

# Employers

Guidance and support for those who may offer work placement opportunities, including childminders.



First published: 24 Awst 2020

Last updated: 28 Hydref 2024

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Guidance for employers who want to invest in and support the development of the future workforce, motivating and inspiring people to work in the sectors. Here's information about what you should have in place to meet the needs of learners, regulatory or legislative requirements and how to maximise benefits for your service setting/provision.

## **The benefits of work placement**

Offering work placement opportunities can bring you a wealth of benefits:

- Tapping into a potential pool of workers and contributing to the development of the next generation of a highly skilled workforce
- Learning from feedback and reflection of learners
- Routinely reviewing standards and practices to ensure they are up to date and of good quality
- Promoting the value of the sector, the range of roles available and motivating people to work in health, social care, playwork or early years and childcare as a career of choice
- Promoting your own service and what it has to offer
- Supporting the development of your own workforce through mentoring.

It must be noted, preparing for and providing support for high quality work placement opportunities is time consuming and needs to be well thought out to ensure the experience is positive and valuable to all involved.

## **Preparing for work placement**

The importance of preparing carefully for work placement cannot be over emphasised, it is important to allow enough time to plan properly. There are a number of things you will need to consider carefully before offering placement opportunities – if you do not already have one, you may want to develop a policy for accepting work placements.

We have provided a list of questions below which will be helpful to think about and there is an [employers preparing for placement checklist](#) to support you.

Things to consider:

- What information can you provide about the work setting – what it does, who uses it, who works there, where it is, whether it is registered and regulated etc.
- Can the learner visit the work setting before the placement starts?
- Do you want to interview the learner prior to offering a placement?
- What are the types of activities learners will be able to undertake in your setting and have these been thoroughly risk assessed?
- What are the types of activities learners must not undertake?
- Will the activities meet the learner’s placement objectives?
- What needs to be considered in relation to consent of individuals / families / carers / children accessing the service?
- How can you involve individuals / families / carers / children accessing the service?
- How will the learner be inducted and supervised?
- Who will act as a mentor for them?
- What are the arrangements for providing feedback?
- What equipment and training (including the use of PPE) will the learner need to undertake for their role whilst on placement?
- What training is required pre-placement?
- Are there any specific regulations, standards or legislation which need to be taken account of e.g. the Regulation of Inspection and Social Care (Wales) Act

2016, The Child Minding and Day Care (Wales) Regulations 2010, Health and Safety, Safeguarding etc?

- Has employer and public liability insurance been arranged to include learners on placement where this is required?
- What checks are needed e.g. DBS?
- How many learners can be safely offered a placement at any one time?
- What key policies and procedures will the learner need to know about e.g. safeguarding, communication and confidentiality, health and safety, codes of conduct and professional practice?
- What procedures need to be in place for reporting any concerns about learners, if they don't turn up or if there is an accident or incident?
- What will the learner need to know before they arrive e.g. practical aspects such as start and finish times, breaks, dress code, use of mobile phones, travel and subsistence arrangements?
- What will they need to know on day 1?
- What paperwork needs to be completed e.g. placement agreements?

There is a [general work placement information sheet for employers to advertise opportunities](#) once you have decided what you can offer.

The nature of work in health, social care, playwork and early years and childcare means that learners will be in contact with children and adults who may be considered at risk of harm or abuse as a result of their age or personal circumstances.

DBS checks are required for all of those over the age of 16 who will be working regularly with 'children or vulnerable adults' undertaking 'regulated activities'. For more information go to [gov.uk - guidance on DBS check requests guidance for employers](#).

Employers are responsible for making sure all learners on placement are adequately supervised in the work setting.

## **Getting the most out of work placement opportunities**

It is important to invest properly in work placement opportunities – you are growing the workforce of the future, starting learners off with a sound grounding in the values and principles of health, social care, playwork, or early years and childcare; these as well as a good understanding of safe practice, will contribute to high quality service provision. The experience learners have on placement will stay with them for life, this is your opportunity to create a good impression.

This section outlines some areas which it would be helpful to consider.

