Workforce Development: East Lothian Council

In 1997, East Lothian Council recognised the benefits of developing their workforce and set up a training and development framework that exists to this day.

East Lothian is the 18th largest Council area in Scotland, and by population it ranks 21st out of 32 with a population of around 102,100.

The Waste Services Team in East Lothian Council embarked on a Workforce Development Programme in 1997. This set out to move the management strategy from one of ‘command and control’ to an organisation that developed staff to be better trained, qualified and engaged in their work and to specifically:

- Improve the opportunities for frontline staff to engage, feedback and input into future service development
- Increase motivation and productivity.

A series of progressive steps helped to establish the Workforce Development Programme within the Council, as demonstrated in the diagram below.

What is workforce development?

Workforce development is the mechanism to adequately train and develop staff so they can effectively deliver and improve services.

It involves up-skilling individual employees through mandatory training (e.g. first aid) and through training for career development (e.g. academic qualifications and management courses).

It is also concerned with strategic planning and performance management for the development of teams, and the progression of an organisation as a whole.

- Identify and provide opportunities for existing employees, including frontline staff, to progress
- Improve the recognition of staff achievements

* Internationally recognised management qualification. Combination of work time post rounds and home study

** Chartered Management Institute (CMI) levels 3-5, Higher National Certificate (HNC), Certificates of Technical Competence (CoTC) levels

Diagram:

- **1997**
  - Step 1: Involvement of the whole team in service decisions
  - Step 2: A service restructure (merger of strategy and operations)
  - Step 3: Mapping staff skills exercise
  - Step 4: Development of an Institute of Leadership & Management module*
  - Step 5: Introduction of annual staff performance review & development meetings
  - Step 6: Training packages developed for staff**
Workforce development in action

Ross Largue, Waste Services Officer

Ross progressed from initially being a loader, through to driver chargehand and into his current role as a waste services officer.

This has seen efficiency savings due to knowledge of the organisation and his ability to apply that to the management team function.

Along his career pathway, Ross gained qualifications in:

- statutory training e.g. manual handling
- CMI Level 3 (frontline management)
- Recycling Managers training course, level 7/Masters level, University of Central Lancashire
- HNC Sustainable Resource Management

Next steps for Ross are Certificate of Technical Competence (COTC), and IOSH Managing Safely.

"After 10 years of driving I became frustrated. I asked my manager what training opportunities there might be for me. Soon after I completed the chartered management course and found it very useful. It gave me a lot more confidence in my decision making, and in my ability to make service improvements."

Paul Duncan, Loader/spare driver/H&S trainer

Paul progressed from being a loader through to his current role of Health & Safety Trainer.

He is now a qualified train the trainer, and is able to deliver all training in-house, resulting in a saving to the Council.

- ILM level 3
- Manual Handling Trainer Course - train & assess
- Institution of Occupational Safety & Health (IOSH) Managing Safely
- Risk Assessment Training
- Rivo Training (risk & compliance software)
- Vehicle Banksman Trainer course
- Certificate of Professional Competence (CPC) Trainer
- HNC Sustainable Resource Management (in-progress)

Next stop for Paul is the National Examination Board in Occupational Safety and Health (NEBOSH).

"Previously manual handling training was a case of, 'there's a safety sheet, look at that', and we had people off work with sore backs, sciatica, etc. I recognised there was an opportunity for me to deliver a more comprehensive training programme for staff. I was then approached about delivering Banksman training, as that was another important area that wasn't being adequately covered."

The images below are of the staff members mentioned in the case study.
Glyn Evans, Team Leader Operations

Glyn progressed from his original role as a loader/driver through to driver chargehand, and now sits as Team Leader of operations. An internal appointment to his current role, the Council benefited from his knowledge of the service, and a seamless move between roles where he hit the ground running. Under this role, Glyn is the foreman for 18 vehicles, is responsible for H&S, PPE management and also tasked with keeping the Council up-to-date on relevant legislation and policy changes.

Glyn has so far gained qualifications in:
- ILM Level 3
- First Aider at Work
- HNC Sustainable Waste Management

The next step for Glyn is CPC Level 5.

"The HNC in Sustainable Waste Management is a distance learning course with four residential weekends undertaken over two years. Units included operational practices, policy and legislation. It has been very beneficial in terms of my knowledge of the waste industry and my own educational purposes. As someone with no previous educational qualifications I feel a great sense of achievement."

Jose Caballero, Recycling Advisor

Jose's first role was as a recycling attendant at a local Household Waste & Recycling Centre. He has since gained a role as a recycling advisor in the management team.

His key responsibilities are now to provide customer care to frontline service delivery, advise householders on correct recycling practices, work with primary and secondary schools to educate pupils on recycling; and in addition is responsible for a number of health & safety duties.

Jose has so far gained qualifications in:
- National Examination Board of Supervisory Management (ILM)
- Certificate of Technical Competence Level 4, Albion Environmental Ltd
- HNC Waste Management, Fife College
- HNC Computing
- IOSH Managing Safely

The next step for Jose is NEBOSH.

"My health and safety training means I am qualified to carry out additional duties such as service reviews, monitoring of contractors (e.g. vehicle checks, legislation compliance), fire alarm maintenance (testing and drills), etc. which I do on a regular basis."

"It used to be a structure with only two or three people dictating. Frontline staff couldn't feedback on how the service was performing, what service improvements could be made of the methods of working. We recognised that there was a huge amount of experience, knowledge and potential that had never been used."

Tom Reid, Waste Services Manager
It's important to give staff the opportunity to advance at whatever level of employment they are at. Encourage them and show them that there is a career path that they can reach for. It doesn't matter what level or position you hold - you've got to have a career development structure in place because people are your assets. When you've got a ready-made workforce that is informed, you're halfway there.

Jose Caballero, Recycling Advisor