



## Section 3: Continuing Professional Development

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## 3.1 A strategic response to continuing professional development

### Establishing Ar Aghaidh Linn

As a result of a comprehensive evaluation of North Tipperary VEC's services in 2000 it was recommended that the professional development of all staff must be addressed in a systematic manner. It was agreed that a professional development programme, co-ordinated by a staff development officer, be established. Ar Aghaidh Linn, North Tipperary VEC's professional development programme, was established in 2003.

### Rationale for Ar Aghaidh Linn

North Tipperary VEC recognises that the rate and scale of change occurring in society impacts on the professional working environment of its staff. In this changing context it is essential that our staff provide an education service of the highest quality. Consequently, North Tipperary VEC is committed to providing support and professional development opportunities in order to enable staff to respond to these changes and to continue the provision of a quality service at all levels. Ar Aghaidh Linn has been established to address this challenge.

### Aim for Ar Aghaidh Linn

The aim of Ar Aghaidh Linn is to support, facilitate and integrate staff development initiatives so that North Tipperary VEC becomes an organisation of learning.

### Objectives for Ar Aghaidh Linn

- To provide a wide range of programmes to cater for the personal, professional and vocational development needs of all staff and of the organisation
- To ensure that all activities provide pathways for progression in terms of career and/or professional development
- To develop an ethos and practice of collaboration and learning in all centres, and at county level
- To support and promote programme and curriculum development at centre and county level
- To link with other agencies to develop comprehensive responses to the needs of all staff.

## 3.2 Induction

Each year North Tipperary VEC holds an Induction day for all new staff appointed to the Committee's Schools, Centres of Education, and Administration Offices. The induction day, held at the beginning of the school year, provides an opportunity to familiarise staff with the organisation and the guidelines under which it operates.

Matters discussed include:

- Organisational Structure
- Administrative Office Support Divisions
- North Tipperary VEC Education Plan
- Professional Development
- Salary and Payroll Related Matters
- Superannuation
- Employment Related Matters
- Posts of Responsibility
- Travel Expenses and Subsistence Allowances
- Support Services and Contacts.

This formal induction process is augmented by specific induction activities in each school, centre and administration office. Programme specific and job specific information and guidelines are conveyed to staff and this ongoing process is continued throughout the year.

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Where staff take up duty after September a further Induction day may be provided by Ar Aghaidh Linn and the Human Resources Department.

North Tipperary VEC will provide a copy of the VEC Staff Handbook to all new members of staff on commencement of employment. The VEC Staff Handbook will provide staff with an overview of the Committee's activities throughout the county as well as a source of information regarding employment-related matters.

### **3.3 Performance Management and Development System (PMDS)**

#### **Introduction**

Performance Management and Development System (PMDS) is a broad term used to describe the method by which all non-teaching employees' contribution to the VEC can be acknowledged and where support is provided so that employees can develop skills and competencies

PMDS is a process for establishing a shared understanding about what is to be achieved, how it is to be achieved and an approach to managing and developing people that increases the probability of achieving success. It enables a communication process which links individual performance to North Tipperary VEC's objectives.

It aims to strike an acceptable balance between the needs of the organisation and the development needs of each member of staff. It recognises the need for continual change and improvement and for the involvement of staff in bringing this about.

#### **System Fundamentals**

The primary reasons for introducing this Performance Management and Development System in the VEC Sector are to:

- Ensure that employees' contributions to the organisation are valued
- Improve the effectiveness of individual performance
- Discuss and agree personal development plans for individuals
- Enhance team-working within the organisation
- Improve relationships at all levels.

#### **Organisational and Individual Benefits**

The organisational and individual benefits of introducing a Performance Management and Development System are to ensure that:

- Employees understand what their role is and how this work integrates with VEC objectives
- Better communication between individuals at all levels
- Planned programmes for individual development are in place
- Individuals receive feedback on their performance
- There is an improved culture of openness and trust
- People in the VEC feel valued at all times
- There is a planned review of performance
- Individual and organisational performance is improved.

#### **The PMDS process in North Tipperary VEC**

PMDS in North Tipperary VEC will be implemented in accordance to the three-phase process detailed in the VEC National Partnership Forum (See Appendix A in this Section).

### **3.4 Continuing Professional Development**

#### **Introduction**

Maintaining and enhancing current performance and adapting to the needs of an evolving education context will only be possible with staff who have the capacities, dispositions and competencies to respond appropriately. To address this important organisational need the VEC has prioritised staff development and is endeavouring to make it an integral part of the working

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life of each member of staff. North Tipperary VEC is now focused on the personal and professional needs of each individual and the creation of a contented, fulfilling and supportive working environment. The VEC will continue to support the personal and professional development of all staff and will involve them equally as partners in the promotion and achievement of the VEC's overall strategy.

