



Brandon Hall Group

EXCELLENCE AWARDS 2023

Aberdeenshire Council — Competencies and Skill Development through an LMS for the 21st Century

Aberdeenshire Council & Learning Pool

Best Advance in Competencies and Skill Development

January 2024



Company Background



Company-at-a-Glance	
Headquarters	Woodhill House, Westburn Rd, Aberdeen AB16 5GB
Year Founded	1996 in current format
Employees	16,000
Global Scale (Regions that you operate in or provide services to)	Aberdeenshire – not including the city of Aberdeen (Scotland)
Customers/Output, etc. (Key customers and services offered)	All the people and businesses of the Aberdeenshire region (Scotland)
Industry	Local Authority



Budget and Timeframe

Budget and Timeframe	
Overall budget	Original budget £10,000 but this has increased annually over time
Number of (HR, Learning, Talent) employees involved with the implementation?	3 from Aberdeenshire Learning & Development
Number of Operations or Subject Matter Expert employees involved with the implementation?	4 (3 from Learning & Development and 1 from IT)
Number of contractors involved with implementation	One company (MediaCorp becoming Learning Pool)
Timeframe to implement	Approx 6 months
Start date of the program	4 June 2012 (merge to LP October 2019)

Business Conditions and Business Needs

Many organizations today have at least a partially distributed workforce, meaning they could have remote or virtual employees, geographically dispersed teams working from multiple locations, or both! However, most of these organizations have a learning need for only a few handfuls of skills and competency needs.

When you're a large Scottish local authority, responsible for a wide and diverse array of essential services (gravedigging to elderly care, education to road maintenance), how do you create a one-stop learning portal that is effective, accessible, and usable for all?

This was exactly the mammoth challenge faced by Aberdeenshire Council's Learning and Development team.



A vast and varied learning opportunity

Aberdeenshire covers a geographical area of 6,339km² and is the 6th largest area by population, serving a population of 260,780.

Whilst Scotland's population rose by 7.7% in the period 1998 to 2020, in Aberdeenshire that increase was 15.3%, which included a decline of 10% in the 25 to 44 age group, whilst the 65 to 74 age group saw the largest increase of 75.9%.

Recent projections indicate that Aberdeenshire's population is expected to rise to 267,896 by 2028, which, together with the changing age demographic of the population, will have an impact on services, making it more important than ever that the Council has the right people, in the right places doing the right things when it comes to the delivery of services.

With the service of the community at the center of their purpose, the local authority employs over 16,000 people and provides a wide and diverse array of essential services, from the education of school children, housing needs, support for community learning groups, care at home for vulnerable residents, gravedigging, and the maintenance of network systems – the education and upskilling of all staff is essential for success. This also includes the necessity to be cross-skilled to move between services in a time of need (dealing with weather, weather impacts, transport needs) – where staff are required to shift into other roles to serve at speed.



Aberdeenshire
COUNCIL





Overview

The Plan

Aberdeenshire Council’s Plan sets out where they want to be as an organization and how they will get there. The Plan identifies its vision ‘Serving Aberdeenshire from Mountain to Sea – the very best of Scotland’, core outcomes and key priorities. It is centered around three pillars:

- ☐ Our People
- ☐ Our Environment
- ☐ Our Economy

These priorities are supported by Directorate and Area Plans, meaning that everyone understands their part in the delivery of the priorities and what we can do to help.



Clearly outlined as a pillar is the people who work for Aberdeenshire Council – their education, health and well-being and ensuring that they have the right people in the right place at the right time – all of these flow from an environment of embedded, accessible high-quality learning and development – regardless of tenure, position or opportunity.



Meeting Employee Needs

Aberdeenshire Council employees are enthusiastic, motivated, and committed individuals, who take pride in their work and appreciate the integral role they play in delivering a first-class service to their community. Keen to learn and build on experience, Aberdeenshire Council responded to this challenge by carefully evaluating and revising its training provision. The result? The creation of a blended-learning training model, supported by a modern, digitally enabled learning platform.

