



WORK EXPERIENCE FOR SOCIAL CARE

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Work Experience – what is expected of the Employer?

We hope that you are reading this Guide because you are interested in offering work experience.

Schools, colleges, young people and the sector need work placements!

You can contact your local schools or colleges if you have not offered work experience to date. Someone will come and talk to you about the opportunities and how that matches what you can offer and what this will mean to you as the employer. The length of work experience/ placement could be anything between a week and three weeks, or several days a week over a number of weeks. You will discuss this with the school / college and agree what is best for both parties

Once all the preparation regarding the suitability of your workplace for Work Experience is done, you will need to consider how you can best support the young person/ student.

Why should I take a student on work placement?

Taking a student on work experience / placement has many benefits to the employer, the student and service users.

- the student can undertake specific projects or activities you and your team have not had the time to do
- the student can spend time with service users as an additional social resource
- many students enjoy their work placement so much and do so well, that employers take them on as temporary staff in holidays or at weekends. This can then continue through the rest of their time in education – and they may even become permanent staff in due course

Work experience is key to building on previous work experience, to developing skills and knowledge of the sector, to develop employability skills whilst reinforcing learning. It should be helping to draw together, apply and add to the student's knowledge and help them gain confidence and expertise – ready for work.

Planning the Placement

There are many factors that you must be aware of which will help you plan effectively.

Health and Safety: Under the Health & Safety Regulations, a person participating in work experience within any environment is regarded as an employee of that establishment for the purposes of health and safety. In addition, the trainee should also be covered by that establishment's liability insurance.

Check if you are not sure!

Insurance: Employers' Liability, Public Liability and Motor Vehicle. You need to ascertain whether your Insurers provide cover for students on work experience.

Check if you are not sure!

Risk Assessment: There is a requirement that all establishments ensure a thorough risk assessment has been completed in relation to any work experience programme and that this is carried out before a placement or activity begins. You will need to carry out the Risk Assessments and minimise risks appropriately. You will need to balance the safety of service users, students and staff whilst also aiming to offer a fulfilling and rewarding work placement.

NB The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 mean employers are required to do this before any person under the age of 18 starts work.

As you consider the possible risks in your place of work, you must take into account the likely immaturity, lack of awareness and inexperience of the young people who will be working with you. You have the right to refuse any young person if you consider the risks associated with them to be unacceptably high.

A school/college will not release any young person under 18 to an employer unless the parent has signed to say that they have read and understood the placement details which include any risks associated with that placement. It is important that your Placement Details (which will be supplied to parents via the school/college) indicate whether you will provide lunchtime supervision. Where supervision is provided, the young person will be expected to stay on your premises during the lunch break. However, it is recognised that in some situations, lunchtime supervision will not be provided.

Induction

Pre-placement meeting: If possible, arrange to meet the student before they actually start the placement. This helps deal with any nerves that they may have! This is also valuable time that you can spend telling the individual about your establishment and the people you support. As a result, the student should understand the environment that they are going to be in and that this is what they are expecting / wanting; the last thing you want is to spend time supporting someone on a placement only for them to tell you after a few days that they did not think the placement was going to be like this!

You should also use this opportunity to talk to the student so that he / she is fully aware of his / her responsibilities. For instance you might want to talk about footwear and dress code if applicable, hours of work, arrangement for lunch and breaks, activities that they will be able to do and those that they will not be able to do (e.g. personal care) so that they arrive on the first day prepared.

Induction: Work experience trainees should be given the same induction information as other members of staff within the establishment to ensure that they are fully aware of issues such as Health & Safety, Confidentiality etc.

Supervision and Support: Work experience students should be supervised at all times throughout the duration of the placement. It is good practice to allocate the student a named 'supervisor' or 'mentor' and both student and staff members must be clear about what this role entails.

If you and your team feel it is appropriate, the student could be invited to participate in other information / support sessions such as inviting them to attend team meetings. This can ensure that the student feels like a part of the team and therefore increase the positive aspects of the placement.

You should be given written information about the student to be placed with you. This should include name, age, school telephone number, named school/college contact(s) and any other relevant facts. You should also be told about any expected outcomes that the school / College would like to see.

CRB: Most schools and colleges of full-time students will have arranged for a CRB check to be carried out well before work experience starts. This will usually be on the basis that the student is on a training programme and that work experience is part of their learning and development. As they are supervised at all times, this should be sufficient for you to carry out a Risk Assessment as to the likelihood that the student could be left alone with a vulnerable service user and for "harm" to occur.

Managing a Placement

Make sure you brief staff so that they are aware of levels of responsibilities and the limits of the student. Work experience students must be supervised at all times throughout the duration of the placement. It is good practice to allocate the student a named 'supervisor' or 'mentor' which helps for continuity of support throughout the placement.