### **Purpose**

Implementation of an appropriate and effective staff development strategy will provide an enjoyable working environment and will enable staff, individually and collectively, to improve their capability and competence. This will benefit learners, members of the VEC, other users entitled to VEC services and staff themselves. This in turn will enhance the status and credibility of the organisation in the community.

### **Equal Opportunities**

The VEC is committed to the development and promotion of a working environment based on equality by ensuring that relevant staff development opportunities are made available to appropriate staff regardless of age, colour, creed, disability, employment category, health, sexual orientation, marital status, race or sex.

### **Each member of staff has the right to expect:**

- Induction into the organisation - Staff members should understand the structure, culture, communication processes, ethical requirements and what contribution the individual is expected to make
- A working environment which is emotionally safe, enjoyable, participative and fulfilling
- Management to have appropriate expertise and commitment to implement all relevant aspects of staff development policy
- A democratic process to discuss and inform staff development activities both personal and professional
- A clear structure and process to access support, individually and in groups as appropriate, for the development of new competencies - competencies which will be of relevance to the individual's employment at the VEC, and will assist personal growth, career prospects and the individual's lifelong learning
- To participate in development and performance management processes - this provides opportunities for ongoing support, an annual review of individual's past development and identification of plans for the future
- An agreed individual training plan
- The provision of an evaluation report regarding participation on staff development activities
- All staff development participation recorded in employment portfolio.

### **The VEC has a right to expect of each member of staff:**

- To develop his/her competence and capability in accordance with VEC Policy
- To participate in the development and performance management processes - this includes opportunities for appropriate ongoing support, undertaking an annual review of the individual's past development and identification of plans for the future
- To become committed and take personal responsibility to agree an individual training plan, which will address personal development as well as specific expertise, on a regular basis
- To participate in team staff development where appropriate
- To keep a record of his/her staff development activity
- To contribute to the nurturing and growth of an emotionally safe, enjoyable and fulfilling working environment.

### **Finance and resources**

It is clear that all staff development initiatives will be contingent on available and accessible finances and resources. To ensure that the organisation can effectively plan and implement its

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staff development policy the Ar Aghaidh Linn Programme will present, in a timely fashion, an Annual Training Schedule to Senior Management for its consideration. This forum will consider, alter if required, and adopt the Training Schedule on an annual basis.

### **Monitoring and evaluation**

The staff development policy and its effective implementation will be monitored and evaluated as follows:

- Each member of staff keeps a record of staff development activity, which is monitored and evaluated through the development and performance management processes
- Senior Management; CEO, AEO, College Principals and Programme Managers, oversee the management of staff induction, training, development and performance management processes, and team and individual staff development plans, including the monitoring and evaluation of the outcomes
- The Research, Development and Training Officer oversees the management of systems and processes to support the planning, promotion, co-ordination and review of staff development
- The Ar Aghaidh Linn Steering Group continuously monitor, review and update the staff development policy and its implementation.

### **Funding professional development**

North Tipperary VEC supports and promotes the professional development of all its staff as a key-contributing factor in the overall development of the Committee's services. We believe that investing in our people produces positive benefits for our employees and improves the service we provide. A professional development fund has been established to support members of staff who would like to participate in professional development activities which are not provided by North Tipperary VEC. See Appendix B and C in this Section for a Policy and Procedures document and Application Form related to the fund.

Appendix A



# PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT & DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM

**Phase 1**  
**SETTING THE**  
**PERFORMANC**  
**E PLAN**  
(Agreed between the  
Post Holder and  
her/his manager)

Plan Cycle / Duration: \_\_\_\_\_

**PERSONAL DETAILS**

Post Holder Name : \_\_\_\_\_

Post Title:  
\_\_\_\_\_

Manager / Supervisor Name:

**SKILLS MATRIX**

Core Skill	Knowled ge	Skills
Customer Service		
Communications		
Organising Ability		
Teamwork		
Judgement		
Flexibility & Learning		
Leadership		
Organisational Awareness/ COs*		
IT Skills		
Innovation		
Management		
Education		
Finance		
HR		
Other:		

Tick appropriate development, coaching or training needs to be addressed over the cycle

**\*CORPORATE OBJECTIVES**

Key VEC Strategic Aims/ Corporate Objectives that intersect with post holders role:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**1. Purpose of the post:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**2. Key Objectives to be achieved (Main areas of responsibility to be agreed clarifying standards expected and factors that influence the achievement of agreed objectives):**