The key criteria for the new learning platform included:

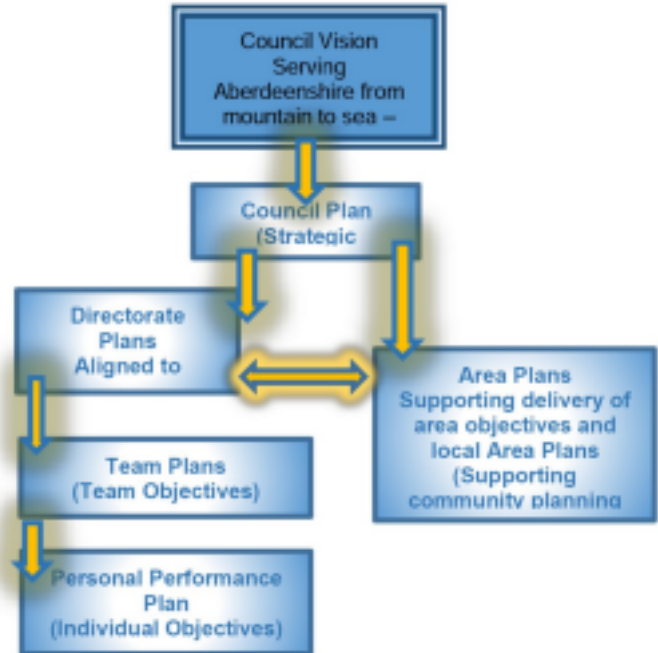
- Quality – A solution that would meet learner needs (reduce feelings of disruption and increase accessibility) and administrators’ high standards (be trackable and user-friendly).
 - Upskill/Reskill competencies – enable employees to easily upskill and reskill as required and needed.
 - Flexibility – Regarding both functionality and appearance, i.e., a look and feel that would be appealing to the learner.
 - Price – It would need to be cost-effective.
 - Technical support – It would need to provide reliable hosting and support services.



Strategic Framework

This framework ensures that all Council plans and strategies are focused on the delivery of a single shared vision for Aberdeenshire and its services. It supports the overarching National Performance Framework for Scotland and the vision for ‘the best quality of life for everyone in Aberdeenshire’.

The framework is critical in ensuring activity is coordinated via a ‘golden thread’ providing a clear direction and linking individual staff objectives through to team and service plans, and into the Council Plan. Our performance management framework supports this activity to provide assurance that progress is being made in delivering the outcomes.



Design of the Program

Historically, Aberdeenshire Council had relied upon the delivery of learning through face-to-face courses and sessions, with some basic online elements for mandatory compliance.

However, with the momentum of technology and then the additional restrictions of the pandemic in early 2020, the need to rebuild the learning offering for all of their 16,000 employees became apparent.

The range of courses required reaches far and wide across all service needs. Skills requirements and competencies. Each one is available either online or face-to-face/virtual. For example:

- Environment & Infrastructure Service – Burials – understanding health and safety, the depth/size of internment sites etc.
- Education & Children’s Services – The Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC) Program.
- Health & Social Care Partnership – Sheltered Housing/Care at Home



Induction & program of learning.

- Business Services – Leadership and Management suite of courses and digital skills.
- Chief Executive Service – Elected Members 2022 Induction Program.

All corporate mandatory courses are available on ALDO and form part of the induction processes, again resulting in less time away from the workplace.

Each course is fully accessible to enable all employees to access it on any device with assistance tools as required.

