Protected Learning Time Policy
Combined Policy and Procedure

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V1.1

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Reference No / Name. None

Suitable for Publication
Policy Section Yes
Procedure Section Yes

Protective Marking
Not Protectively Marked

PRINTED VERSIONS SHOULD NOT BE RELIED UPON. THE MOST UP TO DATE VERSION CAN BE FOUND ON THE FORCE INTRANET POLICIES SITE.
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1 Policy Section

1.1 Statement of Intent – Aim and Rationale
Detail what we want to achieve (the aim) & why we need to achieve it (the rationale)

The aim of this policy is to outline the meaning and purpose of “Protected Learning Time” (PLT) and give guidance to staff on the appropriate amounts of duty time that will be allocated to them whilst undertaking learning using methods other than traditional classroom based delivery. It also outlines the provision of the right to request time off for training.

It is not acceptable to expect our staff to accommodate alternative training methods into spare moments during their working days in an ad hoc unstructured way. If the learning is considered important then dedicated time needs to be allocated permitting the learner to make best use of the learning material and properly assimilate the required knowledge.

1.2 Visions and Values
Dorset Police is committed to the principles of “One Team, One Vision” – A Safer Dorset for You

Our strategic priority is to achieve two clear objectives
To Make Dorset Safer
To Make Dorset Feel Safer

In doing this we will act in accordance with Our Values of:
- Integrity
- Professionalism
- Fairness and
- Respect

1.3 Securing Trust and Confidence
The document seeks to achieve the Priority to Make Dorset Feel Safer by Securing Trust and Confidence. Research identifies that this is achieved through delivering services which:
1. Addresses individual needs and expectations
2. Improve perceptions of order and community cohesion
3. Focus on Community Priorities
4. Demonstrate Professionalism
5. Express Force values
6. Instil confidence in staff
2 Standards

2.1 Legal Basis

Protected learning time is a NPIA recommendation with regard to the Core Leadership Programme. This programme is heavily reliant on pre-reads and completion of workbooks outside the classroom, hence the need for allocated learning time within work hours. The Education & Skills Act 2008 legislates for the entitlement to request time off.

2.2 People, Confidence and Equality Impact Assessment

During the creation of this document, this business area is subject to an assessment process entitled “People, Confidence and Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)”. Its aim is to establish the impact of the business area on all people and to also ensure that it complies with the requirements imposed by a range of legislation.

2.3 Monitoring / Feedback

2.3.1 This policy will be monitored annually by the Leadership Unit.

2.3.2 Informal monitoring and evaluation will be carried out following Work Shops using Level 1 immediate evaluation principles and review of the Work Shop Evaluation Sheets.

2.3.3 Feedback relating to this policy can be made in writing or by e-mail to:

Address: Leadership Unit, LDU, HQ.
E-mail: CLDP
Telephone: 700 3934
3 Procedure Section

3.1 Principle Content

Dorset Police staff are engaged in a wide range of training, learning and development activities. These can be delivered by the Force in-house, brought in or delivered away from Dorset Police premises. Training can be formal classroom delivered courses or increasingly a less formal alternative. This may include use of videotapes, CD-ROMs, workbooks, coaching, mentoring, e-learning and perceptual training.

Non-classroom based training allows learning to take place at times when it is convenient both to the learner and the organisation. Carried out in this manner it reduces abstractions from the workplace and times spent travelling to and from centrally run courses. Conventional classroom based training will continue to be used when it is deemed to be the most effective method of delivery.

Clearly there is potential for alternative learning time to be marginalised when competing with the delivery of operational policing services.

The demands on local policing often impact upon line managers making it difficult to consider the benefits of learning activities on service delivery and improved performance. There is potential for discriminatory or unfair treatment for some members of staff. This must not be permitted and line managers and staff should be sensitive to this issue and monitor closely individual requests and training needs, in line with this policy.

The Force wishes to ensure that all staff are fully supported in attaining knowledge, understanding, skills, attitudes and behaviours that have a direct impact upon: their performance, their teams, departments or command areas. This policy aims to give guidance to ensure this is achieved consistently throughout the organisation.

3.2 Protected Learning Time

Each item of alternative learning material will have a recommended amount of time allocated, which is judged to be appropriate for its completion. This will be known as ‘protected learning time’. If a line manager wishes a member of staff to undertake a piece of learning or an individual is mandated by the Force to complete a learning package, they will be allocated dedicated and specific duty time to undertake the learning – “protected learning time”. This may be one occasion or a number of occasions, which, aggregated together, make up the protected learning time.

Where a programme or package does not have a recommended period of learning time allocated, the Training Manager or the E-Learning Manager will be able to advise on the period within which it can be completed.

Alternative learning should be considered in the same manner and given the same status as learning time allocated to an individual who is on a more traditionally delivered course.
3.3 Prioritisation Of Alternative Learning

It is for line managers to decide which of their staff members undertake courses using alternative learning methods. Training needs can be identified from a number of sources such as staff appraisals, PPP5 requests or skills or knowledge gaps observed in the workplace.

When deciding on the priority to be afforded to learning, managers should use the priority levels from the current PPP5 process:

- **Level 1** = mandatory or required to meet a specific objective as identified on PPP2
- **Level 2** = required to enable the individual to undertake the full range of duties associated with their current job role
- **Level 3** = a development need that falls outside the current job role but would assist the individual with their immediate career aspirations
- **Level 4** = a development need related to future career development

The Force will prescribe some learning; this will always be afforded level 1 priority. Likewise mandatory pre-read material will always be considered level 1.

