**Learning agreement**

1. **Introduction**

[Insert employer name] and the recognised trade unions and staff side organisations, the partners1, acknowledge the benefits of lifelong learning and development for all its employees and all parties are committed to working in partnership to promote and support lifelong learning across the organisation and ensure equal access to learning opportunities. The organisation has signed the Skills Pledge and part of this is to support staff to gain a Level 2 qualification in Literacy and Numeracy [personalise for your organisation, e.g. Working in partnership with SN@P, [Insert employer name] offer excellent support to both staff and learners to gain a Level 2 qualification in Literacy and Numeracy.]

1. **Purpose**
   1. This Learning Agreement provides a framework for partnership working between the Partners on all matters relating to lifelong learning and training and development including the NHS Knowledge and Skills Framework (KSF) [www.nhsemployers.org/SimplifiedKSF](http://www.nhsemployers.org/SimplifiedKSF)
   2. The Agreement outlines the crucial role played by Union Learning Representatives (ULRs) in promoting and supporting aspirations for learning across the NBT. ULRs are recognised as active partners in ensuring effective outreach to employees.
2. **Union Learning Representative (ULR) role**

The Partners acknowledge and support the role of ULRs and in particular their contribution to employee engagement, including:

* Raising awareness of lifelong learning issues in the workplace, especially with non- traditional learners to identify potential skills and talent for the business.
* Helping to identify and work within NBT to prioritise and support members and colleagues with their specific learning needs including Skills for Life – literacy and numeracy, basic IT skills and ESOL <https://www.unionlearn.org.uk>
* Liaising with members and colleagues to identify occupational skills needs and gaps in provision or specific interests.
* Encouraging members and colleagues to access and participate in lifelong learning and the NBT offer to support business needs.
* Motivating members and colleagues to reach their potential.
* Supporting a whole organisation approach to learning - a ‘learning culture’.
* Helping to identify and apply for sources of funding to support lifelong learning including working with external partners.
* Addressing improvement in patient care and delivery of services including reduction of avoidable errors by helping to identify appropriate tailored training.
* Assisting supporting and mentoring members and colleagues to address and cope with change.

1. **Scope**

This Agreement covers all employees of the organisation and will not be used as an alternative to collective bargaining with staff side. The Partners agree that individual issues arising from any educational or learning initiative, not obviously resolvable, shall be subject to the existing NBT policies and procedures. This Agreement reflects the strength of commitment of the partners and as such is protected from any grievances between the parties that may arise outside its scope, thus ensuring the work towards a whole organisation culture of learning is not jeopardised.

1. **Lifelong learning and professional development**
   1. **A definition**

The purpose of **lifelong learning** is to continue to build skills and knowledge through experiences encountered in the course of a lifetime of an individual. It can be through formal involvement such as training, counselling, tutoring, mentorship, apprenticeship and higher education and informal through the learners’ own experiences or situations. It is lifelong, voluntary and self-motivated for either personal or professional reasons and enhances social inclusion, active citizenship, personal development and employability. Lifelong learning places the needs of the learner at the centre of the provision paying particular regard to varying learning styles and levels for adult learners.

* 1. This Agreement refers to the growth and development of lifelong learning opportunities within the organisation and the needs of employee. (Refer to <https://www.socialpartnershipforum.org/priority-areas/learning-for-life/> for additional information).

These needs may or may not be a requirement of their job role, but a requirement for their own personal development. Learning needs which are job related will be, in the first instance, addressed with a line manager.

* 1. The partnership recognises the pivotal role ULRs have in developing a culture of learning within the workplace and the number of activities which ULRs can carry out that underpins the development of lifelong learning opportunities.
  2. The attached Annual Action Plan can detail agreed activities of the learning partnership and the following list gives examples of these activities, and is not exhaustive:
* Provide support, information and guidance to all staff (members and non-union members) in relation to learning opportunities which is based on peer support.
* Assist, support and mentor members and colleagues to build their confidence to take up opportunities to use their transferable skills to support business and personal development needs.
* Support and organise learning events.
* Carry out learning surveys, collate and report on learning needs analysis.
* Provide pre and post support for staff appraisal and reviews.
* Provide support and guidance on learning issues in relation to competencies to do the job.
* Liaise with, negotiate and agree provisions with local training providers.
* Introduce union learning resources in to the workplace for broader use.
* Dissemination of information about learning opportunities and initiatives via union and organisational communication systems.
* Mentoring and induction support for staff including apprentices.
* Access to funding opportunities via union learning initiatives.
* Provide specific knowledge via ongoing union training on for example: dyslexia, Functional skills,
* e-learning support and other learning progression barriers.
* Access to a range of learning resources and tools via unions’ lifelong learning, education departments and institutes and those of their partners, for example [personalise for your organisation, e.g. The Open University].

1. **Roles and responsibilities**
   1. Employer

The employer will ensure that all staff are made aware of and enabled to benefit from and comply with this Agreement. The employer will ensure that staff with supervisory or line management roles carry out their responsibility to promote access to and effectively disseminate information about learning opportunities and are made aware of the important role ULRs play in supporting a whole organisation approach to learning and the value of their contribution to business needs. Further that these staff are equipped to actively support and enable ULRs to carry out their duties in line with this Agreement and ACAS guidelines and the current facilities/recognition agreement.

