



South Staffordshire Plc

Learning and Development Policy

Last updated: 28 November 2025

Contents

Purpose	3
Scope	3
Learning and Development and Our Values	3
Policy	3
Guiding Principles	3
Learning Approaches and Categories	4
Mandatory Training	5
Key Learning Categories	5
Planning and Access	6
Learning Needs Identification	6
Development Planning	6
Recording Learning	6
Learning Delivery and Procurement	7
Funding and Resources	7
Protected Learning Time	7
Evaluation and Impact	7
Apprenticeship Support	8
Commitment to Learning	8
Cancellation / Non-Attendance	9
Data Privacy	9
Management and Administration	9
Document Details	9



Purpose

South Staffordshire Plc is committed to cultivating a high-performing, agile, and inclusive workforce by embedding a culture of continuous learning and development. This policy outlines our approach to building organisational capability and employee growth through a wide spectrum of structured and informal learning opportunities.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees, including those on permanent, fixed-term, part-time, casual, or secondment contracts. It covers:

- Induction and onboarding
- Statutory and mandatory training
- Apprenticeships
- Technical and role-specific development
- Leadership development
- Professional development
- Cross-departmental learning initiatives
- Informal and on-the-job learning

Learning and Development and Our Values

At South Staffordshire Plc, our values of Professional, Trusted, Impactful, and Community focused are at the heart of everything we do. Learning and development plays a vital role in bringing these values to life:

Professional: We invest in continuous learning to ensure our people have the skills, knowledge, and behaviours to deliver high standards of service and performance.

Trusted: By equipping employees with the tools and training they need, we build confidence, reliability, and integrity in every interaction.

Impactful: Our development programmes are designed to drive meaningful change enhancing individual performance, team effectiveness, and organisational outcomes.

Community (focused): We foster inclusive learning environments that encourage collaboration, knowledge sharing, and support for others, strengthening our internal and external communities.

Learning is not just a personal journey it's a collective commitment to living our values and making a positive difference.

Policy

Guiding Principles

Our approach to learning and development is guided by a set of core principles designed to ensure that all initiatives are inclusive, purposeful, and aligned with both individual growth and organisational success.

- **Equity and Inclusion**

We are committed to creating learning opportunities that are accessible to everyone, inclusive of diverse needs, and respectful of all protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010. By removing barriers to participation, we ensure that every employee, regardless of background or circumstance, has equal access to meaningful development.



- **Employee Ownership**

Employees are encouraged to take proactive responsibility for their learning and career development. This includes identifying development needs, seeking feedback, engaging in opportunities, and applying new skills in the workplace. Managers will reinforce this by cultivating a culture of curiosity, growth, and continuous improvement.

- **Strategic Alignment**

Learning and development will always be aligned with the organisation's strategic priorities, balanced scorecard, and individual performance goals. This ensures that investment in learning contributes directly to business success and builds future workforce capability.

- **Blended Learning**

Recognising that people learn in different ways, we adopt a blended approach to development. This includes digital learning, face-to-face workshops, peer-led sessions, feedback, job shadowing, mentoring, and coaching. Such variety ensures flexibility, accessibility, and relevance across roles and learning styles.

- **Integration Across the Employee Lifecycle**

Learning is embedded throughout the employee journey, from induction and onboarding, through professional growth and leadership development, to succession planning and career progression. This ensures that learning remains continuous, relevant, and responsive to both individual aspirations and organisational needs.

Learning Approaches and Categories

Learning and development takes many forms and extends beyond traditional training courses. Research shows that for adults, the most effective learning occurs through a blend of experiences: approximately 70% on-the-job, 20% through collaboration and coaching, and 10% via formal learning such as classroom or online training.

Training needs may be identified at any time; however, personal development review (PDR) discussions provide a valuable opportunity to explore and plan learning and development activities

70%: On-the-job

Learning and development on the job can be the most beneficial for employees because it enables them to discover and refine their job-related skills, make better more informed decisions, address challenges and interact with influential people such as leaders and mentors within work settings. Employees also learn from their mistakes and receiving immediate feedback on their performance.

Examples include:

- on-job development, including exposure to particularly new and challenging situations;
- project work including project reviews and lessons learned;
- work shadowing;
- attachments to different job teams or projects; and
- secondments or job-swaps.

20%: Informal learning

Informal learning takes place when employees learn from others through a variety of activities that include social learning, coaching, mentoring, observation, collaborative learning and other methods of interaction with peers. Encouragement and feedback are prime benefits of this valuable learning approach.

Examples include:

- 360 feedback and self-reflection;



- coaching and mentoring;
- networking;
- volunteering;
- membership of a professional body;
- observing others; and
- self-led personal learning – including but not limited to utilising resources available such as articles, videos, podcasts, collaboration groups and learning pathways

10%: Formal learning

Online and face to face training courses under a series of subject areas including:

- leadership;
- operational;
- technical;
- soft skills development;
- further education courses; and
- professional development events.