3.4 Amount Of Time Allocated To An Individual

Staff undertaking priority levels 1 and 2 training will receive 100% of the learning time allocated to complete the course.

Managers may wish to negotiate a period of time less than that recommended to complete priority level 3 training. In such cases a development need has been identified that would assist the member of staff with their immediate career aspirations. The member of staff will benefit from personal development and, in partnership with the Force, should share responsibility for their learning and be prepared to commit some of their own time.

Priority level 4 requests will not normally receive protected learning time; however the learner should be given full access to learning materials, use of Force computers and equipment to support their learning. This must be undertaken with the knowledge and overview of their respective line manager.

3.5 Learning Contract

To ensure that protected learning time is truly protected and properly managed, managers should identify specific periods when their staff member will be free from normal commitments so that they can undertake their learning.

This learning contract should detail exact times and locations when it can reasonably be expected that the learning can take place. Although protected learning time can never be guaranteed, its interruption and a return to normal duties should only be considered in cases of urgent operational necessity, for instance a court appearance, or similar. In general the same criteria should be applied when interrupting protected learning time as would be to the cancellation of attendance on a centrally run course.
3.6 Location And Timing Of Alternative Learning

In considering the prioritisation and protection of learning time, managers and learners are advised that the location and time of the day proposed will impact significantly regarding its effectiveness.

The Dorset Police clear desk policy ensures that any office not in use (except those with a security requirement) can be utilised for training. Additionally an individual could be permitted to learn from a location other than a Dorset Police site, i.e. home or library, provided they can be contacted in the event of a recall to duty.

3.7 Use Of Headphones

To ensure that colleagues are not interrupted or distracted by the audio content of videotapes, CD-ROMs, DVDs or e-learning, staff should consider the use of lightweight headphones.

If headphones are a requirement of an individual’s role then the HR Business Partner (Health & Safety) should be consulted for specific guidance.

3.8 Special Needs

Managers will wish to consider any special needs that a learner may have and take steps to address them. For instance it may be necessary to allocate additional time over and above the recommended protected learning time.

If an individual has a particular need that restricts their access to learning and this cannot be met locally then advice should be sought from the Training Manager.

3.9 Appeals

If an individual or manager feels that the recommended protected learning time is not suitable or that this policy is not being fairly interpreted then they should appeal in the following manner:

- In the first instance to their departmental or command area managers;
- If satisfaction is not achieved then an appeal should be made in writing accompanied by a copy of the protected learning contract, if used, to the Force Training Co-ordinator;
- If they do not agree with the judgement of the Force Training Co-ordinator then a final appeal may be made to the Head of Human Resources.

The Learning and Development Unit will monitor appeals in accordance with their monitoring and review policy.

3.10 Time Off For Training

The Education & Skills Act 2008 has been amended to introduce new rules giving employees the right to request time off work for training.
The time off will be unpaid and Dorset Police has no duty to meet the costs of the training. Only one request can be made in any 12-month period, by using this method of request. (Previous requests can be discounted if withdrawn, training was cancelled or training failed to start due to unforeseen circumstances).

Dorset Police will seriously consider any request from an employee with at least 26 weeks service for time away from their core duties to undertake training.

The training should be on a topic that will increase their effectiveness in their role or is relevant to the business.

A written request must be submitted stating:
- The application is being made under s.63D of the Employment Rights Act 1996;
- The subject matter of the proposed training;
- Where and when the training will take place;
- The provider/supervisor of such training;
- How the employee feels the training will improve their effectiveness;
- It must be dated and confirm dates and method of any previous application, if applied for under the Act.

The employer must within 28 days either:
- Accept the request and confirm that in writing (in full or in part);
- Meet with the employee to discuss the request;
- Refuse the request and confirm with reasons in writing.

Within 14 days of the above meeting the employer must inform the employee in writing of their final decision. Any refusal may only be made for specified business reasons, such as:
- The training would not improve the employee’s effectiveness;
- The training would not improve the performance of the business;
- The burden of additional costs are too great;
- The employer is unable to reorganise work among existing staff.

### 3.11 Appeals

An employee can make an appeal within 14 days of the refusal.

The employer must act within 14 days of receiving the appeal notice. If they accept the appeal they must notify the employee in writing. If they do not they must arrange an appeal meeting at which the employee has the right to be accompanied, by a Federation or Unison representative or colleague. This must be held within 14 days of receiving the appeals notice and conducted by a different manager. The decision of the appeals meeting should be notified in writing within 14 days.

For further information on the legislation covering this area and a simple process flowchart please click on the links below:

- **Time to Train Legislation**
- **Process Flowchart**
4 Consultation and Authorisation

4.1 Consultation

(A hard copy signed by all persons is required for version 1.0 and any major amendment. For minor amendments completion of the consultation section is at the discretion of the business manager)

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4.2 Authorisation of this version

(A hard copy signed by all persons is required for version 1.0 and any major amendment. For minor amendments a typed name and date is sufficient)

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5 Version Control

5.1 Review

Every policy or procedure is subject to a process of continuing review, depending on its risk factors (as assessed within the corresponding EIA). The date of the next scheduled review is given below. However, if changes in legislation or circumstances make it necessary, the policy should be reviewed and updated sooner.

| Date of next scheduled review | Date: 15 January 2016 |

5.2 Version History

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5.3 Document History

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Details only required for version 1.0 and any major amendment ie 2.0 or 3.0:

Name of Board:
Date Approved:
Chief Officer Approving:

Template version July 2012