* 1. Trade union and staff side

Trade unions and staff side organisations are responsible for identifying, recruitment/election and training of ULRs and their ongoing continuing professional development and support and the appropriate officer will inform LCHS Head of Workforce Development the names of appointed/elected ULRs, confirming that appropriate training has taken place to enable them to carry out their duties effectively in line with ACAS guidelines and the Employment Act 2002.

The staff side organisations and trade unions may wish to appoint a lead ULR or coordinator according to their Branch rules. The joint staff side organisations and trade unions may agree to appoint an overall lead ULR to liaise with LCHS on their behalf. They will use their communications networks to effectively disseminate information to support a whole organisation learning culture.

* 1. Joint

The joint role of the partners will be to encourage a ‘culture of learning’ within the organisation.

The established learning committee/forum will be the mechanism for joint responsibility for determining, introducing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating lifelong learning initiatives. The Learning Committee/forum will produce a joint action plan; setting goals and targets for the learning provision within the workplace for the forthcoming 12 month period.

The Partners, according to the agreed terms and references of the Learning Committee/forum will ensure that all sectors of the workplace are represented equally on the group with an equal balance of management and staff-side membership, comprising ULRs, and managers with a responsibility for learning and development of staff. As well as other learning partners when required. Members of the Learning Committee/forum will be provided with all relevant information concerning the learning provision and their duties/responsibilities as members of the committee. Minutes of the Learning Committee/forum will be shared with relevant stakeholders in order to highlight the partnership work of the Learning Committee/forum to help ensure wider engagement toward the organisations’ ‘learning culture’.

1. **Summary of Agreement**

By signing this agreement we agree to a:

* **Commitment to lifelong learning** to work in partnership to address joint aspirations around learning provision and maximise learning opportunities for staff agreeing to the principles and aims outlined in this Agreement.
* **Commitment to the role of and value of the ULR** to [insert employer] with reasonable, supported time off to undertake their training and carry out their duties.
* **Commitment to Equality and Human Rights** through positive policies to promote equal opportunities in line with Equalities of Opportunity Policy, Harassment and Bullying Policy and ensuring that all opportunities for lifelong learning are brought to the attention of all employees and that they are actively encouraged to fully participate in learning initiatives. (Useful link on the British Institute for Human Right website- <https://www.bihr.org.uk/my-human-rights>)
* **Commitment to confidentiality** in line with [insert employer] Confidentiality Policy. Further, any learning needs analysis is undertaken with the full co-operation of all partners and that any such analysis will be used solely for learning and educational purposes. The analyses will not be used in relation to other issues such as pay, performance appraisal, redundancy and disciplinary procedures. Where information is gathered in confidence both sides accept that personal information will not be passed on, e.g. where learning needs analyses conducted by a ULR has highlighted Skills for Life need which the individual does not want the employer to know.
* **Commitment to integrity of the spirit of partnership of this Learning Agreement and the work of the learning committee/forum** and the individual and joint roles and responsibilities of both the employer and the trade union(s) to undertake to ensure that this is not used as an alternative to collective bargaining with staff side. Existing negotiation procedures and arrangements other than those specified in this agreement will be maintained. Every endeavour will be made to insulate the learning partnership in a situation of industrial dispute. The partners agree that all individual grievances arising from any educational or learning initiatives shall be the subject to the existing [insert employer] grievance procedure.

**The Learning Committee/forum will be responsible for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the Agreement, carrying out a review 12 months from the date of implementation.**

**Signed:……………………………………………………… Date……………………………………………………**

**(Employer Side)**

**Signed:……………………………………………………… Date……………………………………………………**

**(Staff side Chair)**

Trade Unions represented by staff side at the date of signing were:

**UNISON, RCN, RCM** [amend/add as appropriate]

This template for use in the NHS and can be downloaded in Microsoft Word format from [www.rcn.org.uk/learning\_agreement\_nhs](http://www.rcn.org.uk/learning_agreement_nhs) and the independent sector template can be downloaded from [www.rcn.org.uk/learning\_agreement\_independent](http://www.rcn.org.uk/learning_agreement_independent).

[Please see below a sample of an action plan for you to use as a base for your planning.]

Example of an action plan for you to use as a base for your planning.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Sample action plan: business unit\* joint learning**  **Organisation’s lead……………………………………….. Dec 2017 – Dec 2018** | | |
|  | When | Leads |
| 1.Signing Learning Agreement | December 2017 | Partners |
| 2. Form a Learning Agreement | January 2018 | Organisation’s lead |
| 3. ULR Audit  Count, map ULR’s  Brief on learning agreement  Recruit and train where gaps  Network in place  County and regional groups | January – March 2018 | Name of people who leading |
| 4. Communications Strategy  Internal top managers  Internal to staff  External to stakeholders | March 2018 | committee |
| 5. joint events calendar  Map and plan for national learning events for example Adult learner’s week  Publish calendar and promote alongside learning offer  Seek appropriate funding | May 2018 | Name of leads |
| Targeted work  Identify barriers to learning  Plan interventions  Identify teams/divisions  Identify groups\*  Link closely with the Organisation’s learning initiatives and staff side’s access to resources. | June - December 2018 | Learning committee/forum |
| \*Groups could include new staff, including apprentices, HCA’s, women, BME, manual staff  NOTE: the action plan might become very specific, according to what is required, for example, a focus on HCA’s or apprentices or particular areas. | | |