### **Pre-placement visit**

You may want to offer the learner an opportunity to pre-visit the work setting; this will give them a chance to ask questions about the work setting and their placement. Some employers may want to interview learners to make sure they are suitable, it will be important to think about what you can offer on the placement and what you are looking for before this happens.

An [employer / learner placement agreement](#) should be completed either during or after the pre-placement visit.

### **Day 1**

It is important for learners to know what to expect on day 1, this is likely to be their first experience of working in the health, social care or childcare sector, a warm welcome and a well structured start will help to create a positive experience.

The [day 1 checklist](#) is a helpful prompt for what should be covered.

It is important that each learner is allocated a mentor to support them throughout the duration of their placement, including welcoming them on their first day.

A mentor is someone who can provide advice and guidance, they can:

- Help the learner understand the work setting and what is expected of them
- Be a role model demonstrating professional values and behaviours
- Answer questions and provide support when the learner is unsure
- Provide reassurance and encouragement
- Monitor and provide feedback to the learner on their practice and progress
- Provide a bridge between the learner, the placement and the learning provider

Mentors should be experienced workers who are motivated and enthusiastic, they should be available to the learner for the duration of the placement period.

## **Induction**

The All Wales Induction Frameworks for [Health and Social Care](#) and [Early Years and Childcare](#) set out the requirements for new workers in their first 6 months of employment. The requirement for learners on placement within the health sector are set out in the [Core Skills Training Framework](#) and the [Clinical Induction accredited unit of learning](#).

You may wish to use the frameworks to inform the induction process for learners on placement - you can select the areas you think are proportionate for the objectives of the placement and appropriate for the duration of their stay with you. Learners undertaking placement from FE college will either have undertaken or be undertaking one of the Core qualifications for Health and Social Care or Children's Care, Play, Learning and Development, these align with the knowledge learning outcomes of the Induction Frameworks. Any accredited learning for the Core qualifications should be mapped across to avoid any unnecessary duplication, the learning provider should be able to present information on this.

For those learners on Access Programmes mapping should also be undertaken to avoid repetition of learning.

## **Learning opportunities**

Each person's learning needs will be different depending on the work setting itself and their reason for undertaking the placement. It is important to be clear about the placement objectives at the outset so you can match the activities the learner is involved in with their learning needs, providing suitable opportunities for their development.

## **Keeping a reflective log**

All learners should be expected to keep a reflective log to capture their learning; for some, the format and structure of this may be dictated by the learning programme they are undertaking as it may form part of their formal assessment; for others, it will be kept simply as a helpful tool for their own development rather than qualification attainment.

There is a [reflective log template](#) which can be used for reflection; mentors will have an important role here in supporting learners to reflect, as well as

providing feedback on their practice and progress. Reflection on how the learner relates the values and principles of the sectors to what they are doing is particularly important.

## **Good practice case study:**

'Lynsey, manager at Rossett House Nursery, had a long standing relationship with the learning provider involved in Farah's level 3 programme of learning and was familiar with the standards Farah was expected to reach.

Farah attended a meeting about her placement and discussed with Lynsey her expectations about the opportunities the placement could provide. Initially, as she was on a level 3 course, Farah expected to be able to access confidential records and to work with a limited level of supervision, Lynsey explained why this was not possible and explained the regulations they needed to meet in the setting.

Farah was disappointed to find that there were limitations she had not expected put in place by the work setting, but she did reflect later that having the opportunity to understand the reasons for these was helpful. Farah felt the experience helped deepen her knowledge of sector regulations in practice. The process of agreeing a plan for learning at this stage meant Farah was able to adjust her expectations in the build up to the placement and prepare positively for a good start.

Farah's placement progressed well from her induction, with regular mentor meetings and internal placement support from staff. She had regular contact with her learning provider and was able to show a growing maturity in her understanding of what it means to be employed in an area of responsibility, the importance of leadership skills, development of knowledge and skills in a



specialist area and the value of contributing to team knowledge and understanding of best practice in pre-school education.

