

LEICESTERSHIRE

FIRE and RESCUE SERVICE

SERVICE PROCEDURE

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**HUMAN
RESOURCES**

**Skills for Life
Training**

INTRODUCTION

- 1 Government has recognised that, within the National workforce, there is a shortfall in numeracy and literacy skills and cite the following concerns;
 - There are supervisors and junior managers, especially those promoted internally who may need to brush up on some aspects of literacy or numeracy.
 - The need for support for non-qualified employees who have not recognised or do not have confidence in their own ability having left school without any qualifications.
 - Employees who need to brush up on their skills through lack of use.
 - Qualified employees who have secured higher level qualifications while still experiencing problems with the English or maths they need at work, perhaps because these qualifications were achieved some time ago.
- 2 As an organisation, LFRS has recognised this, particularly against the backdrop of the changing role of firefighters and the introduction of the Assessment Development Centre (ADC) process. Some of our staff may need help to improve or consolidate these skills but do not want to be identified by the organisation or by colleagues for a variety of reasons.
- 3 The Governments Skills for Life programme provides funding to local educational providers to allow them to provide basic skills training in numeracy and literacy free of charge to adult learners.
- 4 The TUC affiliated representative bodies have identified the positive contribution that this funding could make to all FRS staff and has established a network of Union Learning Representatives who can negotiate with local providers to provide appropriate Skills for Life training for individual staff members.
- 5 Members of staff who undertake Skills for Life training should be allowed reasonable time off work to complete their studies in line with the conditions outlined in the current LFRS Learning Agreement (appendix 1) and support for the process should be at all levels of management in line with the Skills Pledge declaration made by the Chief Fire Officer (appendix 2).

TIME OF IN LIEU PROCEDURE

- 6 An application for leave in lieu following study for a Skills for Life (SfL) qualification requires the approval of the Area Manager/Head of Department concerned. Consideration of each application is made on the basis of the suitability of the course. Regard is also given to the organisational requirements and exigencies of the Service.
- 7 Time off in lieu may be accrued when staff undertake SfL learning on a non-duty day that does not constitute part of a 5-day course or is training occurring as detailed in Table 4 of Service Procedure – Leave (Station Watch Based).
- 8 Time off in lieu granted for SfL learning on a non-duty day will be equal to the number of hours worked.
- 9 Time off in lieu hours accrued may be used to take full or part shift leave subject to the provisions above.
- 10 Time off in lieu hours accrued for SfL learning will not be eligible to be put forward for payment at the end of the year. *Note; it is therefore recommended that a separate TOIL account is created for SfL learning*
- 11 Accrued time off in lieu will be recorded on the appropriate record form FIN/OT2. Each entry on this form will be authorised by the relevant manager by use of signature and Service number. Each member of staff will be responsible for the maintenance of their own record form. Watch Managers will monitor record forms and will ensure that the forms are available for audit.
- 12 Applications to take accrued time off in lieu leave will be made using the appropriate form, Per11a and authorised by the Watch Manager. Application forms will be kept at station and will be available for audit.
- 13 The maximum number of hours that may be accrued for SfL learning will be no greater than the number of hours study recommended by the SfL provider following diagnostic assessment of the learner. The relevant manager will be responsible for confirming the amount of time recommended by the SfL provider. This will be achieved by means of a written confirmation from the SfL provider. **In any event, a maximum of 24 hours per learner may be granted for SfL learning/testing.**

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Appendix 1



Leicestershire Fire & Rescue Service Learning Agreement

Partners.

Fire Brigades Union
Leicestershire Fire & Rescue Service
Other TUC affiliated Trade Unions

This agreement recognises the role of the Union Learning Representative (ULR) as acknowledged within the ACAS code of practice 2003.

The Fire Service and the recognised Trade Unions are committed to working in partnership to promote and support lifelong learning and ensure equal access to learning opportunities for all employees of the Service.

All parties will promote lifelong learning in the workplace.

Aims.

