, when used in combination, can make up a highly efficient and effective development programme. The term 'blended learning' is used to describe this style of learning, where a blend of different structured activities carried out over time, create a stimulating and very effective learning programme. The list below includes a number of activities that can be blended together.

#### **Examples of activities which when blended together enhance personal development**

- Reading (books, journals, reports, newspapers)
- Networking (both internally and with people external to Wireless Group PLC)
- Instruction - being shown how to do something and subsequently putting this into practice
- Attending conferences/seminars/development forums
- Being a member of committees or working groups
- Work shadowing
- Attending a formal training event (both internal and external)
- Taking on new tasks or additional responsibilities to develop particular skills you identify
- Moving into a new or different work role
- Watching training/educational videos
- Being involved in role plays or simulations
- Using case studies to develop your knowledge (both those described in books/journals, and cases that colleagues or acquaintances may be able to tell you about)
- Using diagnostic instruments (e.g. learning styles questionnaire, Belbin team types questionnaire)
- Asking for feedback on your own performance from those who work closely with you
- Listening to relevant documentaries/news items
- Involvement in coaching/mentoring relationships (can be developmental for both parties)
- Keeping a personal development journal – reflection on experience
- Participating in a group discussion
- Working towards a qualification (academic, professional, or vocational qualifications)
- Belonging to an action learning group (meeting with peers to discuss work related issues with the aim of finding solutions to problems)
- Involvement in activities related to a professional body or employer's association (eg, attending branch meetings, giving a presentation to fellow members)
- E-learning – a large selection of computer-based courses is now available and can generally be completed from the comfort of your own desk. E-learning tends to be interactive, carefully designed (to meet the diverse needs of as many people as possible)

and may include video, sound, pictures, as well as text and check tests to measure understanding.

- Benchmarking – using a similar business operation to compare work processes with a view to learning, developing and possibly improving the performance of your company/department/team.
- Referring to standards of best practice (National Standards) for guidance on how to do your job and to identify specific development opportunities/needs.

**Examples of potentially developmental experiences which may arise in (or be integrated into) the course of normal work activity**

- Attending various meetings
- Working with external committees/stakeholders
- Using the internet or intranet to research something
- Working on a task which requires you to solve a problem
- Giving, or preparing, a presentation on a topic with which you are not familiar
- Discussing how to deal with a particular problem with someone you work with
- Undertaking a project or assignment that is in some way different to those you have worked on previously
- Observing how others deal with a particular problem or respond in a given situation
- Delegating tasks to others
- Being a member of a working group or task force
- Being involved in various tasks (both those which are familiar and unfamiliar to you)
- Adjusting to a new or changed work role
- Managing a change
- Managing a team, or co-ordinating a project group
- Talking things through with your Line Manager
- Taking on additional tasks and responsibilities that present you with a challenge

