Process for Learning and Development Application and Approval

Standard Operating Procedure for Panel

Document Author: Deputy Head of Academy

Document Name	Application and Approval Process for Learning and Development SOP
Version	Version 2.0
Responsible Committee	Learning and Development Approvals Panel or Education and Organisational Development Panel
Responsible Director	Director of Workforce and OD
Document Author (Title)	Chair of Learning and Development Approvals Panel and Deputy Head of Academy
Approved By	Trust Management Group
Date Approved	May 2021
Review Date	May 2022

1.0 Introduction

Key priorities of the Trust's One Team Best Care and People Strategies are to attract, develop and retain a highly skilled, engaged and diverse workforce and grow and develop our existing workforce to become an exemplary workforce for the future. To achieve this ambition we need to ensure that staff receive not only the training they need for their roles but to enable them to grow and develop for the future. This requires all staff to be able to access funding and learning and development opportunities in a fair and equitable way that will help us and them to achieve their aspirations.

This Learning and Development operating procedure applies to the personal, professional and academic development of all employees within the Trust that is considered not core training essential for role. There is no requirement to complete learning and development applications for mandatory training or clinical refreshers or core training essential to role. This process is for applications for learning and development where Trust approval is required. This is required where access to public funding, levy or where abstraction is required. Examples of these are The Learning and Development Panel budget, Apprenticeship Levy and Health Education England. Once completed, the learning and development will not, on its own, lead to a change in the scope of practice of the applicant.

The panel welcomes applications from all staff to undertake their own professional development in ways that suit their personal circumstances. This could be small scale CPD activities or a more formal programme of study. The Trust will also continue to strengthen its approach to clearly informed, fair, equitable, transparent investment in the right development for identified talent. To this end we will be introducing a talent assessment and development model to support our decision making approach for that cadre. The panel welcomes departmental managers to outline career development options and associated learning thus enabling the panel to make informed decisions and to plan panel meetings and budgets.

This Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) defines the process for the application and approval of learning and development opportunities for all staff within Yorkshire

Ambulance Service (YAS); this does not include statutory and mandatory training, clinical refresher and education/training that has been deemed compulsory for service delivery by the Trust or its commissioners. Where there is a specific service need and staff groups have been identified for education programmes, this is considered to be essential training and application for those programmes via this panel is not necessary.

1.1 The objectives of the Learning & Development Approval Panel L&DAP are to ensure that submitted applications meet the following criteria:

- organisational Continuing Professional Development (CPD) priorities to meet strategic aims
- relevance to role or aspiring to develop into another role
- suitability of provider and/or resource and/or supplier
- the requirements of the programme
- Health Education England funding conditions where appropriate
- Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) and Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IFATE) where the Apprenticeship levy or Adult Education Budget (AEB) is accessed.
- NHS Skills Development Network where FSD levy is accessed

and

- that approvals are consistent, transparent, fair and equitable, ensuring we do not set unsustainable precedents.

and

- that there is a clear outline for evaluating and reporting supported learning and development

2.0 Aims

2.1 The aims of this SOP are:

- To describe the learning and development application and approvals process to ensure that:
  o All YAS employees are provided with fair and transparent procedures.

o Clear guidance is available on how to apply for self-funded (where there is an abstraction requirement) fully or partially funded learning and development opportunities or resources

- To outline the criteria and process for supporting applications
- To outline the criteria for ensuring all applicants meet the core access requirements to enrol on programmes which includes completion of statutory/mandatory training and programme access requirements (as appropriate).
- To define the scope of opportunities considered by this SOP for the L&DAP
- To define the process for the L&DAP to inform the individual and Scheduling team of Trust approved logistical support for the programme.
- To ensure that the conditions for accessing funded provision, either internally by the Trust (including abstraction) or by external funding provision are met and that the possible consequences of non-completion are understood by the applicant.

3.0 Scope

3.1 This SOP applies to all YAS employees within all Trust departments.

3.2 Funding and approval for access to learning is closely, but not entirely, linked to the structure of the Trust's education Portfolio Governance Boards (PGB). As such the SOP is approved by the Trust Management Group

Each PGB and EPRR will be represented on the panel and members must attend or send a deputy for applications to be considered that are relevant to their department.

