**Ability Shetland Staff Training Policy**

1. **Scope and Purpose**

As a learning organisation, **Ability Shetland** recognises that its staff, with their commitment, skills and abilities are the most valuable resource of the organisation. **Ability Shetland** is keen to help staff develop and to bridge through training any gaps in knowledge and skill that are required to assist **Ability Shetland** achieve its objectives.

Training should be of value both to **Ability Shetland** and the individual member of staff. It should be work-orientated and have a discernible benefit for both in the foreseeable future: for example, it may be concerned with the development of specific skills or gaining 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 **Ability Shetland**.

**2. Assessing training need**

The staff member, Session Leader or volunteer should discuss their training needs with their line Manager and agree what training is appropriate. All staff and volunteers should be having regular supervision sessions with their line manager. The discussion of training requirements should form part of these sessions. As part of these discussions staff and Managers should consider the requirements of **Ability Shetland**’s strategic plan. The approval of the Team Leader should be sought.

As a result of these supervision sessions and the requirements of **Ability Shetland**’s objectives, a Training Plan will be produced. This Training Plan will be the basis for producing the training budget.

Where course fees are particularly expensive or attendance on the course involves a heavy commitment of time, factors which will be taken into account in deciding whether to give or withhold approval are the financial situation, the work load which would require to be covered and whether the course in question is essential to the work of the staff member and the needs of **Ability Shetland**.

Special consideration will be given within the context of **Ability Shetland**’s Equal Opportunities Policy to staff who require the development of particular skills to allow them to undertake their work effectively. A record will be kept of training undertaken by individual staff members. All staff and volunteers should have access to the training and development required of them to fulfil their roles.

**3. Short courses**

Within the parameters set out above, if a training request is made by **Ability Shetland** to the employee or Session Leader, then the trainee will be eligible to claim to be paid for the hours of the duration of the training. If the employee or Session Leader undertakes training for his/her own benefit without the prior approval of the line Manager, then the trainee will not be able to claim for training time.

It is **Ability Shetland**’s intention to work towards setting indicative training budgets for individual members of staff. The training budget will be reviewed annually as part of the budget-making process and will be used when making funding bids.

The need for, and proposals for, programmes of training for the staff group as a whole can be raised by any member of staff or volunteer. Where appropriate the approval of the Chair and/or Trustee Board should be sought for the arrangements for meeting the needs identified.

**4. Conferences**

Attendances at conferences may be a normal and essential part of an individual’s work, but at times it may also be more properly considered as a development experience for the individual concerned. Either way, attendance at conferences should be discussed with the Team Leader.

**5. 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 line Managers, as part of the Managerial support they give to staff, to assist their colleagues to improve their skill and understanding, to reflect on work events and to learn from experience.

 (Note: Attendance at agreed work-related training, courses and conferences during evenings/weekends will be compensated as agreed with the Team Leader).

**6. Longer courses - study leave/assistance with the costs of study**

**Ability Shetland** recognises that some courses, especially those leading to formal qualifications, require a longer commitment of time and that the costs of study may represent a considerable financial burden to the individual. **Ability Shetland** wishes to be able to assist staff to undertake relevant courses of study. Such a commitment, however, has to be balanced against **Ability Shetland**’s limited staff and financial resources. The following procedures, therefore will apply:

The course of study should be of value both to **Ability Shetland** and to the individual. It should be work-orientated and have a discernible benefit for both sides in the foreseeable future.

Individuals thinking of asking for study leave and /or assistance with the costs of study should first discuss their intention with their line Manager.

Formal requests for study leave /or assistance with the costs of study should be made to the Team Leader who shall consider the request and make a recommendation to the Chair and/or Trustee Board as appropriate.

In determining whether or not to recommend/agree a request for study leave and/or assistance with the cost of study, the Team Leader*,* Chair and/or Trustee Board will take into account:

* The relevance of the intended course to the work of **Ability Shetland**
* The possibility of arrangements to cover for absences involved
* The financial situation

In a situation of competing demands against limited staff cover/financial resources **Ability Shetland** will weight decisions on study leave and/or assistance with the costs of study towards relatively less well qualified staff and staff who have been with **Ability Shetland** for a considerable period.

With regard to the costs of study, **Ability Shetland** will consider covering all the fees or a proportion of them, and making a contribution to the costs of books, residential sessions etc. The Team Leader will recommend what is a relevant contribution in the light of the circumstances of each case.

The Chair and/or Trustee Board may decide to attach conditions to assistance given, for example, continuance of financial assistance being contingent upon **Ability Shetland** being satisfied that the staff member is showing satisfactory progress in their studies and/or sits for an examination within a reasonable period of time etc.

In addition, certain training may be made dependent on agreement to a training contract that requires repayment of costs should the staff member leave employment. Such arrangements would be discussed and agreed in writing with the staff member in advance.

Where repayment of financial assistance is required this shall not include salary paid in respect of time spent on the agreed course of study.

Line Managers will use subsequent supervision sessions to review the impact of any training and development. On a quarterly basis the Managers will review the Training Plan and update it before circulation to the Trustee Board.