Quality Assurance System

PL03 - Policy on Communication

Rev 1.0

Policy on Communication

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	1.0	New Document

Public Information and Communication

1.1 Policy

It is the policy of LASNTG, in overseeing the quality of training at the RTCs, or external venues, on behalf of the Local Authority sector, to ensure clear, efficient, comprehensive, timely and effective two-way communications between the organisation and all stakeholders. In addition, it is committed to engage stakeholders in the review and evaluation of its training provision leading to continuous Programme development and Programme enhancement.

1.2 Stakeholders

The stakeholders are identified as those bodies that contribute to, and benefit from, the work of the LASNTG in the funding, design, development, delivery of the Programmes and those bodies that benefit from the training either as an employer or a learner. Communication is manged through the LASNTG office and the representation of these bodies on a range of groups and committees forms the basis of a forum for regular updates on all aspects of the work of LASNTG

Funding bodies include:

- Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage
- Depart of Environment, Climate and Communication
- Department of Transport (including TII)
- Irish Water
- Local Authorities
- Other public bodies (income from fees)
- Private sector (income from fees)

Other stakeholders include:

- National Directorate for Fire and Emergency Management
- Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI)
- City and Guilds
- SOLAS
- IT Carlow
- IT Sligo
- Health Services Executive (HSE)
- Local Government Management Agency (LGMA)
- Irish Public Bodies Mutual Insurance (IPBMI)
- Road Safety Authority (RSA)
- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
- Road Management Office (RMO)
- National Federation of Group Water Schemes (NFGWS)
- Waste Enforcement Regional Lead Authorities (WERLA)
- Local Authority Waters Project Office (LAWPRO)
- Climate Action Regional Offices (CARO)

All Government Departments and all Local Authorities are represented on the groups and committees that make up the organisational and governance structure of LASNTG. In addition, our partner Institutes of Technology are represented on committees, where appropriate to the Programme being designed and delivered. It is through these groups that a large proportion of the information is communicated.

Learners are briefed on the activities of the organisation at Programme induction stage and a Learner Handbook is available to all Learners. A suite of feedback forms are used to facilitate both Learners and Trainers in contributing to both positive and negative feedback and feedback from oversight bodies such as RAP and MEC also forms part of the two way communication that exists.

1.3   Internal communication

Communications between management and staff, including the planning, delivery and evaluation of Programmes and the Centre's QA system is carried out on an on-going basis by the QA Team. LASNTG regularly updates the schedule of training offered across the RTCs, in liaison with its wide number of partners. Regular meetings, through the QA Team, are held around Programme planning, development, review, feedback, evaluation, Learner progress, etc. Learners, employers and Trainers are encouraged to provide feedback both informally and formally.

The RTC Manager hosts regular meetings with all Centre staff. Issues raised that need to be dealt with immediately are addressed with a follow up at the formal meeting.

Systems are in place to ensure that all staff members have access to the information they need to perform their role to a high standard. Each Programme has a standard set of documents (pack) dependent on what Programme is being delivered.

The importance of ensuring that the channels of communication with Trainers and staff is two-way is recognised and that receiving and acting on feedback is an important factor in ensuring quality. Common communication channels include email, face-to-face and conference/telephone meetings, formal and informal staff meetings, sharing of information by all stakeholders, giving feedback to, and soliciting and receiving feedback from, Trainers and staff.

RTC Managers and members of LASNTG Office staff meet at least twice a year, and more often if required, to review all aspects of training delivery. Annual staff workshops take place, to discuss the organisation's mission and objectives and how it relates to their daily work. It also includes any issues regarding the QAS.

The Programme Coordinator is in regular contact with members of the relevant Programme Design and Development team and has primary responsibly for communicating with Trainers about all aspects of the QAS as it impacts on their work.

The RTC Managers are responsible for day-to-day communication with Trainers about all aspects of the training provision and all Learner issues at local level. They do this by maintaining a high level of personal contact (face-to-face, telephone or through email) with Trainers and employers at all stages of Programme delivery.

All Programme-specific information is available to Trainers in print copy and via a shared online folder in advance of Programme delivery. This includes timetables, assessment plan, assessment briefs, marking guidelines, practice placement requirements, Learner Handbook and Trainer Handbook. This ensures consistency and clarity of information.

1.4   External Communication

As all Local Authorities are equal partners in the process a strong communication culture exists within the sector on how information is communicated. Each Local Authority is assigned to one Regional Training Centre and has representation on the Management/ Technical Committee of that Centre. The Management/Technical Committees meet on a scheduled basis and information in relation to all Programmes is presented at these meetings. This includes current and planned Programmes, new Programmes being developed and attendance rates for each Programme. It updates each Local Authority on its level of funding drawdown across the four sectors, Roads, Water, Fire and Environment. It is also a forum for identifying future Programme needs. The membership of the Committee comes from the nominations of the partner Authorities and, as a result, can have technical, administrative, training and health and safety expertise working in unison.

The Local Government Management Agency convenes regular meetings with the Training Officer network of the Local Authorities where the LASNTG activity is presented. This is an important forum for monitoring that element of training and provides a valuable conduit for feedback and future need identification. In addition the Health and Safety Advisors network, LASAG, meet regularly where training deficits are identified and referred to LASNTG. Other forums include CCMA Sub-committees and regional committees of the various Local Government sectors e.g. roads engineers, water services engineers etc.) Training requirements is cross sectoral and these links are crucial to LASNTG in identifying, developing, promoting, delivering and evaluating the Programmes.

A schedule of private and other public bodies exists within LASNTG and where it deems appropriate these organisations are briefed on upcoming Programmes. This is particularly relevant in relation to certain Roads and Water Services Programmes.

1.5   Conferences

LASNTG organises, and hosts, a number of conferences, Programme information seminars and new Programme launches annually across all sectors. Subject matter experts are selected for each event, including international speakers. These events are particularly of benefit to Government Departments, Irish Water and Regulatory Authorities (EPA, HSA, RSA etc.) whereby the roll-out of annual Department work programme, budgetary matters and new legislation/regulation/guidance is presented. It is a valuable component of the LASNTG commitment to adult training as it is a major forum for networking given the diverse range of disciplines within this sector. The conferences form a major element of the work calendar for LASNTG, and contributes substantially to information sharing and the promotion of the organisation. These events are fully supported by Government Departments, Irish Water, Regulators, Local Authorities Consultants and Contractors at both senior and operative level, thus allowing Local Authority staff and other public service staff and the private sector engage at both a formal and informal level during the course of the events. In addition, it is a

valuable forum for Local Authority staff to network internally, given the diverse scale, and culture, of the Local Authority system, from small, predominantly rural, Authorities to large urban Authorities.

1.6   Social Media

Due to the strong network that exists between Local Authorities, Government Departments, other public bodies and private bodies the promotion and scheduling of Programmes is successfully managed through this network. The LASNTG website is a valuable portal for accessing information on the range and schedule of Programmes available across all sectors and across the five RTCs Details of the Programmes are available, including details of accredited Programmes. Information on the structure of the organisation is available and information of conferences, including papers from previous conferences is also available. Website content is managed by the LASNTG office and content is reviewed on an on-going basis which Programme details updated as required.

It is also the website for e-learning access for the various Programmes that require this access.