3.3 In addition to the delivery of Trust strategy, development of identified talent and relevant career progression, there will be additional requirements of the Trust and opportunities that do not fall into any one of the categories, or may fit into more than one. This will require the panel to seek additional approval from non-panel members or to make an informed judgement based on a consensus of representative PGB panel members. Where funding approval is not obtained applicants who are

registered healthcare professionals and attract the HEE CPD funds are encouraged to use that for part or all of the requested learning/development.

3.4 Learning and development opportunities can include but are not limited to
- Credit bearing courses/modules eg University, college, Private provider,
- Non-credit bearing courses eg Resuscitation council
- Conferences, seminars. (not including travel and subsistence)
- Learning resources including books and licensing fees.

3.5 The panel reserves the right to refuse approval and may seek additional support from education portfolio governance boards where a question is raised as to the suitability of the requested learning, development or resource. For example this could be where a requested activity might cause a conflict to best practice.

4.0 Learning and Development Approvals Panel

4.1 The panel will sit on a monthly basis and all applications should be received at least two months prior to the start of the programme.

4.2 Quorum is the Chair or Deputy Chair and at least four panel members, including Operations, Staff side, Clinical Directorate, Academy and Leadership & OD representation that will each represent a PGB. Where no PGB representative is available, decisions will be withheld. The L&DAP is chaired by either the Head or Deputy Head of YAS Academy; co-ordinated and administrated by YAS Academy senior resource coordinator. On occasions it may be necessary for the Chair to identify a Deputy Chair who will be a senior regular member of the panel.

4.3 The panel must work to ensure the processes outlined herein are followed, that applicants meet the agreed criteria in paragraph 1.1 and to determine application priorities in accordance with Trust priorities and allocated budgets.

5.0 Process

5.1 The stages of the process are presented in the Process Flowchart in appendix A of this SOP. These must be followed and in cases where these cannot be followed or exceptional circumstances prevail, a decision must be agreed by the panel and recorded in the panel meeting minutes. Where short notice opportunities present with less notice time than outlined in Appendix A, individual applicants may ask the panel for special consideration and an extraordinary panel decision to be made. This should be considered an exception rather than the norm.

5.2 There are two possible methods of prompting an application through the L&DAP:

5.2.1 Reactive:

- An individual sees a learning and/or development opportunity advertised internal to the Trust.
- The application is submitted via the learning and development portal: ensuring the any module code or identifier (if applicable) is copied from the advertised opportunity. Normal process applies in terms of commissioning, line manager approval as detailed in Section 8.0 of this SOP and appeals. Any supporting statement should be completed via the portal and not submitted separately. If specific entry requirements are stipulated, these must be stated in the portal application.
- The L&DAP will ensure a fair and equitable process is undertaken to initially exclude applicants who are not up to date with statutory and mandatory training, do not meet the entrance requirements as advertised or are already on an L&D approved or funded programme. Any excluded applications will be declined via the portal immediately with feedback.
- Some opportunities will require additional selection processes e.g. university programmes, in which case a joint selection process will occur with the process being overseen by L&DAP members. Final decisions regarding abstraction to support the learning will be given by the applicant's operational/departmental managers and will consider operational demand. It

is not the remit of the L&DAP to authorise abstraction, but instead to make approvals in collaboration with applicants' managers.

5.2.2 Proactive:

- Individual applies for learning or activity not advertised internally.
- Applications will only be considered where a business need, continuing professional development (CPD) or a PDR personal development plan is identified. This can be determined through the applicants supporting statement and/or the line manager approval stage supporting the application.
- CPD applications requiring abstraction must always be supported by a line manager. CPD not requiring abstraction need not always be supported by a line manager but should follow an informed discussion with a professional colleague where appropriate CPD has been identified and this should be recorded as part of the initial application via the portal. This discussion should take place in sufficient time for the application to be submitted and processed in order to meet course closure deadlines.
- Individuals apply for learning through the learning and development portal. A hyperlink to the learning website should be included in the application where possible.
- It is the responsibility of the applicant to identify any costs associated with the learning and include these in the application.
- Where external funding is available for the learning (for example: Health Education England or ERIC), this must be clearly documented in the application and all signed documentation attached to the L&DAP. Where SSPRD or similar forms are not available at the time of application all offers of support from the panel must be described as conditional and that the applicant maintains liable for costs until signed by the Trust's HEE signatories.
- Applications will be reviewed at the next Learning Approvals Panel (held once per month). Therefore applicants must apply for learning opportunities no later than 16 weeks ahead of the proposed activity. This allows for a maximum of 7 weeks between panel meetings and still allows time for any scheduling changes and higher education institution applications to be processed.