As part of preparation for a work experience placement there is an expectation that issues relating to confidentiality are outlined and explained to each student.

If an accident or incident should occur, no matter how small, you must report this to the school / college and let them know what action you took.

If the student proves to be unsuitable for the placement, contact the school / college and explain the circumstances. The school / college must arrange for them to be collected and deal with the matter through the school's / college's disciplinary procedures if necessary.

Similarly, if the student stops attending the placement, you must notify the school / college on the first day of absence.

Try and ensure you give as much variety and opportunity for the student to experience a range of activities. Often the student will be required to complete a journal / diary whilst on placement; your support in helping complete this will be very much appreciated.

How can you best support a student?

Work Shadowing

Work shadowing is an excellent way to introduce the student to the environment and the daily life. Make sure that the person(s) they are shadowing is clear about the level of responsibility and the range of tasks that the student can undertake.

Students must not be involved or be present at or during any personal care, although they could help with certain tasks like helping someone to put on makeup, help with manicures, help with choosing clothes to wear. Make sure both parties are clear on what students can and can not do.

It may be useful for a student to shadow a few different members of staff to gain an insight into different job roles and how different people go about their work within social care. This could be done through a rota system whereby the student will spend a few hours with a different staff member throughout the day (e.g. care assistant, receptionist, manager). Try not to make this much more than a day of the student's time as the experiential learning is limited.

Students should get involved in as many care staff duties as possible and this should include domestic responsibilities. (However where there are mundane or routine tasks such as sweeping the floor or making the beds the student should take their turn at these but they should not be the only tasks the student carries out whilst they are with you. There is little value in a student spending 4 hours a day making beds!)

Take time to plan out what the student can do on different days or there may be a tendency to give several days doing the same tasks that are repetitive, boring and do not help the student leave with a fulfilling experience that helps them to chose social care as a future career! A planned programme will give them some idea of what to expect each day, it will help you as you will not be thinking each day what can they do, and the student will not be constantly asking what's happening next.

Many schools and colleges will have a Learning Framework; check this before they start and find out how you can best support meeting the outcomes. Students may be required to complete a Daily Diary / Journal. Make sure you and or the students supervisor knows what the expectations are with completion; where possible spend time talking to the student about care – what it involves and all of the many positive rewards the role can bring. If the student has to complete a daily diary you may want to check with the student / school /college whether it is appropriate for you to help with this or even read through as a supportive measure. Use this time to give feedback to the student; but also ask them for their feedback.

Once the placement is complete spend time evaluating the placement with the supervisor and other staff – so that you can use this process to help other placements and their ongoing success.

Suggestions as to what students could do

Daily Diary

The school may ask the student to keep a daily dairy – in which case do make sure the supervisor/mentor spends time with the student making this a valuable reflection. Encourage the student to think about skills they may have used – like good communication skills; why these are important - it will help the student in any future job role they may pursue, as well as supporting their assignments for their qualification.

Activities

There are many tasks and activities that can be built into a work placement programme. Try and plan this out before the student arrives. The school / college may have certain information that the student has to gather but generally it is down to the Manager / Supervisor to determine the activities.

Talk to the staff and service users so that they are aware who the student is - they may also have ideas for activities.

Some suggestions:

News letter: Discuss with the student whether they could produce a newsletter for the establishment. The student could interview staff and service users, do a biography on a service user, day in the life of a care staff and lots more. Make it fun and not too demanding! When you get a different work placement student, they could do the next issue!

Biography of a service user(s) As an alternative to a full newsletter a student can spend time interviewing several service users and writing all about their life. They may be able to get some photos from family and make a display board in an area for

everyone to read and view. Often staff find out information about a service user they did not know!

Mini-projects There are many different areas for project work, make sure that staff are supportive where required, and where possible offer the opportunity to display project work. The student can spend some time interviewing staff and or service users, gathering information to support some of the following ideas:

- What are the different roles within a social care environment?
- What qualities are important for working within social care?
- Which things are important to service users when they live within a social care setting?
- Describe how the needs of the elderly in residential care differ from your everyday needs?
- How was school different for the service users?
- Interview service users to find out what changes they have seen during their life.

Garden Activity: If the weather permits and the timing fits in, students could undertake a small garden project such as potting up summer plants / winter bulbs, making up hanging baskets or even making an area for bird feeders.