Mandatory Training

Some training is mandatory for all employees, while other training is role specific. Line Managers are responsible for identifying and communicating these requirements, and employees are expected to complete them within the required timescales.

Mandatory training for all employees includes essential topics such as information security, health and safety, GDPR, and HR compliance. These are regularly reviewed to reflect current legislation and best practice, ensuring both organisational and individual compliance. Mandatory training is often required to renewed on an annual or cyclical basis to ensure employees remain up to date with the latest guidelines and are aware of their individual responsibilities.

The mandatory training requirements of all employees should be assessed on a regular basis - typically, at the start of a new role, or when responsibilities change.

Key Learning Categories

In addition to the learning approaches outlined above, South Staffordshire Plc offers a broad and inclusive range of development opportunities designed to support employees at every stage of their career. From the moment an employee joins the organisation, they are introduced to our values, culture, and expectations through a structured corporate induction. This is complemented by local and role-specific onboarding, led by line managers, to ensure individuals are equipped with the knowledge and tools required to succeed in their specific roles and teams.

Alongside mandatory training, technical and operational training is delivered to equip employees with the specialist knowledge and practical skills needed to perform their roles effectively. Training may be delivered internally by subject matter experts or externally through accredited providers, with content tailored to evolving business needs and industry standards.

We also invest in the growth of our current and aspiring leaders through structured leadership and management development pathways. These programmes build core leadership capabilities, strengthen people management skills, and ensure that robust succession planning supports the long-term sustainability of the organisation.



South Staffordshire Plc

For those wishing to pursue accredited qualifications, our Professional and Funded Development Policy provides clear guidance on the support available. Apprenticeships, funded through the Apprenticeship Levy, further extend opportunities for employees to achieve nationally recognised qualifications across a wide range of disciplines, whether as new entrants to the workforce or as experienced colleagues seeking to upskill.

In addition, we actively encourage informal and peer-led learning. Mentoring schemes, employee networks, and company-wide knowledge-sharing sessions such as webinars and roadshows create collaborative environments where colleagues can share expertise, strengthen internal networks, and support a culture of continuous improvement and innovation.

Planning and Access

Effective learning and development begin with thoughtful planning and a clear understanding of organisational and individual needs. We adopt a structured approach to identifying, prioritising, and delivering learning that supports both employee growth and business performance.

Learning Needs Identification

Learning needs are identified through a variety of channels to ensure relevance and alignment with strategic goals. These include:

- Annual Personal Development Reviews (PDRs), where employees and managers collaboratively assess current capabilities and future aspirations.
- Team and functional reviews, which highlight collective skill gaps and development priorities.
- Regulatory and compliance requirements, ensuring mandatory training is up to date and legally compliant.
- Succession planning, identifying future leaders and critical roles requiring targeted development.
- Project-specific or strategic initiatives that demand new or enhanced capabilities.

Development Planning

Managers play a key role in translating identified needs into actionable development plans. They are expected to:

- Integrate training plans into individual and team Personal Development Plans (PDPs), ensuring alignment with role expectations and career goals.
- Consider business-critical skills and future workforce requirements when selecting learning interventions.
- Prioritise learning activities that address performance gaps, support role transitions, or enable strategic delivery.

This structured planning process ensures that learning is not only accessible but also purposeful, measurable, and embedded within the broader business strategy.

Recording Learning

Employees and managers are encouraged to record all learning and development activity. This helps to:

- Provide visibility of completed training and development activities.
- Capture both formal and informal learning.
- Supports conversations around performance, career progression, and development planning.
- Enables accurate reporting and assurance for audit or inspection purposes.



Learning Delivery and Procurement

All learning delivery methods are chosen to ensure relevance, accessibility, and alignment with organisational goals.

Internal Delivery

Learning and development activities may be facilitated by members of the Learning and Development and HR team, as well as approved internal subject matter experts. Individuals are selected based on their knowledge, experience, and ability to deliver engaging and impactful learning. Internal delivery supports knowledge sharing, promotes consistency, and ensures that learning is tailored to the organisation's context and values.

External Providers

Where specialist knowledge or accreditation is required, external training providers may be engaged. All third-party providers are expected to meet the following minimum standards:

- Demonstrate value for money and cost-effectiveness.
- Adhere to equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) principles in both content and delivery.
- Provide evidence of appropriate insurance, indemnity, and data protection compliance.
- Clearly define content ownership, licensing terms, and usage rights.

Businesses and their managers are responsible for ensuring that any external training commissioned meets these expectations. Where possible, providers should be evaluated based on feedback, outcomes, and alignment with organisational values.

Funding and Resources

Learning and development at South Staffordshire Plc is primarily funded at the departmental or business unit level, and individual teams are encouraged to allocate appropriate resources to support the development needs of their employees, in line with business priorities and workforce planning.

