**Learning agreement**

1. **Introduction**

**INSERT COMPANY NAME** and the Royal College of Nursing (RCN) bothacknowledge the benefits of lifelong learning and development for all its employees. All parties are committed to working in partnership to promote and support lifelong learning across the organisation and ensure equal access to learning opportunities.

1. **Purpose**
	1. This Learning Agreement provides a framework for partnership working between the Partners on all matters relating to lifelong learning and training and development including **INSERT COMPANY NAME** Knowledge and Skills agenda.
	2. The Agreement outlines the crucial role played by RCN Learning Representatives (LRs) in promoting and supporting aspirations for learning across the organisation. RCN LRs are recognised as active partners in ensuring effective outreach to employees and will be actively recruited.
2. **RCN Learning Representative (LR) role**

The Partners acknowledge and support the role of RCN LRs and in particular their contribution to employee engagement, including:

* + Raising awareness of lifelong learning issues in the workplace, especially with non-traditional learners to identify potential skills and talent for the business.
	+ Helping to identify and work with **INSERT COMPANY NAME** to prioritise and support members and colleagues with their specific learning needs including Skills for Life – literacy and numeracy, basic IT skills and ESOL.
	+ Liaising with members and colleagues to identify occupational skills needs and gaps in provision or specific interests.
	+ Encouraging members and colleagues to access and participate in lifelong learning.
	+ Motivating members and colleagues to reach their potential.
	+ Supporting a whole organisation approach to learning - a ‘learning culture’.
	+ Helping to identify and apply for sources of funding to support lifelong learning including working with external partners.
	+ Addressing improvement in patient care and delivery of services including reduction of avoidable errors by helping to identify appropriate tailored training.
	+ Assisting supporting and mentoring members and colleagues to address and cope with change.
1. **Scope**

The Partners agree that individual issues arising from any educational or learning initiative, not obviously resolvable, shall be subject to the existing **INSERT COMPANY NAME** policies and procedures.

1. **Lifelong learning and professional development**
	1. **A definition**:

The purpose of lifelong learning is to continue to build skills and knowledge through experiences encountered in the course of a lifetime of an individual. It can be through formal involvement such as training, counselling, tutoring, mentorship, apprenticeship and higher education and informal through the learners’ own experiences or situations. It is lifelong, voluntary and self-motivated for either personal or professional reasons and enhances social inclusion, active citizenship, personal development and employability. Lifelong learning places the needs of the learner at the centre of the provision paying particular regard to varying learning styles and levels for adult learners.

* 1. This Agreement refers to the growth and development of lifelong learning opportunities within the organisation and the needs of employee. These needs may or may not be a requirement of their job role, but a requirement for their own personal development. Learning needs, which are job related, will be in the first instance addressed with a line manager.
	2. The partnership recognises the pivotal role RCN LRs have in developing a culture of learning within the workplace and the number of activities which RCN LRs can carry out that underpins the development of lifelong learning opportunities
	3. The attached Action Plan can detail agreed activities of the learning partnership and the following list gives examples of these activities, and is not exhaustive:
* Provide support, information and guidance to all staff in relation to learning opportunities which is based on peer support.
* Assist, support and mentor members and colleagues to build their confidence to take up opportunities to use their transferable skills to support business and personal development needs.
* Support and organise learning events.
* Carry out learning surveys, collate and report on learning needs analysis
* Provide pre and post support for staff appraisal and reviews.
* Provide support and guidance on learning issues in relation to competencies to do the job.
* Liaise with, negotiate and agree provisions with local training providers.
* Introduce union learning resources in to the workplace for broader use.
* Dissemination of information about learning opportunities and initiatives via union and organisational communication systems.
* Mentoring and induction support for staff including apprentices.
* Access to funding opportunities via union learning initiatives.
* Provide specific knowledge via on-going union training on for example: dyslexia, skills for life, e-learning support and other learning progression barriers.
* Access to a range of learning resources and tools via unions’ lifelong learning, education departments and institutes and those of their partners, for example [personalise for your organisation, e.g. The Open University].
1. **Roles and responsibilities**
	1. Employer

The employer will ensure that all staff are made aware of and enabled to benefit from and comply with this Agreement.

The employer will ensure that staff with supervisory or line management roles carry out their responsibility to promote access to and effectively disseminate information about learning opportunities and are made aware of the important role RCN LRs play in supporting a whole organisation approach to learning and the value of their contribution to business needs. Further that these staff are equipped to actively support and enable RCN LRs to carry out their duties in line with this agreement.

