

Work Experience Policy

Document Control

Document Ref:	HRWE001	Date Created:	September 2009
Version:	3	Date Modified:	April 2019
Revision due			
Author:	Tracy Sherriff/ Alexandra Howett	Sign & Date:	
Owning Service			
Equality Impact Assessment: (EIA)	Date undertaken:		
	Issues (if any):		
Chief Executive	Sign & Date:		
Corporate Director (Communities)	Sign & Date:		
Corporate Director (Economy and Environment)	Sign & Date:		

Change History

Version	Date	Description	Change ID
1		New document	
2	Jan 2013	Changed references to CRB to DBS	
3	April 2019	Updated partnership details plus roles & responsibilities	

This Policy is not for publication externally

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1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this policy is to promote opportunities for unpaid work experience within the Council for individuals from groups in the community who a) may experience barriers in entering the paid job market or b) wish to gain an insight into the work environment, and to ensure these work experience placements are engaged in accordance with current Health and Safety Legislation.
- 1.2 Work experience for the purpose of this policy, is defined as, 'an unpaid, time-limited work placement, on West Berkshire Council premises, typically a maximum of two weeks and generally a working pattern of Monday to Friday with an emphasis on the learning experience in order to help prepare the person for their future transition into employment'.
- 1.3 The provision of work experience is considered to be an important public relations exercise for the Council in line with our corporate social responsibility, in addition to providing the opportunity to attract applicants to future positions within West Berkshire Council. Work placements provide the chance for individuals, particularly those who are disadvantaged, to gain valuable experience which will help prepare them for the transition into the working environment.
- 1.4 The policy supports the Council's commitment to corporate social responsibility and promotion of equality of opportunity. It is a way for us to establish links with local schools and young people in the community.
- 1.5 The Chief Executive and Corporate Board have approved the Work Experience Policy. The separate work experience procedure/information pack for Managers which should be read alongside this policy, will help to ensure the policy is implemented consistently and fairly across West Berkshire Council.

2. Applicability

- 2.1 This policy applies to all Services of West Berkshire Council and to anyone seeking a work experience placement.
- 2.2 This policy does not apply to schools.
- 2.3 This Policy has been the subject of consultation with Heads of Service and Trade Unions and has been ratified by the Council's Corporate Board.

3. Policy

- 3.1 It is the Policy of the Council to;
 - 3.1.1 Work with local schools and/or external agencies to identify individuals who would benefit from unpaid work placements in the Council.
 - 3.1.2 Appoint a work experience lead within HR to coordinate work experience activity; including liaison with schools and/or external agencies, internal staff and managers and agreement of suitable work experience opportunities.
 - 3.1.3 Appoint a responsible person/supervisor within the service for each work placement, who will coordinate work experience activity, oversee

induction into the service and provide feedback regarding activities undertaken. Support will be provided by HR for this voluntary role, which will be undertaken alongside the postholder's normal duties.

- 3.1.4 Open up placements throughout the year where possible in line with demand but not exceeding HR and/or service capacity.
- 3.1.5 Encourage individuals on work experience to apply for suitable job or apprenticeship vacancies when they are advertised externally. They may be appointed to paid employment in the Council following normal recruitment processes.
- 3.1.6 Ensure that individuals on work experience are made aware of, and comply with, the Code of Conduct for Employees and all other relevant Council policies and procedures, such as the Health and Safety Policy, for the duration of the placement. An information pack will be prepared to assist with this process. The placement may be terminated immediately if there is a breach of the Council's policies.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

- 4.1 Heads of Service/Service Directors are responsible for
 - 4.1.1 Understanding that under Health and Safety Law, work experience students are employees and should be treated no differently than other young people WBC employs.
 - 4.1.2 Providing spaces for work experience placements if possible each year.
 - 4.1.3 Ensuring that each placement complies with the work experience policy and procedure throughout the duration of the placement.
 - 4.1.4 Ensuring that the appropriate risk assessments and inductions for the service are conducted for each work experience placement. Risk assessments and inductions will need to consider the age of the person on placement.
- 4.2 Line managers/supervisors are responsible for;
 - 4.2.1 Conducting an informal interview with the individual prior to the placement.
 - 4.2.2 Managers should ensure that all staff within their team are clear about the role of the incoming individual and foster good working relationships with them.
 - 4.2.3 Carrying out appropriate risk assessments and inductions for each work experience placement and providing necessary training in the specific tasks to be undertaken.
 - 4.2.2 Devising an appropriate work experience programme, in liaison with HR where necessary.