Managers are responsible for identifying and justifying learning investments within their own budgets. Where additional support or guidance is required, they may consult the Learning and Development team to explore suitable options, including cost-effective delivery methods or alternative funding routes.

Where applicable, apprenticeship programmes may be funded through the Apprenticeship Levy. Access to this funding is coordinated in partnership with the HR team to ensure compliance with levy regulations and alignment with organisational development goals.

Protected Learning Time

South Staffordshire Plc recognises that time away from day-to-day duties is essential to support meaningful learning and development. Employees will therefore be provided with reasonable protected time to complete mandatory training, engage in eLearning, participate in leadership development, undertake agreed external development, or pursue approved professional study (see Professional and Funded Development Policy).

All study or development time should be agreed in advance with managers to ensure appropriate planning and support.

Evaluation and Impact

To ensure that learning and development activities deliver real value for both employees and the organisation, all programmes will be evaluated. Evaluation may take several forms, beginning with participant feedback to



capture the learner's experience and identify areas for improvement. Line managers also play a key role in assessing how well learning outcomes have been achieved and whether the development activity has met agreed objectives.

In some cases, pre- and post-assessments may be used to measure the acquisition of knowledge, skills, or behaviours. More importantly, the success of learning is judged by how effectively it is applied in the workplace. Managers and employees should discuss the transfer of learning into day-to-day practice and its contribution to individual performance.

At an organisational level, we will also consider business impact measures where appropriate, such as improvements in efficiency, compliance, employee engagement, or customer outcomes. Together, these evaluation methods provide a balanced view of both the immediate and longer-term benefits of learning and development, helping us to continuously improve the opportunities we provide.

Apprenticeship Support

Apprenticeships are a key component of South Staffordshire Plc's learning and development strategy. They provide structured, accredited pathways that combine practical experience with formal learning, supporting both new talent and the upskilling of existing employees.

Apprenticeship programmes are available across a range of disciplines and levels, including, but not limited to:

- Leadership and management
- Technical and operational roles
- Digital and data-focused programmes
- Customer service and business administration

These programmes are funded through the Apprenticeship Levy and delivered in partnership with approved training providers. All apprentices receive support throughout their learning journey, including:

- Guidance and oversight from their line manager
- A designated contact from the training provider
- Regular progress reviews and feedback
- Access to relevant learning resources and protected study time

Apprenticeships contribute to workforce development, succession planning, and the promotion of inclusive access to nationally recognised qualifications. They are aligned with organisational priorities and are available to employees at various stages of their career.

Commitment to Learning

South Staffordshire Plc places great importance on employees engaging with learning and development activities, particularly where training is mandatory for legal, regulatory, or operational reasons. Completion of required training helps us maintain a safe, compliant, and high-performing workplace.

Before engaging with a learning and development activity, employees should fully understand the requirements of the learning activity and ensure they are fully able to commit to the learning activity, outcomes and completion in full. Any concerns should be discussed in advance with their manager, to give them the opportunity to put in place additional support and guidance.



South Staffordshire Plc

Where training or development activities are not completed, managers will work with employees to understand the reasons and provide appropriate support. This may include addressing workload pressures, offering additional guidance, or making reasonable adjustments to ensure participation is possible.

Where required training remains incomplete despite support, this may be addressed through performance conversations, with a focus on understanding barriers and enabling successful completion. Managers are expected to monitor completion levels, while employees are encouraged to raise any challenges or barriers at the earliest opportunity.

Cancellation / Non-Attendance

South Staffordshire Plc is investing time and resources in supporting employees' development by providing learning and development opportunities. In return, we expect employees to make every effort to attend and engage with all organised training. If an employee needs to cancel their place on an internal training course, they should cancel promptly and inform their Line Manager as soon as possible.

Data Privacy

South Staffordshire Plc is committed to protecting the privacy and security of your personal information. Our Privacy Notice describes how we collect and use personal information about you during and after your working relationship with us, in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation 2016/679 (GDPR). If you require further details as to how your personal data is processed, we ask that you refer to the Privacy Policy.

It is your responsibility to familiarise yourself with our data privacy policies. If you have any queries regarding the processing of data by South Staffordshire Plc please speak to your Line Manager in the first instance.

Management and Administration

This Policy does not form part of any employee's terms and conditions of employment and may be varied from time to time.

The Group HR Director will be responsible for the management of this Policy and has final authority over this Policy.

Suggested changes / amendments should be submitted via email to peopleteam@south-staffordshire.com. Any changes shall be reviewed and approved in accordance with South Staffordshire Plc HR Policy and Procedure review process.

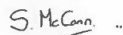
Questions regarding this Policy should be directed to Human Resources using the following email address peopleteam@south-staffordshire.com

Document Details

Owner: Human Resources

Date of Approval: November 2025

Approved By: Sara McCann

Signed by: 

Version no.	Ref Number	Last Review Date	Next Review Date	Author	Version Update
1.0	HR-044	28/11/2025	01/04/2027	HR	Published