* 1. Joint (Employer & RCN)

The joint role of the partners will be to encourage a ‘culture of learning’ within the organisation. The Partners will agree to establish a Lifelong Learning Partnership committee which would be responsible for introducing, implementing and monitoring lifelong learning initiatives. The lifelong learning partnership committee will produce joint Annual Action Plan; setting goals and targets for the learning provision within the workplace for the forthcoming 12 month period.

The Partners, according to the agreed terms and references of the lifelong learning partnership committee, will ensure that all sectors of the workplace are represented equally on the group with an equal balance of management and staff, comprising of RCN LRs, and other learning partners when required. Members of the lifelong learning partnership committee will be provided with all relevant information concerning the learning provision and their duties/responsibilities as members of the committee. Minutes of the lifelong learning partnership committee will be shared with relevant stakeholders in order to highlight the partnership work of the committee to help ensure wider engagement toward the organisations’ ‘learning culture’.

1. **Summary of agreement**

By signing this Agreement we agree to a:

* **Commitment to lifelong learning** to work in partnership to address joint aspirations around learning provision and maximise learning opportunities for **INSERT COMPANY NAME** staff agreeing to the principles and aims outlined in this Agreement.
* **Commitment to the role of and value of the ULR** to **INSERT COMPANY NAME**.
* **Commitment to Equality and Human Rights** through positive policies to promote equal opportunities in line with **INSERT COMPANY NAME** Equalities of Opportunity Policy, Harassment and Bullying Policy and ensuring that all opportunities for lifelong learning are brought to the attention of all employees and that they are actively encouraged to fully participate in learning initiatives.
* **Commitment to confidentiality** in line with **INSERT COMPANY NAME** Confidentiality Policy. Further, any learning needs analysis is undertaken with the full co-operation of all partners and that any such analysis will be used solely for learning and educational purposes. The analysis will not be used in relation to other issues such as pay, performance appraisal, redundancy and disciplinary procedures. Where information is gathered in confidence both sides accept that personal information will not be passed on e.g. where a learning needs analysis conducted by **INSERT COMPANY NAME** has highlighted a skills for life need which the individual does not want the employer to know.
1. **Monitoring and Review**

The lifelong learning committee will be responsible for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the agreement, carrying out a review 12 months from the date of implementation.

**Signed:** ....………………............................................. Date: ................................

 **INSERT COMPANY SIGNATORY**

**Signed:** ……………………........................................... Date: ...............................

 **INSERT RCN SIGNATORY**

This template for use in the independent sector template can be downloaded in Microsoft Word format from [www.rcn.org.uk/learning\_agreement\_independent](http://www.rcn.org.uk/learning_agreement_independent) and the NHS version can be downloaded from [www.rcn.org.uk/learning\_agreement\_nhs](http://www.rcn.org.uk/learning_agreement_nhs).

[Please see below a sample of an action plan for you to use as a base for your planning.]Example of an action plan for you to use as a base for your planning.

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| **Sample Action Plan - Business Unit Joint Learning (e.g. South East)** **Organisation’s Lead \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Dec 2011 – Dec 2012** |
|  | **When** | **Leads** |
| 1. Sign Learning Agreement | December 2011 | Partners |
| 2. Form a learning committee | January 2012 | Organisation’s Lead |
| 3. ULR Audit - count, map ULRs- brief on learning agreement- recruit and train, where gaps- network into workplace, County and Regional groups. | January – March 2012 | RCN Lead (e.g. IM / BM) |
| 4. Communications strategy- internal to managers- internal to staff- external to stakeholders. | March 2012 | Workforce Planning and Development Steering Group / Learning Committee (or organisation equivalent) |
| 5. Joint events calendar- map and plan for national learning event days, e.g. Adult Learners’ Week, awareness days/months- publish calendar and promote alongside learning offer to workforce- seek appropriate funding. | January 2012 (with existing ULR team) | Organisation’s Lead, RCN Lead and ULR team |
| 6. Targeted work- identify barriers to learning\*- plan interventions- identify teams/division - identify groups\*\*- link closely with Learning Initiatives and staff side access to resources.\*\*\* | April – Dec 2012 | Workforce Planning and Development Steering Group (or organisation equivalent) |
| \* Specific work on barriers to learning will address e-learning, skills for life, confidence\*\* Groups could include new staff, including apprentices, HCAs, women, BME, manual staff\*\*\*Access to trade union and staff side organisations’ resources will support the work. These are typically used to tackle barriers by tailoring resources and courses, for example, BME staff into management, HCA CPD days and Dyslexia support. In addition, resources to address skills gaps, e.g. drug calculations, report writing, etc.NOTE: The action plan might become very specific, according to what is required, for example, a focus on HCAs or Apprentices or particular areas. |