- 4.2.5 The manager must ensure that individuals on work experience placement have a clear understanding of the confidentiality attached to working at WBC and that they have the necessary levels of supervision. The manager should ensure a confidentiality agreement has been signed.
- 4.2.6 The manager may wish to appoint another member of staff within the service to act as supervisor. This person will have delegated responsibility for the work experience placement in particular regard to supervision on a daily basis and will be responsible for providing support and guidance.
- 4.2.7 Liaising with the placing agency, school or Social Worker (for those in leaving care). The manager will be responsible for notifying HR who will in turn notify parents (for individuals under the age of 18), educational establishments or agencies (if applicable) and the individual if problems arise or they wish to terminate a placement during or in advance of the expected date of termination.
- 4.2.8 Managers should provide a written reference for the work experience candidate at the end of the placement.
- 4.2.9 Providing a written assessment of the candidate at the end of the placement to HR and the recommending school / agency.

4.3 Employees are responsible for;

- 4.3.1 Treating each individual on work experience fairly and with respect.
- 4.3.2 Promoting Health and Safety work practices.
- 4.3.3 Providing support and guidance to individuals as directed by the line manager.

4.4 Human Resources are responsible for;

- 4.4.1 Ensuring that work experience is managed appropriately in accordance with this agreed policy and the work experience procedure.
- 4.4.2 The central co-ordination and administration of all work experience placements.
- 4.4.3 Liaising with external schools and/or agencies to identify candidates for work experience.
- 4.4.4 Ensuring a responsible person / supervisor is appointed for each work placement and support provided as appropriate.
- 4.4.5 Coordinating each work experience placement in conjunction with the responsible person / supervisor.

- 4.4.6 Undertaking pre-placement checks (Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), references, medical etc) where necessary.

5 Identifying work experience opportunities

- 5.3 Work experience can include, but is not limited to, work shadowing, work observation, visits and carrying out work based projects. The HR work experience lead will work with Heads of Service/Service Directors and/or managers to identify opportunities that would be suitable for work experience. The actual duration of placement and/or hours worked will depend upon the individual selected and the role the service is able to offer. Where it is deemed appropriate for the individual and the service can maintain its operational requirements, some work experience placements may be for a prolonged period of time, for example, one day a week over a 6 month period.
- 5.4 Work placements may in exceptional circumstances, be used to help services to cover peaks in workload or specific one-off tasks for a limited duration (e.g. one or two days of a placement). The council will not use work experience participants as a substitute for filling vacant positions or otherwise as additional resource required to meet business as usual activities. The Council recognises work experience placements are intended to give a broad, meaningful, constructive and indicative taste of the work a service is involved with, therefore it is vital they are given a real insight into a service and not given repetitive low level staff so they leave having had a positive experience.
- 5.5 Careful consideration should be given to work experience requests in areas where individuals might have access to children or vulnerable adults, confidential information, or be exposed to physical or other risks. In such cases, a risk assessment must be carried out before a placement begins. The risk assessment may conclude that the work placement is unsuitable.

6 Identifying candidates for work experience

- 6.1 Eligibility: WBC supports the programmes devised by The Department for Education. We will therefore consider applications from students as part of their 16 to 19 study programme, young people aged 16 to 24 who are motivated to work but lack the skills and are on traineeships and young people with complex needs who need a higher level of support to access employment. HR will also consider requests from other groups e.g. people returning to the workplace, mature students.
- 6.2 HR will develop and maintain links with a range of schools and/or external agencies to provide candidates for work placements. As work experience opportunities are identified within Services, HR will contact the relevant agencies to provide them with the details and seek suitable candidates.
- 6.3 HR will contact the service manager / responsible person to provide details of the candidate(s) identified for the placement so that the service can carry out the selection process.
- 6.4 From time to time, an agency may contact the Council directly with details of a candidate. HR will contact managers in relevant Services to find out whether a placement can be offered.