General Activities:

As well as specific projects there are many other general activities that students can get involved in:

- Helping with visits and trips
- Playing games
- Helping with meal times
- Helping with domestic duties
- Helping with activities and clubs
- Helping with manicures
- Reading newspapers to service users
- Help with making up recruitment packs – great opportunity for the student to understand the requirements of recruiting into social care
- Ask the student if they have musical or artistic skills or hobbies – such as playing a musical instrument – what a fantastic resource for you and service users!
- Mini-surveys (e.g. my favourite pudding)
- Refreshing notice boards, creating new templates for menus, revising information sheets
- Helping with letter-writing or emails
- Creating reminiscence boxes

This list is not exhaustive – and many of these could be longer-term activities that your next work placement student could carry on/complete.

What courses are the students likely to be doing

Here are some examples of typical courses offered by Berkshire schools and colleges with their work experience requirements.

<p>Young Apprentices (age 14-16)</p> <p>First Diploma level 2 in H&SC</p> <p>2 year course</p>	<p><u>Work experience requirements:</u></p> <p>One day a week in college One day a week on work experience 1st year; week-long blocks 2nd year (term-time only) = 50 days total over 2 years</p>
<p>The curriculum includes Communication and individual rights; Individual needs, Cultural Diversity, The impact of diet, Creative and therapeutic activities</p>	

<p>Diploma in Society, Health and Development (age 14-19)</p> <p>Levels 1, 2 can be achieved in either one-year or two-year programmes Level 3 is a two-year programme</p>	<p><u>Work experience requirements:</u></p> <p>All 3 levels have work experience requirements of a minimum of 10 days per year</p>
<p>The curriculum includes: Exploring the sector(s), Principles and values, Partnership working; Communication and information sharing, Growth, development and healthy living</p>	

<p>First Diploma in H&SC level 2 (age 16+)</p> <p>One year course</p>	<p><u>Work experience requirements:</u></p> <p>10 days during the year</p>
<p>The curriculum includes Communication and individual rights; Individual needs, Cultural Diversity, The impact of diet, Creative and therapeutic activities</p>	

<p>First Nationals – Certificate and Diploma in H&SC level 3 (age 16+)</p> <p>Two year course</p>	<p><u>Work experience requirements:</u></p> <p>10 – 30 days during the 2 years (depending on options chosen)</p>
<p>The curriculum includes: Developing effective communication, Equality, diversity and rights, Health, safety and security, Sociological and Psychological perspectives for H&SC, Development through the life stages</p>	

Advanced Applied GCE – 10 – 20 days during the 2 years (age 16+)	<u>Work experience requirements:</u> 10 – 30 days during the 2 years (depending on options chosen)
The curriculum includes: Human growth & development, communication & values, Social aspects and lifestyle choices, Promoting health and well-being, Meeting individual needs, Understanding human behaviour	

Other qualification routes you may have heard of

Apprentices (level 2):

Age 16+. Typically requires classroom attendance: 4 x 3.5 hours per month x 18 months (throughout the year, not termly). This leads to the achievement of an apprenticeship “framework” (NVQ level 2, technical certificate level 2, Key Skills, Employment Responsibilities and Rights (ERR))*

Generally employed status (though can do fixed term contract to cover the time on apprenticeship (18 months))

Advanced Apprentices (level 3)

Age 16+. Typically requires classroom attendance: 4 x 3.5 hours per month x 18 months (throughout the year, not termly). This leads to the achievement of an advanced apprenticeship “framework” (NVQ level 3, technical certificate level 3, Key Skills, Employment Responsibilities and Rights (ERR))*

Generally employed status (though can do fixed term contract to cover the time on apprenticeship (24 months))

***NB** These models will change when QCF is implemented in September 2010.

Programme Led Apprentice (PLA)

Various models of delivery to enable learners to start their apprenticeship learning before they have gained employment. Once they are employed, they move onto an apprenticeship or advanced apprenticeship.

Learning leads to the relevant technical certificate, key skills and ERR from the framework. They achieve the relevant NVQ once in employment.

There is a good opportunity for some voluntary work placement alongside this.

Current initiatives in response to economic situation

(£1000 to you if you can help jobseekers)

Work Focussed Training – for age 25 plus, 6 months unemployed or more

Funded by the government to provide the skills people need to get a job.

For example: a 5 day course including Moving & Handling certificate, Health & Safety awareness, Introduction to Personal Care, What are the different job in social care and How to prepare for an interview in social care.

Learners must be actively seeking work – and might apply for employment or look for voluntary work in the care sector at the end of the course.

If they become employed (16 hours per week, minimum wage), the employer receives £500; if still employed 26 weeks later, the employer gets a further £500

Care First Careers

Similar to the WFT fund above, but geared towards 18-24 years olds who have not been employed for 6 months or more.

Same bonus arrangement for the employer as WFT above.

To be available in Thames Valley from 1 April 2010.

This work experience guide has been produced by Bracknell & Wokingham College and Skills for Care with funding from Progress South Central