



Training – A guide to Quality Status

Increasingly training is being seen as vital to the development of the parish and town council tier of local government not only for clerks but also, increasingly, for councillors (members).

Training ‘Statement of Intent’

As part of the amended Quality Parish and Town Council Scheme councils are now required to produce a ‘Statement of Intent’ on training for both staff and members. This document seeks to advise you on what the statement of intent must contain and some useful context to base it on. It also details helpful links and contacts which might assist you in the writing of your statement.

What your statement of intent should contain

Your statement should do more than just indicate your commitment to training (this is more than just a mission statement). You should be looking to include the following as sub headings and detail under each one your plans as a council in how you will tackle each issue:

1. A brief statement of your commitment to training.
2. A brief outline of who your commitment to training includes and what types of training it will cover.
3. How you will identify training needs?
4. How you will resource training to meet those needs?
5. How you will measure the impact of the training attended?

Before you begin it might be worth you considering what ‘training’ means to you as individuals and as organisations. Is it just about attending a session on a certain topic and feeling suitably briefed? Have you ever stopped to consider what training you or your staff and members might need and then planned attendance of training around these needs?

You may feel training is just another ‘buzz word’ that has no real relation to your work as local councils. The reality is that it is an integral part of the revised QPS scheme and needs to be treated with as much weight as any other part of your work.

What is training?

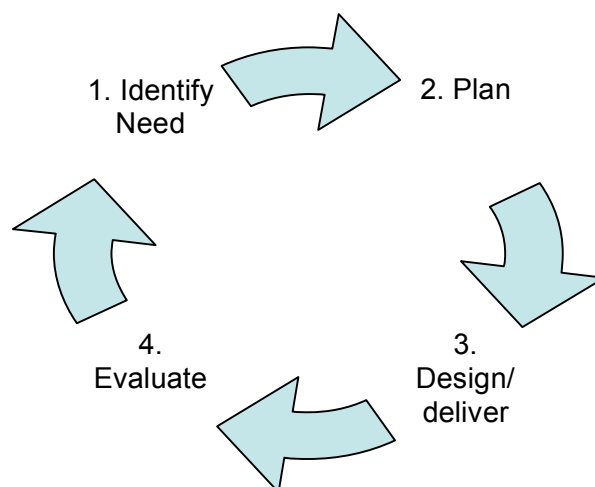
“A planned process to develop the abilities of the individual and to satisfy the current and future needs of the organisation.” CIPD 2007

In seeing training as a ‘planned process’ we hope you will begin to consider it as a function of your work like many others such as finance, legal powers and duties or planning. In fact training could be viewed as an over arching function responsible for maintaining effective working practices in all areas of your work.

Training can be divided into a number of different elements. Each may be carried out at different levels and different stages in the process of development, these elements are:

- identifying training needs – in the light of the overall objectives of the organisation and the requirements of individuals
- planning and organising training to meet those needs
- designing and delivering it
- evaluating the effectiveness of training

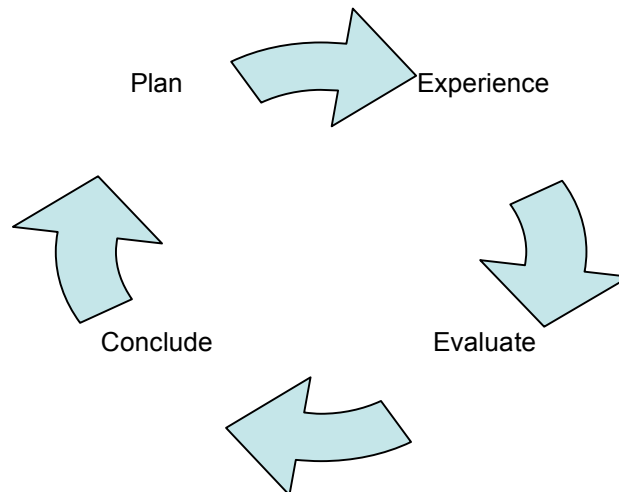
The following model may help you visualise this in the form of a continuous cycle:



Work to these four ends lies at the core of any training function whether it is carried out by one person or several, inside or outside the organisation. By approaching each step systematically, the process of learning can be more efficient.

This cycle can also be applied to the trainee or person undertaking the training

The delivery becomes the individuals experience, personal evaluation allows them to reflect on that experience. From this they are able to draw conclusions identifying new training needs which can be planned for the future:



You will notice that this cycle is not numbered this is because you can begin the cycle at any point.

How might you identify training need?

There are a number of ways/methods that you might identify someone's training needs; here are a few to get you started:

- Staff appraisals
- Questionnaires
- Interview
- Formal and informal discussions

There are also a number of things which might require a person to need training, these include:

- Changes in legislation
- Changes in quality systems
- New and revised qualifications launched
- Accidents
- Professional error/mistake
- New equipment
- New processes/working methods
- Complaints to the council
- A request from a member of staff

What training resources might be available to you?

If you have not done so already you should contact your local County or Regional Training Partnership (C/RTP) who will be able to support you with a calendar of events to support your training needs. Contact details of these can be found on the nalc website: www.nalc.gov.uk you might also visit the Society of Local Council Clerks website www.slcc.co.uk to see how their network of regional training officers might support you in developing your training plans.

Through your C/RTP you will be able to access national initiatives such as the good councillor guide and associated training packs and also training in chairmanship skills if required.

Qualifications

Through your C/RTP you will be able to find out more about nationally recognised qualification such as the Certificate in Local Council Administration (CiLCA) which meets the QPS schemes requirement for a 'qualified clerk'.

Most C/RTPs will run training and support of some description to support you in undertaking CiLCA so it is worth finding out what is available to you before you register.

Prior to undertaking CiLCA you may also look to find out about Working With your Council (WWC) which is a distance learning pack applied for through the SLCC (full details on the society's website).

Holding the University of Gloucestershire's Cert HE in Local Policy also meets 'qualified clerk' status.