

Action for Health, Education and Development (AHEAD)

STAFF DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING POLICY

The staff of AHEAD, with their commitment, skills, and abilities, are the most valuable resource of the organisation. As such, AHEAD is anxious to help staff develop.

This policy is intended to ensure that staff are made more aware of development opportunities and to introduce more formalised arrangements than the relatively ad hoc practice of past years.

STAFF REVIEWS

To ensure that there is regular consideration of the needs of each staff member and post, the Co-ordinator and Management Committee shall meet individually at least twice a year with each member of staff who is responsible to them. Additional, more frequent, reviews are also considered valuable, and each department is encouraged to make arrangements appropriate to its own needs.

The two minimum annual reviews will take place in April and October each year, and the Co-ordinator will have responsibility for organising a system whereby him/herself and the Management Committee are reminded that staff reviews are due and asked to report that the reviews have taken place.

The purposes of staff reviews shall be to clarify objectives, identify changes in the nature of the work done and probable new directions, and review the strengths and weaknesses of the individual staff member with a view to planning actions to assist development. These might include changes in work practice, identification of training needs, and consideration of long-term future plans.

If such a review leads to revision of a job description, then the existing procedures on job evaluation shall apply.

Where training needs are identified, it shall be the responsibility of the Co-ordinator staff member concerned to identify appropriate training courses, and to make necessary arrangements. Other agencies may be used for advice and information.

Arrangements will be made for the Co-ordinator and Management Committee to be trained in the skills and styles appropriate for such staff reviews.

TRAINING

Training should be of value both to AHEAD and to the individual. It should be work-orientated and have a discernible benefit for both sides in the foreseeable future. Thus it may be concerned with development of specific skills or gaining of information directly related to the job. It may also be concerned with the development of individual confidence, interpersonal skills, and background understanding relevant to the tasks of a voluntary agency such as AHEAD.

Budgetary provision will be made for up to 10 days for each member of staff for attendance at short training courses. The training allowances shall apply pro-rata for part-time staff. The training allowances will also apply pro-rata to temporary and fixed-term contract staff working at AHEAD for more than three months.

Where course fees are particularly expensive or a staff member wishes to exceed the number of days allowed per annum for short courses, this may be agreed by the Management Committee. The Management Committee will take into account the financial situation, work load of the unit, and whether the course in question is essential to the work of the staff members and the needs of AHEAD. Such additional training allowances will be allowed in the case of staff with a disability and part-time staff who require the development of particular skills to allow them to undertake their work effectively.

Within the limits set above, AHEAD will allow time off work and cover the full costs for attending short courses. The limits will be reviewed annually by the Sub-committee (Finance) as part of the budget-making process.

Decisions as to which courses to attend shall be the responsibility of the Co-ordinator in consultation with the individual concerned. He/she will also be responsible for arranging the timing of training absences to minimise the effect on work-flow and colleagues.

Other agencies may be used for advice and information.

Where a request for training is refused, the staff member concerned may institute the Grievance Procedure if s/he wishes the decision to be reviewed.

The Co-ordinator will inform the Administration Officer of courses taken by staff. The Administration Officer will institute a recording process. An analysis will be presented to the Management Committee and Sub-committee (Finance) annually. Information on training time and costs already incurred by a staff member shall be available on request to that person, their line manager, and the Management Committee.

Where special programmes of training for the organisation as a whole are undertaken, such as that concerned with equal opportunities recruitment, the sub-committee (Finance) shall decide whether it should be an additional budgetary commitment over and above the normal training allowances.

CONFERENCES

Attendance at a conference may be often a normal and essential part of an individual's work but at times it may be also more properly considered as a development experience for the individual concerned. Conference attendance shall be additional to the training allowance mentioned above. A staff member wishing to attend a conference, however, should obtain approval of their line manager who shall also consult with the sub-committee (Finance).

TRAINING AS PART OF NORMAL WORK

'Training' does not mean only attendance on formal courses. It should be a conscious part of normal work. In particular, it is the responsibility of the Co-ordinator, as part of the managerial support he/she gives to staff, to assist their colleagues to improve their skills and understanding, to reflect on work events, and to learn from experience.

As regards new members of staff, it shall be the responsibility of AHEAD to arrange an induction programme that:

1. Introduces the new person to colleagues
2. Explains the structure and functions of AHEAD
3. Explains the work of AHEAD
4. Ensures understanding of the particular post and tasks to be undertaken by the worker
5. Ensures knowledge of the work of other organisations involved with AHEAD and the possibilities for collaborative work and support

The Co-ordinator shall be responsible for ensuring that after six months, there is a session with the new worker review progress, the direction of the work, development needs, and links to other organisations involved with AHEAD.

Where a number of new staff join AHEAD at a similar time, the Co-ordinator may arrange a common seminar for them all on the functions and structure of AHEAD.