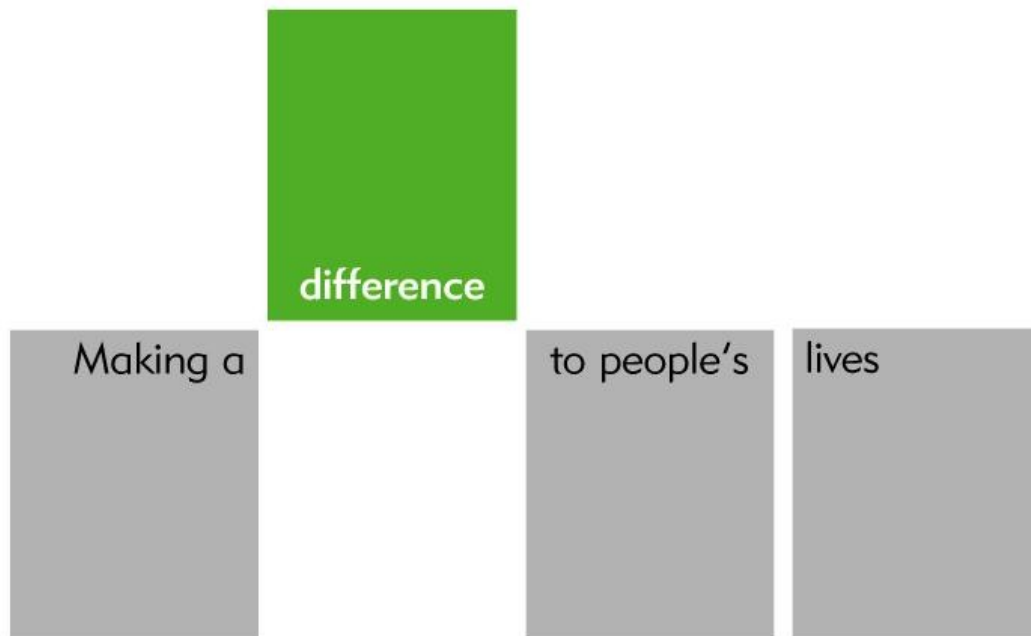




**Nottinghamshire
County Council**

Adult Social Care and Health

**Work Experience: A Guide to Good Practice
March 2008**



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Section 1: Introduction

What is Work Experience?

Work experience can be defined as a placement, on employers premises, in which a trainee carries out a range of tasks or duties in order to learn more about the work area and the skills / attitudes needed to meet the demands of a working environment. Placement lengths can vary from as little as one week up to several months. This can be done in block placements or as a more staggered approach of one day a week over several weeks.

Why is Work Experience important: A trainee's perspective

Work experience is increasingly becoming acknowledged as the most informative and *realistic* way of learning. Through work experience, a trainee can gain more in-depth knowledge on how an establishment is run and the skills they will need in order to start a career within their chosen area. The introduction of new qualifications such as the diploma in Society, Health and Development in 2008 and the continued success of initiatives such as the WorkStep programme means that for many people, work experience is no longer just an aspiration but is now a requirement.

Who is this Guide for?

This Guide is aimed primarily at managers who believe in encouraging people into employment and who want to promote their establishment or department as an employer of choice. The following sections are to be used as a guide only and are by no means exhaustive. However, we hope that this will identify and resolve some of the key issues associated with work experience and generally inspire more people to offer work experience placements within their establishments and departments.

Section 2: Benefits to the employer

It is generally accepted that demand for work experience will continue to grow. This is particularly the case with the introduction of new types of learning such as the new diplomas which have a very strong focus on work based learning and initiatives such as Ready4Work which encourage people currently receiving benefits, back into employment. In order to meet this demand, it will be necessary for more establishments to offer work experience in as wide a range of work areas as possible.

The following are benefits and opportunities associated with providing work experience within your establishment or team:

- ❑ **It has a positive impact on influencing career choices and will help to build a workforce for the future:**
Work experience is a good way to introduce people to the vast range of career opportunities available within your establishment, including jobs in areas that are not particularly well known and where recruitment and retention is especially challenging.
- ❑ **It helps establishments to engage with their local community:**
Local authority establishments are required to understand and meet the wider needs of the local communities they serve - work experience is one way of working towards achieving this. Work experience is also important in increasing recruitment and retention of local people to local jobs.
- ❑ **It helps to widen access to jobs and encourage diversity in the workforce:**
Work experience is a good way to challenge the myths and stereotypes commonly associated with certain work areas. Through practical illustration of the different types of people who work within a particular area, we actively encourage people to change their views.
- ❑ **It offers staff the opportunity to develop supervisory and management skills:**
Work experience can provide staff members with opportunities to widen their experience and skills by taking part in planning work experience tasks and activities. Supervising work placements may also provide opportunities to gain skills in task management or mentoring.