- The L&DAP will not accept retrospective applications and applications for learnings that have already started will automatically be declined unless there are exceptional circumstances. This may require an extraordinary panel meeting which must be quorate.

- The applicant must highlight their supporting manager, supervisor or team leader at the application stage and once submitted they must complete the approval section. Until this is completed, the application will not be received at the L&DAP and it is therefore essential that line manager approval is completed in a timely manner.

- Unsupported applications will be without notice, automatically removed from the system after 6 months.

- The L&DAP has a responsibility to prioritise applications based upon organisational need and available support. The L&DAP considers all relevant information provided with the application when making a decision to approve learning or not. Where any developmental or performance management needs have been identified to the manager, the decision to approve applications will consider this in the final decision. The panel does not need details of any development or performance management plan but only needs to know that the application is supported by the manager and that it is required.

- Where an application is approved, the signed application form will be returned to the applicant at the same time the outcome is communicated.

- Where an application is declined, feedback will be provided via the learning and development portal, and where possible will include the panel's recommendations for other opportunities or reapplication. The outcome of applications will be sent to the applicant and their identified line manager. The appeals procedure can be found in section 9.0 of this SOP.

5.3 The YAS Learning and Development Portal can be found on Pulse on the Leadership and Organisational Development page. This can be found using the following link: http://learning.yas.nhs.uk/
Once in the portal the individual may complete and submit an application for learning by clicking the 'Apply for Learning' Button

6.0 Abstractions

6.1 It is not the remit of the L&D panel to authorise abstraction or study time but instead to work with line managers to ensure local fair and equitable access to learning and development whilst considering local management implications. Managers should be aware that if they are approving an application that requires abstraction, the panel will consider that the abstraction is also approved unless specifically stated by the manager that the applicant must attend in their own time. Upon approval the L&DAP will liaise directly with Scheduling to ensure that any approved abstraction is recognised and planned accordingly.

6.2 The Scheduling Training Team will only accept notification of approved learning via the L&DAP.

6.3 Where applicants are required to attend in their own time, Scheduling will also be advised with the aim to support flexible working arrangements in order to attend any L&DAP approved programme but this is not guaranteed.

6.4 It is the applicants responsibility to keep Scheduling up to date with any changes to required dates but this cannot normally be facilitated once rostering has been completed for the period, normally 10 weeks, or if they end the learning early.

7.0 Funding

7.1 Only invoices that relate to L&DAP approved learning will be paid for by the Trust. Procurement will set up new suppliers and P2P will not pay invoices without a panel reference. Invoices will only be paid within the financial year of the L&DAP approved application or, where this is close to the financial year end, where the learning and funding stream makes specific reference to the year in which the learning and development is to take place.

7.2 HEE CPD Funding. Each registered HCP is entitled to a set fund from HEE over 3 years towards their CPD requirements. (Correct at time of SOP approval 2021) Institutions providing recognised CPD that would be eligible for funding include but are not limited to:

- Universities

- The advanced life support group who provide courses such as ALS
- Accredited prehospital trauma life support or European trauma life support providers
- The Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh who provide the diploma in immediate care examination.

The Trust is unable to provide dedicated time off for CPD so any courses have to be completed in the applicants own time and the funds cannot be used for travel or accommodation purposes. Applicants applying for learning that cost more than the HEE CPD allowance will be required to make up the difference themselves. The allowance can be split over more than one course until the total is spent.

