

Learning and Development Report 2025/26

1.0 Training budgets at the Council have been historically split into four fundamental areas:

- Central/Corporate training budget
- Service training and development budget.
- Professional training budget
- Health and Safety

	Budget 2025/26
Central/Corporate	£14,640
Service Training & Development	£ 22,480
Professional Training	£20,000
Health & Safety	£3,000
Total L & D Budget	£60,120

1.1 Employees are informed of training opportunities via email/intranet updates via teams. Conversations between staff and managers are also welcomed during the PDR process to discuss individual training desires and needs specific to their roles.

1.2 To support the L&D function for 2026/27 the HR team refreshed the PDR forms and PDR process in March 2026 to better align with our Values and Behaviours and to create a more consistent, meaningful development conversation for everyone at East Herts Council. The previous multi-form approach has now been simplified into one single PDR form, making the process clearer,

more efficient, and easier to complete.

- 1.3 The mandatory training programme continues to be delivered through the online platform Skillgate. Employees receive annual reminders when renewal is due and when they are no longer compliant. All employees, agency staff and new starters are asked to complete the mandatory e-learning courses. In total 1372 'completed' training episodes were recorded in 2025/26.

Course	Participants
The Importance of Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion	237
Data Protection: Compliance following GDPR	255
Office Etiquette and Email Management (<i>To be re-registered every 3 years.</i>)	66
Fire Safety	266
Understanding the Safeguarding of Children, Young people, and Adults at risk.	277
Preventing Sexual Harassment in the Workplace	271
Total	1372

- 1.4 The below table details additional non- mandatory training completed in 2025/26.

Course	Participants
Difficult Conversations	7
Managing Conflict – Performance Booster	10
Data Collection and Analysis to Justify Management Decisions	4

Effective Delegation – Performance Booster	4
Resilience Workshop	25
Introduction to Procurement	10
Procurement – Managing the Tendering Process	4
De-escalation and Personal Safety Training	33
Neurodiversity in the Workplace	17
Procurement – In-Tend Training	3
Evacuation Chair – Train the Trainer	6
Domestic Abuse Session	38
Prevent Training	47
Planning for Retirement	23
MEAM (Making Every Adult Matter)	5
Total	236

1.5 September 2025 the online training platform SEEDL was introduced offering free training courses for all East Herts residents and employees and council staff. In January 2026, the communications team began internal promotions of SEEDL, and this was also promoted by the HR team as part of the East Herts All Staff Briefing in January 2026. There were 97 active users recorded on SEEDL during Q4, 50 of whom were East Herts employees. Between January and March 2026, 20 courses were completed.

1.6 The HR and H&S team work with other service areas such as Data Protection to develop the e-learning programmes to ensure the programmes continue to grow and are fit for purpose. The e-learning platform is funded from the central training budget.

2.0 Professional Training

2.1 The professional training budget was set at £20,000 for 2024/25 and has remained the same for 2025/26. All employees funded for professional qualifications sign training agreements in line with the Organisational Development Policy, which allows the council to reclaim a percentage of funding if an employee leaves the Council within two years. The training agreements are held centrally in Human Resources. We continue to ensure there is a fair process in funding professional development in 2025/26.

3.0 Apprentices

3.1 In January 2026 the Government significantly changed the funding for Level 7 Apprenticeships (master's degree level) in England to prioritise younger learners. This meant that from 1 January 2026 Level 7 Apprenticeships would only be available for apprentices aged 16-21 at the start of their Apprenticeship. Anyone who commenced Level 7 before 1 January 2026 will be fully funded through to completion.

3.2 The Council continued to sponsor apprenticeships in 2025/26 from the Apprenticeship Levy:

- 1 x Payroll administrator – Level 3
- 3 x Chartered Town Planner Degree – Level 7
- 2 x Revenues and Welfare Benefits Practitioner – Level 4

3.3 The HR & OD Service will continue to collaborate with managers and training providers to develop the Council's Apprenticeship Programme. The Leadership Team are committed to make better

use of our levy provision and professional training budget as a critical part of workforce planning.

4.0 Learning and Development initiatives and priorities 2026/27

- 4.1 The initial learning and development needs for this year will be collated from the PDR cycle after the 29 May 2026 deadline. The HR team will collaborate with members of the Leadership Team to ensure the learning meets the needs of the council to deliver its priorities.
- 4.2 Using completed PDR's, the HR team will identify needs analysis scope a learning and development training cycle. We will ensure our employees are supported and will identify where there are skill shortages as part of our succession planning.
- 4.3 The courses available on the e-learning platform will continue to be developed ensuring they are up to date and further courses will be designed and developed for Officers and Members to help implement policies and projects.
- 4.4 The HR team continues to work with all our training providers to review the way learning is delivered in line with our blended working to ensure employees have a variety of development opportunities available to them. Training will be delivered online, virtually and face to face as we continue to develop and engage with staff. The range of delivery will give officers more options to access different training events and opportunities.
- 4.5 The HR team will be reviewing and refreshing the Corporate Induction programme in 2026 to ensure it reflects the council and the services provided. The possibility of video content from key areas is being considered to allow new starters to access some core elements earlier.

- 4.6 Further exploration into Apprenticeships for harder to fill roles, also exploring options to use apprenticeships for those members of staff already in post to gain further / higher qualifications via apprenticeship schemes.
- 4.7 Employees from the Democratic & Member Services and Licensing Team successfully joined the SDP 2026 Programme. The programme forms part of the District Council's Network development offer and is designed to support employee growth, skills development, and cross-organisational collaboration. It brings together delegates from across the Council to strengthen leadership capability, encourage knowledge sharing and build a strong professional network. Through participation, delegates are supported to enhance their skills, broaden their organisational understanding, and contribute more effectively to service delivery and continuous improvement across the Council. Plans are being considered to roll this out further across East Herts.
- 4.8 East Herts Unity (EHU) has been established to support staff mental health and wellbeing, and to promote diversity, equality, inclusion, and representation across the organisation. The group aims to bring colleagues together, ensure all voices are heard, and help every employee feel welcomed and represented at East Herts Council. EHU staff volunteers hosted two internal community events designed to encourage interaction, learning and connection among colleagues. Further events are to be planned in 2026/27 with support from the HR team.