7 Pre-placement procedure

- 7.3 An application form will be requested from the work experience candidate and if deemed suitable, they will be interviewed informally either face to face or by phone by the nominated supervisor. At the interview the supervisor will assess the candidate's suitability for the role.
- 7.4 The supervisor will provide an outline of what the placement will involve and the candidate will be able to seek information to help decide whether they wish to take up the opportunity.
- 7.5 It may be necessary to take up references, a medical questionnaire and a DBS check before the placement can take place (HR will advise on this). In this case, the work placement must be planned in advance to allow enough time for these to be completed before the placement begins. For more information on the issue of DBS checks, please see the pre-employment policy. A list of what can be accepted as a reference for work experience placements is included within the work experience procedure/managers information pack.

8 Induction and supervision

- 8.1 The individual undertaking the placement will be asked to sign a confidentiality agreement at the start of the placement. It is important that the manager supervising the placement explains what the agreement means.
- 8.2 On the first day of the placement the work place supervisor should ensure that appropriate access has been granted to the individual and the following details have been confirmed with the individual:
 - 8.2.1 The Health and Safety and First Day Data Protection and Information Security e-learning modules have been completed
 - 8.2.2 Who will be their workplace mentor throughout their placement and who they should go to in their absence.
 - 8.2.3 Standards of behaviour and conduct that are expected in the workplace, and any specific rules relating to the area in which they will be working, especially where there will be access to confidential information.
 - 8.2.4 The duties and tasks that they will undertake/observe/take part in during the placement using the work plan that has been created and the learning goals identified (where appropriate).
 - 8.2.5 The need for them to write a daily report/reflection of the work that they have been doing/observing/involved in (particularly for school student placements). This may not be relevant if the main focus of the placement is work shadowing.
 - 8.2.6 The dates and times of any review sessions that will take place.
- 8.3 Further information can be found in the work experience procedure/managers information pack.

9 Health and safety

- 9.1 Prior to the individual beginning their work placement, the service manager will have completed a risk assessment and sent this to the school/agency to be agreed with the individual. The purpose of this risk assessment is to identify any hazards or threats the individual may be exposed to, taking into consideration their lack of experience. Managers will be responsible for ensuring that appropriate safeguards and controls are put in place to ensure the health and safety of all individuals undertaking work experience and their colleagues. The manager must also ensure that the individual undertaking the work experience is aware of the risks and how to report any health and safety concerns and should therefore go through the risk assessment with them as part of their induction.
- 9.2 Individual needs will be assessed to ensure the Health and Safety of all participants, including those with a disability.
- 9.3 Managers should provide as much notice as possible if individuals on work experience will be asked to attend external meetings while on their placement. For insurance and safeguarding purposes WBC staff will not give lifts to work experience students under the age of 18. Students should be supported in planning how they will make the trip and WBC may choose to reimburse individuals for travel costs associated with attending external meetings away from the students normal base. Individuals who use their own vehicle should ensure that their car insurance covers them for business use.
- 9.4 Individuals participating in work experience are covered by the Public Liability Insurance Scheme.

10 Review of work experience placements

- 10.1 When the individual on work experience leaves, all WBC property must be returned and any IT access terminated.
- 10.2 The workplace supervisor will provide feedback using a standard template on the ability and progress of each placement. At the end of the placement this will be returned to Human Resources who will provide information to the recommending school/agency on request.
- 10.3 HR will provide reports to Corporate Board on the work experience programme upon request.

11 Review of the Policy

- 11.1 This policy will be reviewed to respond to any changes at least every three years.
- 11.2 The Service responsible for reviewing and maintaining this Policy is Human Resources.

Other Relevant Documentation

Work Experience Procedure & Manager Information Pack
Work Experience Candidate Pack
