

Committee:	Date:
Housing Management & Almshouses Sub-Committee	03/07/2017
Subject: Housing & Neighbourhoods Professional Development Training Programme Update	Public
Report of: Director of Community & Children's Services	For Information
<p style="text-align: center;">Summary</p> <p>This report is to provide an update to Members on the Professional Development Training programme planned and delivered by the Housing & Neighbourhoods department each year. The report provides a summary of the last two years and information about the planned programme for 2017/18.</p> <p>Recommendations</p> <p>Members are asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note the report. • Consider their future training needs and how the department may assist. 	

Main Report

Introduction

1. The Professional Development Training programme is run by the Housing & Neighbourhoods department. The programme was established in 2014.
2. The programme is designed and delivered to meet the unique needs of the department by offering courses on topics relevant for staff to meet the needs of their roles and therefore also meet the needs of residents.
3. We are delighted that our programme has been well-received by staff and we continue to develop the programme, to ensure the benefits continue.

Background

4. The City Corporation's central Learning & Development team manage a full programme to cover required training, for example mandatory courses for new staff members at the City Corporation and Equality & Diversity training.
5. The content of our programme is designed to match requirements identified by managers in the department, to meet the needs of their teams.
6. The programme includes staff from the Barbican & Property Services teams and those from the People division of the Community & Children's Services department in courses where it is appropriate to do so.

7. The courses are usually optional, however, on occasion where a course has been designed for a particular purpose or group of staff, we ask managers to ensure their teams are able to attend.
8. The costs of the programme are met from a budget of £32,000 funded from the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). The budget is also used to fund personal Professional Development, as outlined below, as well as staff attendance at events such as conferences. We are always conscious when designing the programme that it must deliver value for money.

Current Position

Departmental Training Courses

9. In the past two years of the programme, there have been 32 courses on 25 different topics, and 415 attendees on those courses.
10. Our most frequently held course was Domestic Abuse Awareness, which was delivered three times by one of our Tenancy Sustainment Officers in conjunction with a representative from Victim Support.
11. Our most popular courses in terms of attendees have been Housing Law, Leasehold Law and Universal Credit/Welfare Reform. Our staff are keen to keep their knowledge up to date in order to provide the best support and advice to our residents. We now run refresher courses on these topics annually, updated with new information as it is issued through government regulation.
12. Our most popular course in terms of positive comments was the Fire Safety 'Mock Trial'. This was commissioned via a law firm, and delivered in the Mayor's Court in Guildhall Yard. The course was delivered by members of the law firm, including barristers playing the parts of judge, defendants, witnesses, defence and prosecution. The premise of the course was that the City of London Corporation was on trial for a fire occurring in a social housing estate, and failures relating to risk management practices were explored.
13. A highlight of the 2016/17 programme was a Personal & Professional Development afternoon, which we commissioned for our apprentices and junior members of staff, to encourage them to think about their future careers.

Personal Professional Development

14. The department also manages the Personal Professional Development funding. Staff across the department are encouraged to apply for funding for qualifications.
15. There is a scale for the funding levels provided by the department, set on a percentage basis, linked to how essential the training is. For example, if the qualification is vital for their current role it may be 100% funded, if it will enhance their career prospects in the department, it is 50%.

16. In the past two years, we have funded those seeking Chartered status with the Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH), project management qualifications, document fraud identification and for a member of our repairs contact centre, support for a surveying qualification.
17. In 2016/17, we reviewed the approval process, in conjunction with staff that had been through the process, to ensure it is as easy to use as possible.

Proposals

18. We intend to continue to develop and deliver our training courses for staff. In 2017/18, our programme includes courses on Fire Risk Assessment, supporting those on our estates who are hoarding and repeats of courses on Housing and Leasehold Law. Staff are encouraged to suggest topics; in particular managers use the appraisal process to identify the needs of their teams. Please see Appendix 1 for the list of courses planned in 2017/18.
19. Members will be aware that the Assistant Directors of Housing & Neighbourhoods and Barbican & Property Services will be delivering a series of briefings on relevant topics at committees over the coming months. We encourage Members to consider any training needs they may have, in particular Housing Management or Law issues, and let us know if we may be of assistance. For example, Members have attended our in-house courses on previous occasions.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

20. The training programme forms part of the DCCS Business Plan Priority 5 Efficiency & Effectiveness: Delivering value for money and outstanding services.
21. The suppliers are commissioned via our Procurement Team where appropriate, e.g. where the value reaches set thresholds. Some are specialist suppliers and not subject to Procurement, for example, this year a training session will be delivered by Rights of Women (ROW) on how staff may support residents suffering from Domestic Abuse to secure injunctions.

Conclusion

22. The Housing & Neighbourhoods training programme is well-utilised by the department and offers a local, easy-to-access route for our teams to learn about topics relevant to their roles.

Appendices

- Appendix 1: Professional Development Programme Courses 2017/18

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