7.3 HEE SSPRD. These courses are identified by ICS and regional level HEE education management leads. ICS and regional Trusts' priorities are identified and places allocated by "available places" only. YAS has access to this data and has equal right to apply for SSPRD funded places across the ICS and region. Applicants applying for these funded places need to confirm at the point of application if their chosen learning and development is HEE funded. This information can be obtained from the leader of the chosen programme. A signature from either of the YAS HEE signatories will be sought by the provider which will only be signed following approval by the panel. The signatories are YAS Academy Head and Deputy Head roles. HEIs will be unable to secure HEE funding without this signature and applicants will be liable for outstanding course fees.
For funding places out of region authorisation needs to be sought from HEE on a case by case basis.

7.4 Applications for learning that fall under the remit of the Leadership and Management PGB must be identified as relevant through the appraisal process and aligned to the Trust's leadership development pathways.

7.5 L&D approval panel YAS sourced budget. Currently the budget is set at £30,000 for all applicants through the portal. Where funding cannot be secured via other methods then the panel will consider the applicants funding request from this budget.

7.6 The apprenticeship levy may be used where an apprenticeship provides the appropriate learning. Processes presented in Appendices C and D must be followed with the relevant IFATE apprenticeship criteria being met. This option is available for clinical and non-clinical apprenticeships. The L&DAP has a responsibility to prioritise all applications and these will be considered again based on organisational needs and available support.

> 7.7.1 The L&DAP will consider if there is a suitable apprenticeship which could cover a programme of study before other funding options are considered.

> 7.7.2 Prior to the application being submitted the manager should have met with the apprenticeship team to discuss the implications of the apprenticeship, thereby ensuring that the apprentice will receive the appropriate support once the apprenticeship has commenced.

> 7.7.3 Once an apprenticeship has been approved by the panel, the apprenticeship team must be advised; thereafter they will initiate the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) and the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IFATE) processes to ensure the apprentice is enrolled correctly and levy funding can be accessed. See Appendixes C and D for Guidance for Managers

7.8 Strategic level funding. In line with Trust initiatives other funding streams may be available for specific purposes. In each case consideration will be given to whether these opportunities should be managed by the learning and development approvals panel.

7.9 Those receiving HEE SSPRD, SSLD, Levy or Trust funding are entering into an agreement whereby if they leave the Trust they may be eligible for some or all of the costs of the programme. The payback cost will be calculated on time served following completion of the learning programme. An extraordinary panel will form including HR where a final figure will be calculated on the following basis.

- Leaving within 6 months of completion 75% is repayable.

- Leaving within 1 year of completion 50% is repayable.
- Leaving within 18 months of completion 25% is repayable

Where exceptional circumstances are presented and upheld, this payback scheme will not be invoked.

7.10 If applicants are successful at gaining a place on a funded course, learning or development opportunity, and without good reason or extenuating circumstances fail to complete the course 100% of the course fees may be repayable. Repeated unsuccessful attempts at summative assessments are excluded from this clause. In either case, further applications for funded places may be affected.

These funding rules do not apply to those spending HEE allocated CPD monies however further applications will take into consideration prior attrition.

8.0 Line Manager/Supervisor/Team Leader Approval

8.1 All applications for learning must be submitted through the learning and development portal in the first instance, this ensures an equitable process for all employees of YAS. The applicant's line manager, supervisor or team leader is the first point of approval or rejection for the learning or development activity and they must consider any necessary abstraction requirements to support the learning. It is not the remit of the L&D panel to approve abstraction.

8.2 The manager should check the following prior to approving or rejecting the application for learning:

- Has the request for learning been highlighted in the applicant's PDR? If not, have they had a PDR recently? An application for learning should not be rejected solely if the request has not been made through their PDR.
- Is the applicant compliant with all aspects of Statutory and Mandatory training? In the post Covid 19 recovery stage where non-compliance has been unavoidable this requirement may be temporarily relaxed where it relates to the face to face element of the training. Information Governance, Fire safety

and Safeguarding awareness do not fall into this category and therefore the applicant must be up to date. Where non compliance is identified at the point of application, the applicant's manager must confirm to the panel that they will ensure they are compliant before the learning or development opportunity starts. This should only be a special consideration to those that do not have readily available access to IT facilities such as email or access to Pulse etc.