- To build a Learning Partnership Forum (LPF) in Leicestershire Fire & Rescue Service
- To encourage and support the staff within Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service to participate in Lifelong Learning
- To provide access to Lifelong Learning
- To establish, where possible, a Learning Centre within the Service
- To build upon the Government's current learning initiatives
- To encourage and support staff seeking learning opportunities and re-skilling prior to retirement from the Service.

Who the agreement covers.

This agreement covers all full and part-time employees of Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service

The Service will undertake to ensure that this agreement will not be used as an alternative to collective bargaining with the recognised unions and agrees to maintain and use existing negotiating procedures and arrangements other than those specified in this agreement.

The Partners agree that all individual grievances arising from any educational or learning initiatives shall be subject to the existing grievance procedures.

The Partners agree to establish a joint Union/Employer Learning Partnership Forum, which will be responsible for introducing, implementing and monitoring learning initiatives.

The main responsibilities of the LPF will include;

- Consideration of the learning needs of staff
- Prioritising learning needs
- Identification of those groups and individuals who are to benefit from the various learning initiatives
- Produce a realistic learning plan, setting goals and targets for the learning provision within the Service, which will include establishing a Learning Centre
- Establishing the standards for the learning to satisfy
- Determination and monitoring of the provisions available
- Maintenance of any contracts with external education and training providers
- Ensuring that the learning plan is effectively implemented so that the LPF meet their goals and targets for learning provisions

The Partners agree that any learning needs analysis shall be undertaken with the full cooperation of all Partners and that any such analysis will be solely for learning and educational purposes. The analysis will not be used in relation to other issues such as pay, performance appraisal, redundancy, disciplinary procedures, etc.

All individual learning records and information will be totally confidential and kept by a designated ULR.

The Partners commit to regularly updating the learning records of participants in any learning programme.

The LPF will comprise of agreed numbers of managers and ULR's and the Service will place at least one senior member of its it's management team on the LPF so that the LPF is able to take effective decisions.

The Partners agree to ensure that all sectors of the Service, where possible, are represented on the LPF and the members of the LPF are provided with all relevant information concerning the learning provision and their duties and responsibilities as members of the forum.

The Partners will have the responsibility of disseminating all information on matters relating to learning within the Service and will ensure that all employees and

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managers are made aware of the learning opportunities available and the work of the LPF.

The LPF will meet once a month (or as otherwise agreed) to carry out the tasks identified by this agreement.

A Chairperson or Secretary will be appointed at the first meeting of the LPF and once a year thereafter to facilitate the future meetings of the forum.

Equal opportunities, Equal access

The Partners recognise the importance of equality of access to learning and equal opportunities to enhance skill levels.

The Partners will ensure that learning and development will be provided to all employees.

The LPF will:

- Make every effort to ensure that when any learning takes place the specific needs of individual employees are taken into account
- Ensure that ULR's are given the opportunity to take suitable training to enable them to offer support, advice and guidance to their members and work with the Service to introduce and sustain a learning culture in the workplace
- Assist individual employees and learning reps to make informed choices with regard to programmes and give those concerned the ability to secure the maximum benefits possible from the opportunities available
- Recommend that, where possible, reasonable time off is granted for attending learning/educational establishments and accessing learning during working hours. This will be agreed on an individual basis taking into account the exigencies of the Service.

Although participation by employees will be on a voluntary basis, the Unions agree to actively encourage their members to fully participate in all learning initiatives and opportunities.

This agreement will be re-evaluated every 12 months after signing.



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Appendix 2

Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service Skills Pledge Declaration

**On behalf of Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service, I, as
Chief Executive Officer, make a commitment that we shall:**

**actively encourage and support our employees to gain the
skills and qualifications that will support their future
employability and meet the needs of our organisation;**

**actively encourage and support our employees to acquire
basic literacy and numeracy skills, and with Government
support work towards their first Level 2 qualification in an
area that is relevant to our organisation;**

**demonstrably raise our employees' skills and competencies
to improve organisational performance through investing in
economically valuable training and development.**

Signed...