▣ **It provides additional resources for your team / establishment:**

Work experience may offer the opportunity to provide additional support to your staff and to some service users, that would not otherwise be available. For example, a work experience trainee may provide extra social stimulus by talking to or listening to service users.

Section 3: Health & Safety, Confidentiality and CRB checks

1.1 Health and Safety

One thing we are all well aware of is that work experience can sometimes be particularly challenging within certain environments, with the constant pressure to balance the safety of SU's, trainees and staff with ensuring a person takes part in a fulfilling and rewarding work placement.

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.

Therefore, an establishment has the same duties towards a work experience trainee as it does towards other employees.

It is good practice to outline health and safety guidance to a work experience trainee in a formal policy, which should be made available to all work experience placements and to all staff involved in delivering work experience. A copy of the Nottinghamshire County Council's Health and Safety manual relating to all aspects of work can be found by clicking on the link to Health, Safety and Wellbeing on: <http://intranet.nottscc.gov.uk/index/workingforncc.htm>

However, the key consideration in relation to Health & Safety guidance, is to ensure that a thorough Risk Assessment has been conducted.

1.2 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. The relevant form and guidance for this can be found in Appendix 2.

Steps should then be taken to reduce the identified risks to the lowest possible level.

It is also expected that each person taking part in a work experience activity must be informed about:

- The risks to their health and safety and any measures that have been put in place to reduce these risks
- The reasonable steps each person should take to protect themselves
- The named person who is responsible for their health and safety.

Any placements for school age learners should be risk assessed through the Nottinghamshire Education Business Alliance, and placements *should* be on their school database. There is a process in place and this check should take place automatically with no cost to the employer. If you want to check whether a risk assessment has been carried out, or if you have accepted a young learner and have had no contact from NEBA, please call 01623 404345.

1.3 Confidentiality

As part of preparation for a work experience placement there is an expectation that issues relating to confidentiality are outlined and explained to each trainee. The relevant form for this can be found in Appendix 3.

1.4 CRB checks (if applicable)

It is each establishment's responsibility to decide whether a CRB disclosure is necessary in the case of work experience trainees.

The Department of Health and CSCI advise:

"For people under 18 years of age undertaking placements in regulated services for **adults**, no CRB or POVA check is required. This is based on the rationale that the role they are undertaking will be suitably supervised."

In summary, CRB's are NOT a legal requirement for work experience trainees under the age of 18 working within adult services; this is providing the trainees are supervised at all times and will not be responsible for administering personal care. In the cases of people over the age 18, depending on the work area and service type, a CRB may be a legal requirement.

In the case of managers and those involved with facilitating a work placement, it is advisable that a CRB check is conducted. However, this is not a legal requirement although it would be considered good practice for a work experience supervisor to ensure this is conducted.

This can be checked at the following web address and telephone number:

Section 4: Managing a Placement

For all work experience placements it is good practice to ensure that there are clear and concise practises in place for before, during and after work experience takes place in order to maximise outcomes for both the trainee and your staff.

1.1 Pre-placement Preparation

▣ **Skills Profile (CV)**

Some establishments / teams may find it useful to ask the student to send in a skills profile (CV). By doing this, the team are able to find out a little more information about the trainee before they start. From the trainee's point of view, this may be a useful way to prepare them for the types of information an employer will ask for when it comes to applying for jobs.

▣ **Placement Interviews (a.k.a. pre-placement visit):**

A pre-placement interview or 'pre-placement visit' helps to ensure that the trainee is placed in an environment conducive to their learning outcomes and will help to reduce the risk of problems arising during the placement itself. Interviews should be conducted by the person responsible for supervising the trainee during placement so that they are able to gauge the level of interest and aptitude of each trainee before they begin.

▣ **Briefing staff members about the placement:**

It is important that staff within the establishment know that a work placement is taking place and who will be the designated supervisor for them. It can be useful to get staff members thinking at this stage, about how much time and resources they may need to allocate in order to make the placement a successful one.

A team meeting can be a good place to brief staff on placements as they will have the opportunity to ask questions and to request any information they will need about the trainee in order to make the work placement successful (e.g. name, any qualification they are studying, learning objectives).

1.2 During the placement

▣ **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 and other relevant information. As guidance, we have included a checklist of things to include when inducting a trainee. This can be found in Appendix 4.

