

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR EMPLOYEES POLICY

Vocational Training Services Care Sector Ltd (VTS) is committed to providing a high-quality education & training delivery service throughout Essex and into the surrounding counties. We are a small independent training provider delivering peripatetic, work-based education & qualifications (mainly apprenticeships) to learners of all ages. Training predominantly takes place on employers' premises; however, learners do attend one of our offices from time to time to attend learning sessions and sit online assessments.

Integral to our ongoing success is the conviction that by investing in and realising the full potential of our employees, we will equip them to meet the needs of our employers and learners.

Our vision is to recruit, develop and maintain a highly skilled workforce which delivers a high-quality apprenticeship training service to our employers and apprentices. We will aim to ensure that our employees are regularly provided with a range of flexible, challenging and appropriate learning & development opportunities to cater for their individual needs, learning preferences and the changing apprenticeship market. Once qualified to the minimum level and effective in their job role, staff are expected to undergo and keep a record of at least 30 hours of continuous professional development (CPD) activities each year.

In order to achieve this aim, we will:

1 Provide a comprehensive induction for all employees

The induction process will take account of the employee's pre-existing knowledge & skills in relation to their job role and will seek to provide them with a supported programme of learning and mentoring in order for them to become fully effective in their role. The Quality and Operations Manager (QM) will oversee this process and will meet regularly with the employee to review progress and arrange appropriate training for any emerging needs. The QM will appoint another experienced member of staff to act as mentor and liaise with the new employee on a day-to-day basis and to oversee the delivery of the Teaching, Assessment & Quality Assurance (TAQA) award at level 3 if applicable. The whole process will be documented, and the employee will be encouraged to take ownership of their progression and update their CPD folders regularly.

2 Ensure continuous improvement of knowledge, skills and performance within our sectors

The senior management team will ensure that staff remain up to date in terms of knowledge, skills and performance within their delivery sectors. We will regularly utilise sector specific training events by sending key personnel to attend and then cascading the information to relevant staff in the form of in-house training. By subscribing to sector specific publications such as Nursery World and Nursing Times, and by regular liaison with our awarding organisation, we will receive updates in terms of legislation or 'best practice'. At the monthly staff meetings, the QM will organise CPD activities to encompass any such sector updates to ensure that all staff are aware, and any appropriate alterations are made to delivery. Staff will spend time together in their subject area groups to discuss any further training requirements or updates they may feel are necessary and this will be relayed back to the QM to organise additional training if appropriate. At least once per year, subject to our employers' agreement and opportunity, we will arrange for all delivery staff to spend a day working at one of our trusted employer's premises in a 'back to the shop floor' day in order to refresh their knowledge and skills in a 'real job' setting if applicable

for that staff member. We will work closely with our employers to ensure our flexible delivery models are both right for them and remain relevant to the apprenticeship.

3 Ensure continuous improvement of knowledge, skills and performance in teaching & training

The senior management team will ensure our employees' continuous development in terms of knowledge, skills and performance in teaching & training. As a minimum, all delivery staff are required to have or be working towards the Teaching, Assessment & Quality Assurance (TAQA) award at level 3. We will expect and support staff to progress to the Certificate of Education at level 4 and then encourage further progression to the level 5 wherever possible. Apart from this formal training, we will utilise the information and training available from organisations such as Ofsted, The Education & Training Foundation, City & Guilds, FE Week and AELP to ensure we remain up to date with new teaching methods and requirements. We will use the monthly staff meetings to disseminate information to all relevant staff. If the need arises, we will engage the services of outside organisations to visit our offices to deliver teaching/training updates to all staff as a group. We will operate a tightly monitored process of staff observations and subsequent feedback in order to ensure that our teaching is effective, current and suitably flexible to take account of individual learner and/or employer needs and is appropriate for our delivery models.

4 Ensure continuous improvement of employees' skills and performance

The senior management team will ensure our employees' continuous development and improvement in terms of their all-round skills and performance. In addition to training opportunities outlined in 2 & 3 above, all staff will be subscribed to an individual learning portal giving them access to a variety of online learning courses of interest to them and relating to the sector of their expertise. They will have the opportunity to explore and improve their knowledge & skills in specific areas of interest to them, which will develop their individual skills and enhance their performance. The courses are all CPD accredited and will be logged as professional development hours.

As a minimum, all delivery staff will undergo training updates at least annually in the following:

- Safeguarding, equality & diversity, Prevent duties
- Legislation updates specific to their industries
- Occupational practices (which may include back to the shop floor days)
- Apprenticeship standards (new versions/updates)

5 Ensure that continuous professional development is given high priority

The senior management team will ensure that our staff understand that continuous development is an essential part of their professional lives. At least once per quarter, all delivery staff will be observed at a teaching session by either an internal quality assurer or a quality manager. Constructive feedback will encourage them to strive for continuous improvement in their teaching style. Staff meetings take place once per month and part of this meeting will encompass a training update or exercise of some sort. Additionally, all staff will be encouraged to attend formal training events throughout the year, and then be prepared to disseminate the information at the staff meetings. Staff will be required to update their CPD records regularly and these will be monitored by the Quality managers to ensure compliance. Staff will be made aware that adequate CPD evidence is required by Ofsted and External Quality Assurance inspections.

6 Ensure that learning objectives are focussed for the individual

All delivery staff will meet once per month with the quality manager in order to monitor their management of their caseload, discuss any issues or concerns and to find solutions. Part of this monthly monitoring will be to discuss any difficulties the staff member may be having and any support they might require in addition to the regular training activities taking place. The Quality manager will then arrange any additional support accordingly.

Once per year, a more in-depth meeting will take place in the form of an annual appraisal and a training needs analysis for that staff member. This will consider feedback from observations, learner and employer satisfaction feedback, management information data regarding various performance indicators, plus the staff member's own viewpoint regarding their own strengths, weaknesses and preferences. The CEO will agree individual performance targets for that staff member, both short and longer term, and the appropriate training will be put in place.

We will aim to support and develop staff members in the areas identified as requiring this, whilst utilising their strengths in other areas.

In this way, we will develop a well-equipped and skilled workforce which can deliver the services with the flexibility required by our customers, as well as fulfilling our organisational aims and objectives.

7 Regularly monitor all professional learning & development activity

As part of the annual self-assessment process, the senior management team will review our approach to professional development to ensure its continuing suitability, adequacy and effectiveness. In particular, we will utilise management information data to scrutinise ongoing staff & learner performance, observation feedback for assurance regarding the quality and currency of teaching, plus satisfaction questionnaires to ensure our staff feel well supported and equipped to carry out their job roles, and employers & learners are happy with the service they receive. Any areas for improvement we identify will be reported in the self-assessment report and addressed through the quality improvement plan.

REVIEW AND VERSION CONTROL

This policy is reviewed annually and update as necessary.

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