

policy

aims

Few people join the co-op with the knowledge, skills, and experience they need to make a full contribution to the life of the co-op.

Also, because the circumstances of the co-op are constantly evolving and changing, members need new skills and information.

The co-op aims to identify and assess training needs of members in relation to their rights and responsibilities as members of the coop, and to develop strategic and operational procedures to meet these needs.

1 The Training Working Group is the focus for training activity within the co-op.

2 Identification of training needs and proposals for activity are formulated by the group and brought to the General Meeting for discussion and approval.

3 There is a designated budget within the co-op for costs associated with training.

4 An induction system introduces new members to the co-op and gives information on the co-op's activities.

5 Members are issued with the co-op handbook which contains the policies and procedures of the co-op.

6 When elected, officers, committee members and Working Group Co-ordinators receive training concerning their duties.

7 The Training Group investigates training that may be available from outside sources. It seeks advice from other co-ops, housing organisations and its development partner on the most appropriate training available for particular needs.

8 Where appropriate the co-op brings in trainers to do special courses for the co-op, for example financial training or housing management training needs.

9 Internal training is organised where members of the co-op are able to pass on their skills and knowledge to other members.

10 Each General Meeting provides an opportunity for members to discuss general issues and problems as well as day to day business.

Induction

training

procedures

a. prospective members

All prospective members must attend 3 General Meetings, participate in a Working Group, attend an induction session before they can be nominated for membership and be placed on the waiting list for rehousing. The following procedure provides a timeline for moving a prospective member to nomination:

1. Prospective member makes contact with the co-op
2. Background information and application form sent out
3. Completion of application form - receipt / acknowledgement of application form
4. Milestone - Prospective member added to database / mailing list
5. Prospective member invited to attend induction session at which they receive information pack which supports the induction modules and includes a set of FAQ's for working groups and a glossary of terminology. Key elements of the induction session are:

INDUCTION MODULES 1 - 3

Each represents a half hour slot

- **Induction 1**
'Co-op history'
The co-op Background + What is a co-op? + Schedule One
- **Induction 2**
'Working groups'
Co-op structure + Overview of work areas within the Co-op
- **Induction 3**
'Working co-operatively'
Different working situations + skills required
- **Interview / Skills audit**
Completion of basic skills audit and questionnaire
- **Working Group expression of interest**
Completion and forwarding as appropriate

6. Prospective members actively participating in a

training

working group and having attended 3 GM's can stand for membership

7. Milestone - New member added to the co-op's housing waiting list

Drop-in sessions before each GM will be used to help facilitate this process. Situations of 'emergency' rehousing or supported housing allocations may necessitate variation from the above approach.

b. new members

New members must:

- complete a 'Co-op CV' in order to facilitate ongoing development and skills auditing (see procedure/guidance)
- Sign a job description selected from an appropriate working group

The co-op CV will be entered into the co-ops skills record. As a Co-op member they are eligible to benefit from

- Working Group training - chosen from 'core' group such as rents, maintenance, finance or allocations
- General Skills training – chairing meetings, participating in meetings, effective planning, managing volunteers, IT skills

Co-op members attending external training must produce a report-back. The training group will maintain a record of training undertaken, including report-backs produced by those attending paid external training sessions, and working groups and/or training groups (as appropriate) will maintain files containing handouts and background material collected from training sessions.

Working Group co-ordinators will periodically be requested to keep up-to-date summaries of their groups work and sets of Frequently Asked Questions relating to their work and job descriptions. This will also include a list of active members and relevant contacts. They will also be required to maintain records of their active members by keeping a file of their CV's and signed job descriptions.

job vacancies

Working Group job descriptions form the basis for signing up members to commit to carrying out work. Inactive members identified by Membership Group should be dealt with by the Human Resources officer by:

1. Contacting them (following issue of letter 1)
2. Interviewing them to identify why they are not

participating and what they intend to do

3. Review job vacancies and attempt to match up with inactive member
4. If job is identified then fill out job description sign-up form
5. Add current job description provided by Working Group
6. Form to be signed by inactive member and countersigned by WG co-ordinator

Following this procedure progress is to be monitored by the Membership Officer

external training

Negotiations with external training providers to conclude with production of a written brief by the training officer. This is then to be forwarded to the potential training provider so that a written quote can be produced. Depending on the cost this will then require approval by the GM, to be accompanied by a written justification and where appropriate comparative costs from other training providers.

co-op CV + job descriptions

The group is to ensure that all members complete a copy of the standard CV format and that this is kept up to date periodically.

The CV format details external qualifications, experience, as well as details of training, experience (in the form of job descriptions) and personal development during their membership of the co-op.

Working Group co-ordinators are to provide the Training Group with up-to-date completed job description forms (using the standard format where possible)

Copies of the CV's and job descriptions for the Co-op membership will be held on file in the office, as well as by co-ordinator – enabling them to keep track of members and their current job descriptions in their group.

The Human Resources officer will use the CV to keep track of skills and experience within the co-op, and (through liaison with co-ordinators) to ensure that everyone is in a working group and has job descriptions.