▣ **Contracts**

A contract of work is not a requirement for trainees within your establishment / team. However, some managers find it useful to draw up an 'honoury contract' which could include the following:

- Dress Code
- Policy on personal property
- Hours of work
- Data Protection
- What to do if they cannot attend for any reason
- Type of work the trainee will not be able to perform (e.g. personal care)

This may help to ensure that the trainee is fully aware of his / her responsibilities and will prepare them for this aspect in the world of work.

▣ **Supervision and Support**

Work experience trainees should be supervised at all times throughout the duration of the placement. It is good practice to allocate the trainee a named 'supervisor' or 'mentor' and both trainee and staff members must be clear about what this role entails. If establishments have the resources available, it is also good practice to offer the trainee other support measures, such as inviting them to attend team meetings. This can ensure that the trainee feels like a part of the team and therefore increase the positive aspects of the placement.

▣ **Placement activities and tasks**

There are many tasks and activities that can be built into a work placement programme and the tasks given in Appendix 5 are just a few suggestions of activities which have been used in the past to meet learning outcomes of trainees. Generally, it is up to the establishments which activities they would like trainees to become involved in. However, when you are planning an activity timetable for a placement please ensure that, where possible, you

tailor activities to meet trainee learning outcomes; this will ensure that the trainee is able to evidence the competencies they have used throughout the placement. Please see Appendix 5 for ideas.

1.3 After the placement

Work placements should be beneficial to both you and the trainee. In order to evaluate how the placement has gone, it is useful to do the following:

▣ **Feedback to the trainee**

A trainee should bring with them a work experience booklet provided by their school / college/ university/ agency within which there should be a form for you to complete relating to the trainees competencies and skills illustrated throughout the placement. In the event that there is not one available, we have provided a template for this in Appendix 6.

Although this is a good opportunity for you to feed back to your trainee on various aspects of their time with you, it is worth remembering that this is also an opportunity for the trainee to feedback to you on how they feel the placement has been managed.

▣ **Complete a brief evaluation of how the placement has gone and any improvement areas for future trainees**

Although we recognise how time consuming work experience placements can be, we would advise that after a block of placements has taken place, you complete a short evaluation of how the placement has gone and any things you might do differently for future placements. This is useful to you to ensure the smooth running of placements in future. This can also be useful in compiling good practice information for other establishments as part of an overall drive to ensure the good quality of work experience placements within the organisation as a whole. Appendix 7 can be used as a template for this.

Useful Contacts

Should you have any questions about work experience or you would like to become involved, please contact:

Workforce Planning Team on 0115 9772784

OR

Learning and Development Team on 0115 945 2764

OR

Nottinghamshire Education Business Alliance (for school learners age 14-16 years) on 01623 404345

Useful websites and resources

▣ Skills for Care Work Placement Guides

<http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/files/Employer%20Guide.pdf> (Employers Guide)

<http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/files/Student%20Guide.pdf> (Student Guide)