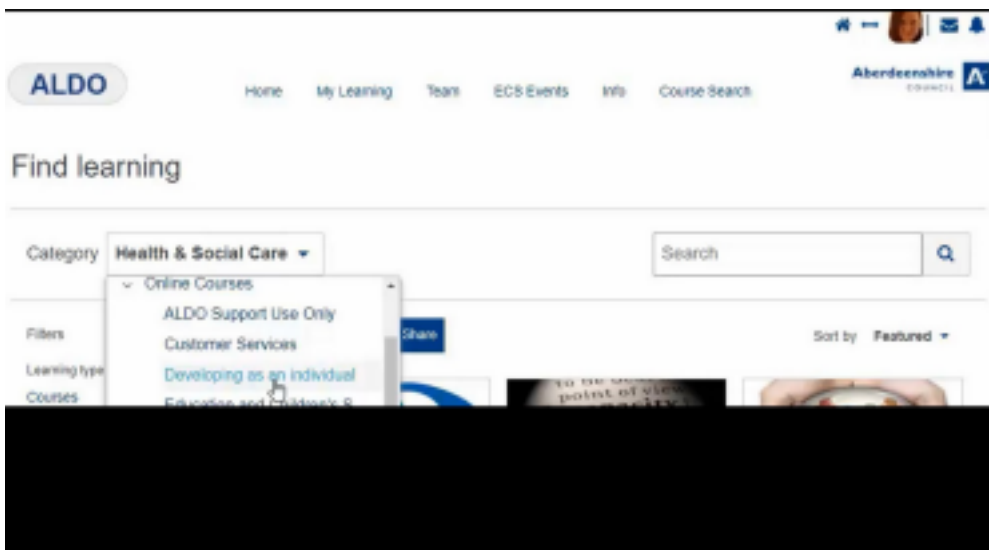
aldo.aberdeenshire.gov.uk accessibility score





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About GIRFEC Children &

Learning and Development

Welcome to Learning and Development for GIRFEC and Child Protection in Aberdeenshire. This is facilitated by the GIRFEC Learning and Development subgroup, comprised of Multi Agency representatives.

The GIRFEC training portal on ALDO provides access to a range of professional learning and development resources which supports the implementation of GIRFEC national practice and child protection in Aberdeenshire. The resources are a range E-Learn/Virtual Courses which you can access and complete at your own pace as well as links to other professional learning materials.

If you are a Council employee, or from a partner agency that already has an ALDO account you can access this training directly by logging on to ALDO. If you or your agency do not have an ALDO account, please complete this form – [ALDO Account Request](#)





Example design

An example of skills and competencies in learning achievement aims can be seen in the below example for Aberdeenshire Council's Child Protection training. Everyone who has contact with children and their families has a part to play in ensuring children and young people are safe and that you are confident in your practice to respond to any concern you may have. The courses are designed at 3 levels:

- Introduction to Child Protection.
- Child Protection Refresher - Developing Your Knowledge.
- Managers & Designated Child Protection Officer Training.

Learning aims cover:

- Understanding the role and developing confident practice in responding to the needs and protecting children in care.
- Awareness of the different types of abuse.
- Knowing where to report any concerns about child abuse or neglect.
- Understanding the relevant legislation & policy and how it relates to roles.
- Exploring the continuum of support from Getting it Right for Every Child through to Child Protection.
- Understanding why Chronologies are important in safeguarding children and what the term significant event means.
- Exploring tools & resources that are available to support practice.
- Understanding the steps to take if there is concern about a child.
- Multiagency processes to address concerns, 'what happens next?'
- Increased confidence in record keeping and information security.

Utilizing Learning Pool technologies

Through the usage of Learning Pool Platform, this enabled Aberdeenshire Council to;

Enjoy continuous innovation: empowering learners with an evergreen learning



experience built to align talent development with evolving organizational strategies, moving towards a performance management culture.

Make compliance simple: Keep their workforce on top of the latest standards and practices by providing them with the learning they need when and where they need it. Report out on that compliance with the same ease.

Delivery of the Program

An all-encompassing, 21st-century learning solution

With many criteria points to hit and a plethora of different service areas to cover, this wouldn't be an overnight process. In addition, it was important to Aberdeenshire Council to bring its digital learning into the 21st century, with a new look and feel.

Aberdeenshire Council's in-house team introduced Learning Pool Platform to create new content, tools and courses that would meet the needs of all across the business. Thus, with the support of Learning Pool, Aberdeenshire Learning and Development Online (ALDO) was reborn with a new look and feel, along with more interactive and immersive content capabilities.

With accounts created for all employees, elected members, volunteers and partner agencies, such users have access to almost all of the circa 450 courses available (some restricted courses for security reasons or business levels are necessary). All courses are device-agnostic and have been refreshed with support from subject matter experts – resulting in the right content, for the right individuals, within the right teams, at the right time.

Each course can also jump straight to the required content at the exact point of need.

“Learning Pool worked very flexibly and supportively with the Aberdeenshire Council's Community Learning and Development team (CLD) enabling us to create a bespoke program of e-learns that are creative and helpful.

