

HUMAN RESOURCES STRATEGIC FORUM**DISCUSSION PAPER ON PROVIDING WORK EXPERIENCE AT NHDC****What is the definition of work experience?**

- Providing fifteen year old, year 10, pupils with a week long placement in an organisation to get an overview of a working environment
- Supporting a college / university student in their course requirement to undertake a placement relevant to their course / chosen career path. (This can be agreed for longer than a week if a service area feels able to support that)

Who is eligible for a work placement with NHDC?

Because of the time commitment involved work placements are only offered to individuals / pupils resident in North Hertfordshire.

How is work experience arranged?

The initial approach is via Schools or by personal approach from pupils / students. HR endeavour to ensure that the placement is in a preferred service area as specified by the individual, as it is a valuable way for them to assess a future career to aspire to.

What support does NHDC have in place?

NHDC has supported work experience for many years, and many service areas provide this on a regular basis i.e. I.T., Children's Services, Environmental Health Customer Services Centre, Museum Service and HR. On one occasion a pupil work shadowed the Leader of the Council!

What are the pressures of supporting work experience?

Work experience support requires a considerable time commitment from the service. A manager is assigned to oversee the individual and draft an itinerary for the duration of the placement, to ensure the individual has a wide overview of the service area. For pupils there is also a requirement to liaise with Teachers.

What are the positive aspects of supporting work placements?

Providing work experience opportunities is a good way for NHDC to support the local community, and showcase the services that the organisation provides to the next generation of workers. For the pupil this may be the first real experience of work they have and it could be a vital part of their CV in applying for an apprenticeship, college place or their personal statement for a university place.

Other Considerations

- All work experience placements are unpaid. The pupil/student is not paid by or employed by the Council. The individual would be closely managed at all times throughout their placement.

- When agreeing to requests from a student for longer placement periods managers must ensure they are providing work which supports course requirements. Many services have gained good experience of this through providing apprenticeships.
- Generally the placements are for highly supervised participation in lower level duties such as admin roles and assisting with project work within the placement department
- They would not attend any internal or external meeting unaccompanied as a representative of the Department/Council.
- Good Practice for the manager is to meet the pupil/student prior to commencement of the placement. This is a good ice breaker and is useful for the manager to gain an insight into their expectations/aspirations. It also helps the pupil/student know what to expect and where to go when the work experience starts.

The HR team work with Youth Connexions on a regular basis to ensure placements are offered to year 10 students in local schools and we have a great track record in supplying these vital places. We are currently finding places for Fearnhill and Hitchin Boys School for their work experience in 2017. The HR team also attend careers advice sessions that are held at Local Schools.