▣ National Work Experience Council

<http://www.work-experience.org>

▣ Department for Education and Skills

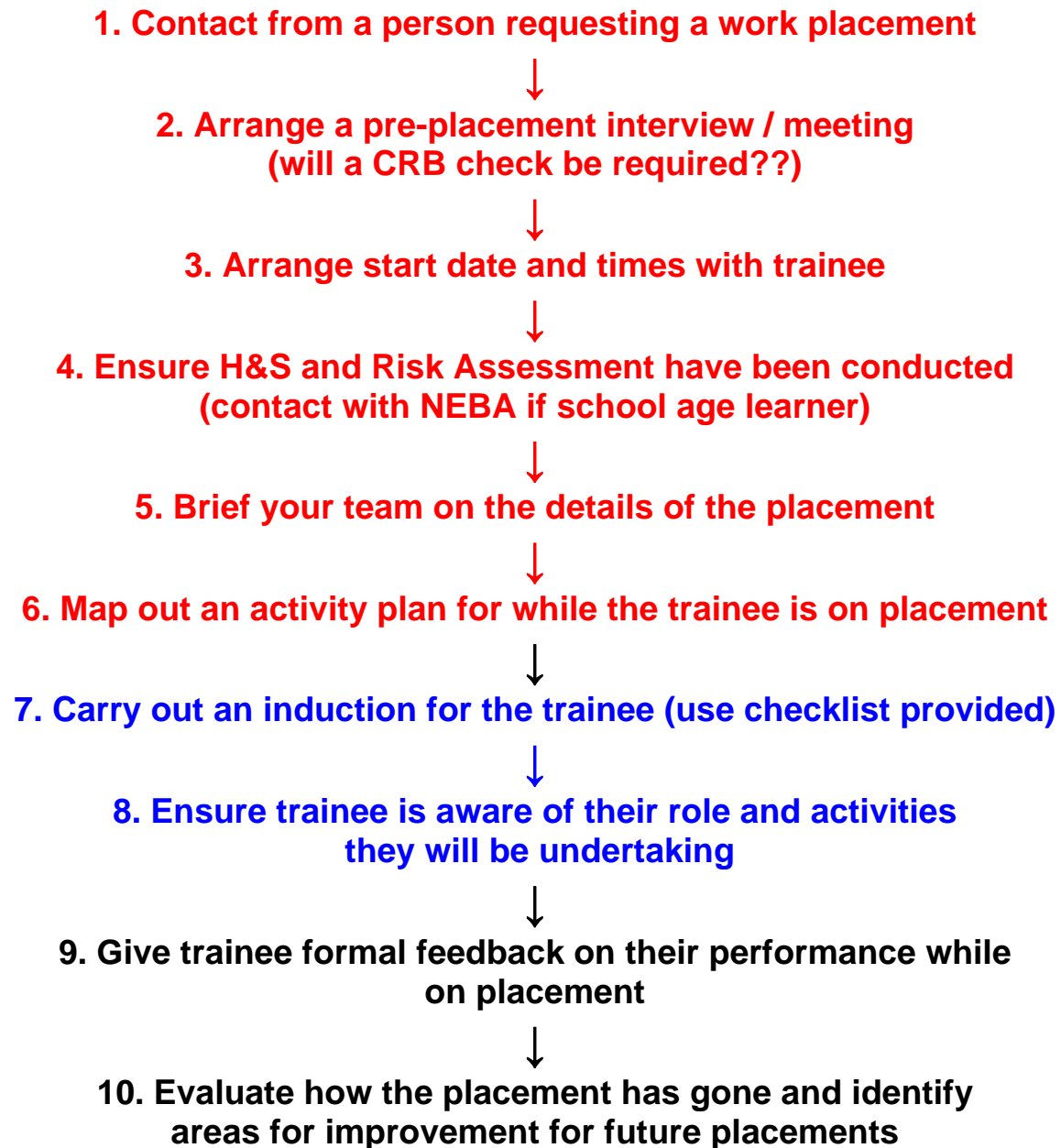
<http://www.dfes.gov.uk/>

▣ Nottinghamshire Education Business Alliance

<http://www.neba.info/>

Appendix 1: Flowchart to take you through work placements

- Key: ■ Before Placement
■ During Placement
■ After Placement



Appendix 2: Risk Assessment

[Risk Assessment Form Guidance Notes](#)
[Risk Assessment Form](#)

Appendix 3: Confidentiality

[Confidentiality](#)

Appendix 4: Induction Checklist

[Induction Checklist](#)

Appendix 5: Activities

▣ **Work shadowing:**

It may be useful for a trainee 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 trainee will spend a few hours with a different staff member throughout the day (e.g. care assistant, receptionist, manager).

▣ **Daily Diary:**

This can be useful for the trainee to keep track of activities they have done throughout the placement and will also provide a log of 'evidence' to illustrate competencies / skills used throughout their time at your establishment.

▣ **Collating information for an in-house newsletter**

The trainee may interview staff and service users to produce a fun and thought provoking newsletter / article on a topic relating to social care.

▣ **Writing an assignment**

A trainee may be asked to research and write an assignment relating to their time on placement. This may be on a variety of different areas – a few ideas are:

- Different job roles within a social care environment
- Qualities which 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?
- What measures are taken to ensure that the residents of a care home stay as mobile and active as possible?
- Investigate the checks that are made on prospective employees of residential care homes and find out why these checks are necessary.

▣ **Real Life Project**

Depending upon the amount of time a trainee may spend with your establishment, you might ask them to undertake a 'real life project'. This would be a mini project geared towards addressing an issue or idea that your establishment would like the trainee to investigate. This would be useful for your establishment as it means you can gain access to some fresh ideas and inputs, and would be useful for the

trainee as it helps them to develop and use their creativity to address 'real life' issues / gaps. An example of this might be:
'As a sector we sometimes struggle to attract people from the 16-25years age group. How would you go about attracting this group of people to the sector?'

Appendix 6: Evaluation form for the trainee

[Trainee Evaluation](#)

Appendix 7: Evaluation of the placement

[Placement Evaluation](#)

Appendix 8: Work Experience Audit Form

[Work Experience Audit Form](#)

Appendix 9: Request for Work Experience Form

[Work Experience Request](#)

Appendix 10: Letter template to confirm receipt of request form

[Receipt of Request Letter](#)

Appendix 11: Letter template to confirm placement

[Confirmation of Placement Letter](#)