The CLD Improvement team also worked with our colleagues in the ALDO team to create a training matrix to match all CLD job profiles within the council. As the elements are in-house, we also created a short video to provide a tour demonstrating how members of staff would navigate their professional learning offer digitally.”

Sue Briggs, Strategic Development Officer for Quality Improvement and



Professional Learning.

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Home > Aberdeenshire Council Child Protection Training

Aberdeenshire Council Child Protection Training

Aberdeenshire Council Child Protection training from Aberlour futures for the early learning and childcare workforce can be booked through the ALDO learning portal.

We are commissioned by Aberdeenshire Council to provide child protection training for all staff working with children and young people and their families.

Everyone who has contact with children and their families has a part to play in ensuring children and young people are safe and that you are confident in your practice to respond to any concern you may have. The courses are designed at 3 levels:

- Introduction to Child Protection
- Child Protection Refresher - Developing Your Knowledge
- Managers & Designated Child Protection Officer Training

Introduction to Child Protection	Refresher/Developing Your Child Protection Knowledge	Managers/Designated Child Protection Officer Training
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 hours, delivered via MS Teams • Live and interactive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 hours, delivered via MS Teams • Live and interactive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 hours, delivered via MS Teams • Live and interactive



Delivery included:

- ☑ Streamline reporting – personalized dashboards, custom reports and completion tracking.
- ☑ Blended learning - blend, orchestrate and track face-to-face and e-learning together in a single intuitive platform.
- ☑ A fully adaptable and responsive interface - a stellar user experience and access to ALDO on multiple devices through an intuitive interface.



In addition, Learning Pool support built in for peace of mind – a dedicated Account Manager, backed up with award-winning telephone support and underpinned by their Academy with no arbitrary limits on how much help can be provided.

Change Management Efforts

Learning at the time of need – excellence during the pandemic

The refreshed and revitalized ALDO provided the perfect solution at the beginning of the pandemic. With all leisure centers suddenly having to shut their doors, staff working within this service were asked to complete a programme of courses to equip them with the knowledge and skills for work in Health and Social Care (i.e. working in Care Homes, Home Care Service, etc.).

This quick action and accessible learning meant that these staff were equipped and able to be redeployed in a different sector during the most critical time – securing jobs, wages, and enabling care for those in great need.

Aberdeenshire Council can also report that its ALDO feedback word cloud consists of phrases like:

- 'Great'.
- 'Godsend over Covid-19'.
- 'Excellent'.
- 'Perfect for online learning'.
- 'Valuable'.

All such feedback is captured, and any constructive feedback acted upon. Any constructive or negative comments are directly addressed, as example; instruction videos created for search function after feedback was received.

New releases/developments

Acting upon business needs and feedback received, Aberdeenshire Council have enhanced the reporting ability for managers monitoring individual team members development including the newly released use of recording Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and other evidence. This now



allows employees to have all their learning in one place. Sample reports available to managers are:

Team refreshers where they can monitor refresher due dates to ensure staff are always fully compliant e.g., GDPR, Cyber Security, People Handling. ☑ Face to face booking commitments to make rota setting/cover easier. ☑ Full report of evidence of learning (achieved out with ALDO) reducing the need for multiple training records to be held separately.

Feedback on new reports:

“I really like the new training record – that it can now be viewed by more than one person is a fantastic addition. It makes it so much easier for me to make sure that my staff are in date with training as they could have more than one post and I used to have to rely on them letting me know when they had completed something then sending on a screenshot which they never always did. Now they can’t hide! I love it, makes my job much easier.”

Comments on ALDO and ALDO Support’s Customer Service

- Perfect for online learning.
- Really good learning tool.
- Nice and bitesize.
- Like all learning and face to face in same place.
- Great videos that are clear and straightforward.
- Nothing is ever a problem and tasks always completed.
- We are currently putting together an online training course. Super helpful with support/ideas/feedback etc as well as being readily available for discussion.
- I appreciated very prompt response to my email requesting access to new starts team reports. Having this access enables me to see what training the new staff need to complete when coming into post.



Measurable Benefits

The impact

Through working with Learning Pool Platform, Aberdeenshire Council has seen nothing short of outstanding results.