8.3 If the manager approves the learning application they are agreeing that they are willing to fund any travel and abstraction backfill expenses (from their budget) as stated in the application whilst the learner is undertaking the learning.

8.4 The manager must establish if the application for learning is aligned with the Trust's objectives and local workforce objectives. In the cases of HEE CPD funded learning there should be a professional discussion whereby an agreement is arrived at that ascertains that the CPD is relevant to role and or professional aspirations.

8.5 The line manager must reject the application if it does not meet the above criteria.

9.0. Appeals Process

9.1 Unsuccessful applicants will be provided with a clear reason why their application has been declined. If the reasons are not acceptable to the applicant, an appeal against the decision of the Approval panel may be made in writing to the Chair of the L&DAP. The appeal must include the grounds for which the appeal has been made. Where the appeal cannot be resolved the case will be elevated to the Associate Director of education and organisational development for independent review. Applicants are encouraged to consult staff side representation as part of their appeal.
A response should be given to the applicant within 14 days

10. Quality Assurance of Learning Activity.

10.1 This section outlines definitions and procedures for quality assuring supported learning and development opportunities. The Deputy Head of YAS Academy is the designated head of quality assurance for education in the Trust.

10.2 The process of monitoring the L&DAP activity is to ensure they are consistent, valid, reliable and meet the requirements of the various funding streams available to support activity.

10.3 The L&DAP will maintain accurate records of

- Decisions,
- Reimbursement agreements and reimbursement activity
- Evaluations of a sample of funded providers
- Attrition from funded courses
- Impact analysis – individual and organisational.
- Equality impact assessment outcomes

10.4 Quality assurance outcomes are to be used to inform individual Trust stakeholders periodically and on request. This will vary depending on activity, learning needs analysis, career development and talent management strategies and Trust priorities or when there are specific reasons to audit provider activity.

Appendix A: Flow Chart for the L&D PANEL SOP

Personal Development Review (PDR) discussion between staff member and line manager. Or CPD identified and professional discussion taken place.

Step 2

A Support for Learning and Development application is completed by individual staff member. Applications endorsed by the line manager are then automatically forwarded to the L&DAP.

Step 3

The application considered by the L&DAP and decision made.

Step 4

Applicant advised of Panel decision. If application is approved, staff member completes and signs 'Reimbursement Agreement Form*' and submits form to L&DAP coordinator.

Step 5

Applicant then enrols on the course or programme.

Appendix B

Checklist for Learning and Development Approvals Panel

The L&D panel aims to approve or decline applications for learning for externally and internally provided educational opportunities. There are some aspects that require clarification and this checklist is for the L&D panel members to clarify some of the stages of the L&D panel application process.

1.　All applicants must be fully compliant with statutory/mandatory training prior to submission of their training application. Unless 8.2 applies.

2.　All applicants must meet the relevant L&D panel criteria as outlined in paragraph 1.1 of this SOP

3.　All successful applicants should have clear expectations outlined and be sent a reimbursement agreement form

4.　All applicants should have a clear reason why an application has been declined and informed of the appeal process.

5.　Confirmation of learning approval should be provided to Scheduling with at least 10 weeks' notice. This will be the responsibility of the Learning Approvals Panel Administrator.

Information required by the Scheduling Training team:
　　　a.　Name of Individual
　　　b.　ESR Number
　　　c.　Base station
　　　d.　Learning title
　　　e.　Course date(s) or learning period
　　　f.　Number of days, if appropriate
　　　g.　Any other relevant information pertinent to that course e.g. attendance at resits (number of)

6.　For "front line" operational staff, A&E, PTS and EOC, for fully abstracted courses, it will be the responsibility of the local Scheduling Team to record the course attendance via the Trust's resource management system.