Over time, Farah achieved the expected outcomes from her placement and felt confident in her ability to work in and with a team to bring about improvement. She was able to reflect on this learning and recognise her progress. When she reflected on her initial meeting and the need to revise her plans she could see the importance of the first step and said she now had an informed respect for the manager's decisions. She also reported she felt the learning from the experience would make her a better manager some day.'

## **Meeting requirements for regulations, standards and legislation**

It is essential when offering placement opportunities, you ensure you meet requirements for relevant regulations, standards and legislation. Some of the key requirements have been listed below. Policies and procedures related to these key requirements should be shared with learners.

### **Safeguarding**

All learners must be informed about arrangements for safeguarding at the work setting, at a minimum this should include:

- Reporting concerns and whistleblowing
- Confidentiality
- How to keep themselves and individuals / children in the work setting safe.

### **Health and Safety**

You must ensure all learners understand the work setting's health and safety policies and procedures, this includes what they must do if they identify a hazard or anything that may be a danger to themselves or others. They must be made aware of the fire safety arrangements in the event of a fire emergency.

## **Data Protection and Confidentiality**

You must make all learners aware of their responsibility to make sure information about individuals or children and their families/carers is handled in a confidential and secure way. They must be clear they never discuss anything they hear or see about individuals or children and their families/carers outside of the health, social care or childcare setting. They can discuss with relatives/friends what they've been doing in terms of activities and experiences but never discuss individuals or children, their families/carers or workers.

## **Regulations, standards and legislation**

Statutory [guidance for service providers and responsible individuals](#) on meeting service standard regulations for:

- Care home services
- Domiciliary support services
- Secure accommodation services; and
- Residential family centre services.

There's also regulation, standards and legislation on:

- [National Minimum Standards for Regulated Childcare for children up to the age of 12 years](#)
- [The Child Minding and Day Care \(Wales\) Regulations 2010](#)

- [National Minimum Standards for Residential Special Schools](#)
- [Health and Safety at Work](#)
- [Food safety standards](#)
- [Health and care standards \(Wales\) 2015.](#)

## **Specific course requirements for work placements**

Where learners are undertaking placement with you as part of a course or qualification, there will be specific requirements they will need to meet in relation to the activities they undertake to develop their practice, this may include giving access to assessors who will come to the workplace to formally assess the learner's practice.

The learning provider will let you know of any specific arrangements before the placement starts – these should be detailed in the [learning provider/employer placement agreement](#).

Some of the qualifications which have specific requirements are:

- Degrees in nursing, occupational therapy and social work
- Degrees in early childhood studies with Early Years Professional Status
- Children's Care, Play Learning and Development: Practice Levels 2 and 3
- Children's Care, Play Learning and Development: Practice and Theory Levels 2 and 3
- GCSE in Health and Social Care and Childcare
- Advanced GCE and Advanced Subsidiary GCE in Health and Social Care and Childcare
- Health and Social Care: Principles and Contexts Levels 2 and 3

- Playwork level 2 and 3.

This is not an exhaustive list, all of the practice qualifications for social care, early years and childcare can be found on our [Qualification Framework](#).

Practice qualifications for regulated childcare for children and young people between the age of 5 and 8 can be found on [PlayWales Qualification Framework](#).

Higher Education Institutes will each set specific placement requirements for their programmes and should be contacted for further information.

Delivery guidance which details the requirements for most of the other qualifications can be found on [Health and Care Learning Wales](#).

## Providing feedback

An important element of the success of placements for both employers and learners is the provision of robust, constructive and clear feedback.

The allocated mentor should be continuously monitoring the practice of learners and providing feedback which supports their learning and development. An end of placement evaluation provides the opportunity for both the learner and the employer to look back over the period of the placement and reflect on the experience and what has been learnt. The [end of placement evaluation template](#) available may help you do this.

There may be occasions where you have to provide negative feedback where suitability to work in the sector, practice or the behaviour of learners causes concern. The process for reporting any concerns should be agreed with both the learning provider and the learner before the placement starts, this should

include the potential removal of the learner. Any concerns about safeguarding must be acted upon in accordance with the [Wales Safeguarding Procedures \(2019\)](#).

## **Contact us**

If you have a question or if you can't find what you are looking for [get in touch with us](#).