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**3. Key Outputs/ Results to be achieved for this cycle**

(Should be Specific Measurable Achievable Relevant Timebound and specify standards to be maintained and how you will measure achievement of objectives)

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**4. Knowledge, skills and attributes required of the jobholder:**

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**5. Development, coaching or training needs to be addressed over the cycle  
(a comparison of 1 - 3 with 4, will assist identification, and refer to skills matrix.)**

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**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Post holder.**

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Manager / Supervisor**

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_



# PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT & DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM

**Phase 2**  
**ASSESSING  
PROGRESS  
DURING PLAN  
ROLLOUT**

Date of Assessment: \_\_\_\_\_

**Identify agreed areas where acceptable progress is being made:**

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**Identify agreed areas where improvements will be implemented:**

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**Identify agreed corrective action including any changes in Key Outputs (results) for the cycle:**

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Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Post Holder

\_\_\_\_\_ Manager / Supervisor

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



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## Appendix B

### North Tipperary VEC Policy for Funding Professional Development of Staff

#### Teachers and tutors without Dept of Education and Science approved Teaching Qualifications

Teaching staff without approved teaching qualifications will be encouraged to avail of the Department of Education and Science funded B.Sc. in Education and Training. In the event that teaching staff avail of other recognised courses, North Tipperary VEC will not normally fund such courses.

#### Courses provided by North Tipperary VEC

*Subject to the prior approval of their Principal/Manager*, staff of North Tipperary VEC can avail of courses *relevant to their work* free of charge (other than costs payable to external bodies involved in the course) where the courses have already formed, subject to the minimum number of paying participants on the course.

#### Post-Graduate Diploma Courses

Staff pursuing courses covered by the Teacher Fee Refund Scheme 2001 should apply for support through that fund. North Tipperary VEC will not normally fund such courses.

#### Masters and other Professional Development Courses

1. A central contingency fund of €15,000 has been established. All schools, centres and programmes have contributed to this fund.
2. Staff completing a course/qualification which entitles him/her to an increment in pay will not be supported by this fund.
3. Staff following *relevant recognised courses* (other than those supported by the Teacher Fee Refund Scheme 2001) may apply to this fund for support. The amount of support received will depend on (a) the number of applicants and (b) the cost of the course. The maximum support available will normally be 50% of the course fee. Financial support is payable annually on production of evidence of payment and successful completion of the previous year of the course.
4. Part-time and contract staff will be paid on a pro-rata basis. (e.g., part-time teacher doing 8 hours/week would be eligible to apply for 8/22 x 50% of fees. An adult education tutor doing a 16 hour course would be eligible to apply for 16/735 x 50% of fees.)
5. If the number of applicants is too great, then the amount available from the fund will be proportionately less than 50%.
6. Applications for support from this fund must be submitted *each year* to Dr Noel Colleran, Lifelong Learning Centre, Martyrs Rd, Nenagh, in advance of the course commencing, (or for the next year of the course). Such application must be approved by the Principal/Manager of the school/centre/programme.
7. Completed applications Forms should be submitted to your Principal/Manager not later than the last day of May each year.
8. Staff must complete an application form each year for the course that they are pursuing as provision of funding in one year does not guarantee funding in future years.
9. Staff members may be able to claim of tax relief on that portion of professional development fees paid by themselves.

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## Appendix C

### Application to North Tipperary VEC for Funding Professional Development Courses

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Phone  
No. \_\_\_\_\_

Name of College/Centre/  
Programme/ Office in which you  
are currently based \_\_\_\_\_

Current work with Tipperary  
(NR) VEC

- Tutor/Teacher \*
- Manager/Principal
- Administrator
- Caretaker
- Other (please specify)

\* Please specify  
subject/areas you  
teach \_\_\_\_\_

Status

- Permanent/Temporary Wholetime
- Part-time \*

\* Number of hours/week \_\_\_\_\_

Current  
qualification(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Other certified courses for which  
you received funding from Tipperary  
(NR) VEC (course, year) \_\_\_\_\_

Name of course for which you are  
applying for financial support \_\_\_\_\_

College \_\_\_\_\_

Qualification to be obtained

- Post-Graduate Degree
- Post-Graduate Diploma
- Primary Degree
- National Diploma/Certificate
- Other (please specify)

Duration of course \_\_\_\_\_

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Is the course full-time or part-time. (If part-time, contact hours per week) \_\_\_\_\_

Course commencement date

Please attach course prospectus

Fees per annum € \_\_\_\_\_

Relevance of course to your work in North Tipperary VEC:

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Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(Applicant)

Principal/Manager (Recommendation)

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Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(Principal/Manager)