7.　For non-operational staff, it will be the responsibility of local teams to record attendance according.

8.　L&D PANEL Process Timeline
　　　a.　Application through the portal (no later than 16 weeks ahead of the activity)
　　　b.　Line manager approval (no later than 12 weeks ahead of activity)
　　　c.　Learning approvals panel (no later than 8 weeks ahead of activity)
　　　d.　SSPRD funding forms must be submitted with the application
　　　e.　Authorised abstraction (no later than 6 weeks ahead of the activity)

f.   Individual enrols on learning after L&D Panel approval

9. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that the learning activity is supported by line manager and that authorisation and supporting statement is provided by the line manager within this timeframe. Applications will not progress any further in the process without line manager approval

10. All learning applications should be submitted through the L&D portal for panel approval, universities should only accept candidates onto their courses that have had forms/funding signed off by the Head or Deputy Head of YAS Academy

11. Scheduling should only abstract staff from shift if they have been informed that they are undertaking learning that has been approved by the panel

12. There should be 6 monthly evaluations of approved learning activity. This data should be fed back to relevant PGBs, applicants' managers, academy quality team or other stakeholders in the Trust.

Appendix C

A Managers guide to Apprenticeships

For existing members of staff:-

You have a member of staff in your department who would like to complete an Apprenticeship/Training course:-

```
                    ┌─────────────────────┐
                    │  Member of staff    │
                    │  would like some    │
                    │      training       │
                    └─────────────────────┘

    ┌─────────────────────┐
    │ Can this be fulfilled│
    │  by a Apprenticeship │
    └─────────────────────┘

  ┌──────────┐   ┌──────────┐   ┌──────────────────────────┐
  │          │   │          │   │ Identify and agree       │
  │   YES    │   │    NO    │   │ alternative training,    │
  │          │   │          │   │ then apply for funding   │
  │          │   │          │   │ via the Learning Portal  │
  └──────────┘   └──────────┘   └──────────────────────────┘
```

Contact the Apprentice Team to see which apprenticeship would be most suitable. Discuss with the Team what is required for the Apprenticeship, ensuring both the manager and learner are fully aware of the commitment and requirements of the Apprenticeship.

Once a qualification and Provider have been agreed, the individual must complete the application for funding on the Learning Portal. Once approved by the Course Approval Panel, the Apprenticeship Team will arrange the Induction/sign up.

Manager to liaise with the Apprentice Team and keep them informed of the learners progress and any problems which may arise

Appendix D

Managers Guide to Apprenticeship Qualifications for existing Staff:-

You have a member of staff who would like to complete some training.

Have you considered an Apprenticeship to fulfil this training?

There are many apprenticeships available and there may be one to suit your member of staff's training need.. You should contact the Apprenticeship Team to discuss the options.

Apprenticeships are training programmes to help create a skilled workforce. Anyone 16 or older can become an apprentice. You can be employed by a company and still develop your skills with an apprenticeship. Good apprenticeships combine effective on- and off-the-job training with thorough assessment

Apprenticeship programmes can help us to build a more qualified and better-trained workforce with the right skills for the job, we want to have the best trained staff in the organisation and apprenticeships can help us to do this.

On an Apprenticeship the candidate will learn and evidence skills, knowledge and behaviours which are outlined in the apprenticeship standard. The standards are made up of on-programme learning, on-job evidence and an End Point Assessment which is a chance for them to showcase what they have learnt.

Before you make a decision about the Apprenticeship training, can you commit to the following?:-.

- Supporting your apprentice to work towards an approved apprenticeship standard that fits within their role profile. The apprentice team can offer guidance on the most suitable apprenticeship.

- Ensuring your member of staff spends at least 20% of their time on off-the-job training which is relevant to their apprenticeship. This could be through webinars, business projects that contribute to their apprenticeship, written assignments, shadowing or attending classroom training.

- Giving tutors/apprenticeship delivery coaches reasonable access to the member of staff so that they can provide the appropriate training.

- Spending time with the tutors/apprenticeship delivery coaches and apprentice to ensure the apprentice is making progress.

- Agreeing with the training provider when the apprentice has obtained sufficient skills, knowledge and behaviours to sit their apprenticeship end-point assessment.

- Liaising with the Apprentice Team and making them aware if any concerns or issues.

If the answer is yes to all of these, contact the Apprentice Team to discuss the next steps on yas.apprenticeships@nhs.net