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# Learning providers

Guidance and support for agencies seeking to place a learner in a work placement.

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Guidance and support for learning providers (schools, FE colleges, Higher Education Institutes, work based learning providers), careers advisors, employment agencies and volunteering agencies on how to establish what would make a good work placement, and what would need to be in place to ensure a safe learning opportunity which presents experiences that meet the learner's placement objectives.

## **The benefits of work placement**

Using work placements can provide learners with opportunities to:

- Experience a variety of work settings and find out about a range of roles which will help them make informed choices about future careers
- Potentially accumulate UCAS points for study in higher education
- Have experiential learning and assessment of their practice to achieve the practical competency element of work based qualifications
- Build confidence and develop knowledge, understanding and skills which may lead to employment
- Put their subject knowledge into practice and help develop a deeper understanding

Good partnership working with employers to provide high quality work placement opportunities for your learners, will support you to help prepare them for employment and achieve the experiences and qualifications needed for the next step of their journey. As well as the benefits listed above work placements can provide opportunities for:

- Using a wider range of assessment methods to gain more robust and reliable evidence of competence.

- Engaging learners who benefit from more practical ways of learning.

We have lots of film clips about different roles in the sector on the [WeCare Wales website](#). Employers also advertise their job vacancies there, so encourage your learners to take a look at what's available.

## 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 seeking placement opportunities.

We have provided a list of questions below which will be helpful to think about.

Things to consider:

- What are the needs of the learner / what do they want to achieve from their placement?
- Are there any specific qualification requirements the learners need to meet?
- Does the learner have any specific requirements the employer needs to be aware of?
- Can the learner visit the setting before the placement starts?
- What placement opportunities are available?
- Matching the needs of the learner against placement opportunities and the expectations of the employer
- Making sure the employer meets all requirements for health and safety (including PPE), safeguarding and employer and public liability
- Looking at inspection reports where available to ensure there are no areas of concern which would jeopardise the placement objectives
- Have all relevant checks e.g. DBS been completed?

- Consent of parent/carer where learners are school pupils
- Clarity about activities, risk assessment, equipment and training needed
- Making sure the employer understands any course requirements including timelines for assessment
- Access for assessors where placement is linked to qualification attainment
- Arrangements for induction, supervision and support
- Arrangements for providing feedback
- Paperwork which needs to be completed e.g. placement agreement.

The [specific work placement information sheet for named learner](#) can be used to provide information for learners about their placement.

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 ensure work placements can provide the opportunities and support required to meet learners needs.

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

## **Pre-placement visit**

Some employers will offer learners an opportunity to pre-visit the work setting; this will give them a chance to ask questions about the work setting and their placement and should be encouraged. Some employers may want to interview the learner to make sure they are suitable, it will be important to help learners think about what they want to achieve on the placement 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 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](#).

Employers may use the frameworks to inform the induction process for learners on placement, selecting the areas which are proportionate for the objectives of the placement and appropriate for the duration of their stay with them.

Learners undertaking placement from FE college should 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.

## **Learning opportunities**

Each person's learning needs will be different depending on the work setting itself and the reason for them 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.

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:**

'Megan was undertaking her level 2 CCPLD practice qualification through her local FE college. To achieve the qualification, her practice needed to be assessed against the standards and criteria set in the qualification.

Rebecca, the manager of Little Scholars Nursery, had met with the placement officer from the college to agree what was needed to support a positive placement. They talked about the qualification tasks, her learning needs and a little about the learner coming to placement.

Megan was then invited to look around the setting and to meet her mentor before the placement started. At this visit she was told about expected dress code, behaviours and confidentiality and given some information about the setting to read. She was advised she could ask questions at any time and then

spent time working through her qualification tasks with Rebecca to outline the learning and experiences she hoped to gain. This initial visit was important for Megan as it began her induction to the setting and allowed her to work with the manager to make sure the placement could provide the opportunities she needed to achieve her qualification. The visit also allowed staff to plan for her placement in more details and start preparing the learning plan for Megan.

Megan arrived on her start date ready to begin a full induction with her mentor and to go through, check and agree the placement plan and learning plan. Megan progressed through her placement knowing what standards were expected and who to turn to for advice, she enjoyed ongoing support from her mentor and the staff team with weekly meetings to discuss her progress and next steps. Over the time of her placement she achieved all targets set and gained skills, knowledge and experience alongside growth in confidence and a better understanding of what it takes to be part of a workplace team in a childcare setting.'

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

It is essential when accessing placement opportunities, you ensure the employer has confirmed they meet requirements for relevant regulations, standards and legislation. Some of the key requirements have been listed below.

### **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**

Learners must be aware of health and safety at all times whilst on work placement. They must be informed if they see anything they may think be a hazard or a danger to themselves or others they report it to their mentor or the manager of the work setting. Make sure they are aware of the fire safety arrangements for the setting in the event of a fire emergency

## **Data Protection and Confidentiality**

Learners must understand their responsibility to make sure information about individuals or children and their families/carers is handled in a confidential and secure way and when on placement they may see people they know, but must never ask personal questions which could cause embarrassment. They must 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**

You must ensure employers are aware of any specific course requirements for learners they are taking on placement and the activities and support which they can provide will meet their needs.

## **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](#) can be used to help the learner do this.

There may be occasions where the employer has 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 employer 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 \(2019\)](#).

You should also have a process in place for learners to provide feedback including any concerns from them related to their placement.

## Contact us

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