Competencies and skill development course completion figures

2020 – 30,558

2021 – 42,295

2022 – 68,991

Jan/Feb 2023 – already 12,922 (this extrapolates to an estimated course completion of over 76,000 in 2023).

- An average of 570 daily unique logins (up from an average of 300 the previous year).
- 561 courses available to all learners (currently approx. 17,000 active users).
- An improvement in the digital skills of its workforce – computers are available to all employees, and confidence has measured growth in using their own equipment and devices to access their learning.

Outside of learning achievements, ALDO has seen Aberdeenshire Council achieve:

- A blended approach to learning, for example, previously used to run a two-day face to face mandatory people handling course which is now an online theory course followed by one-day practical face to face. In 2022, 1,106 people completed this new delivery method making a saving of:
 - o 33,180 miles (£14,931 based on 30 miles of travel per person.)
 - o Approx. 1,106 hours of paid travel time per person (£13,272).
 - o This results in an estimated total saving to the Service of



£28,203 (this does not include the time saving for the trainer delivery of the saved day).

- Contributing directly to 19% reduction since 2019 in Aberdeenshire Council's goal of 75% by 2030 and Net Zero by 2045 through:
 - o Saving paper impact with the reduction of printing course materials due to online transition.
 - o Reducing travel necessity and costs, leading to an impact in carbon footprint.
- 97.7% rated 5-star for customer service from learners.

Achieving Standards Mark

Aberdeenshire Council's Community Learning and Development Team (CLD) has successfully achieved its Standards Mark for Professional Learning from The CLD Standards Council for Scotland.

The Standards Council is the professional body for all those who work or volunteer in community learning and development in Scotland.

The Standards Mark is the route offered for organizations who offer CLD learning to staff: from the smallest voluntary sector project to local authorities and national agencies. The Standards Mark process looks at the whole range of learning opportunities offered, not one specific program, as well as the learning culture of the organization.

Sue Briggs, Strategic Development Officer for Quality Improvement and Professional Learning, explains: "To obtain our CLD Standards Mark, Aberdeenshire CLD staff professional learning group created a SharePoint site to host all documents and links to its exciting professional learning offer.

"The CLD Improvement Team also worked with our colleagues in the ALDO team, supported by Employee Development Officer Sophie McKen, to create a training matrix to match all CLD job profiles within the council. As the elements are in-house, we also created a short video to provide a tour demonstrating how members of staff would navigate their professional learning offer digitally."



Overall

“The relaunch and modernisation of ALDO with a new look and feel means that it is now fit for purpose and allowed us to maximise the benefits of technology – e.g. anytime, anywhere, just-in-time learning, 24/7 accessibility, on any internet-enabled device, to keep increasing training uptake.

Having the support of Learning Pool to implement new changes and technological updates has been invaluable to us at Aberdeenshire Council.

ALDO is now part of our everyday cultural language and landscape – embedded in everyday working life, regardless of levels, roles, location or responsibility.

Feedback on ALDO has been really positive and has given us an indication of what learners want. We will look to expand and reflect this feedback on an ongoing basis, as we will be able to amend content quickly and effectively as needed.”

Sharon O’Neill, Employee Development Officer.

The learning journey is continuous; therefore, ALDO will continue to develop, expand, and evolve as individual learner needs are identified. While such changes are inevitable, one thing will remain – with its new capabilities, accessibility and functionality, ALDO will always play a key role within the overall culture of Aberdeenshire Council with continuing support from the Learning Pool team.



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**EXCELLENCE
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About Brandon Hall Group™

With more than 10,000 clients globally and 30 years of delivering world-class research and advisory services, Brandon Hall Group™ is focused on developing research that drives performance in emerging and large organizations, and provides strategic insights for executives and practitioners responsible for growth and business results.

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Three annual programs recognize the best organizations that have successfully deployed programs to achieve measurable results.

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Individual and Enterprise Membership Options: Includes research assets, advisory support, a client success plan and more.

Advisory Offerings

Custom Research Projects, including surveys, focus group interviews and Organization Needs Assessment for Transformation, Technology Selection and Strategy.

**SOME WAYS
WE CAN HELP**



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