

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

**ADULT AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE
15 January 2014**

Agenda Item	11.
Report No	ACS/10/14

Work Experience

Report by Director of Education, Culture and Sport Service

Summary

This report sets out a revised work experience policy document which will meet the requirements of the Curriculum for Excellence.

1. Background

- 1.1 In 2003 Determined to Succeed, the Scottish Government strategy for enterprise in education, set out a requirement for all pupils over the age of 14 to have an opportunity for work based vocational learning linked to accompanying relevant qualifications.
- 1.2 Building the Curriculum 4 – Skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work. (Scottish Government 2009)
“Curriculum for Excellence offers the flexibility for a more individualised approach to work placements which is relevant and meaningful for young people providing opportunities for them to consider the skills they need in advance of their placement, to practise and develop their skills and to reflect on their experience post-placement.”
- 1.3 In 2013, the Interim Report of the Commission for Developing Scotland's Young Workforce chaired by Sir Ian Wood made specific reference to work experience within the context of its interim recommendations.
- 1.4 Work related learning prepares young people for life after school, helping them to develop the skills and attitudes they will need to become responsible citizens, successful learners, confident individuals and effective contributors to the work place and society.
- 1.5 The term “Work experience” or “Experience of Work” is now being used to describe much more than a work placement, towards the end of secondary education. “Work experience” now involves learning through work, about work and for work, at all ages from 3 to 18. With Curriculum for Excellence, the introduction to the world of work can start in the early years with, for example, visits to work environments or visits from employers.

- 1.6 Experience gained with employers must therefore be managed effectively within the learner's whole school experience and planned and viewed by schools as part of his/her learning, particularly in the Senior Phase and as they approach their leaving age.
- 1.7 Work related learning provides opportunities for young people to experience a real or simulated working environment; acquire vocational and other work skills; understand and conform to the demands of different workplaces; acquire employability skills such as good timekeeping, customer care, health & safety, teamwork and reliability. It should allow young people to experience work safely and constructively, and be integral to their education.
- 1.8 It may take a number of forms, including: Work Experience; Work Shadowing or volunteering; Enterprise Education; Skills for Work or other vocational courses with an employer or college; SQA Group Awards such as 'Steps for Work', or other employability awards such as ASDAN; other achievements such as Duke of Edinburgh or Youth Achievement Awards.

2. Policy

- 2.1 The attached policy sets out the context for a revised approach to Work Experience. It seeks to build on the positive aspects of the previous approach while addressing the weaknesses. It details the relevant roles and responsibilities for Highland ECS staff. It highlights the importance of ensuring that appropriate procedures are in place to ensure that young people are prepared for their work related learning experiences, that appropriate arrangements have been made with regard to the health and safety requirements of young people and employers taking due account of advice and guidance received from Health and Safety staff within the Council and from the Health and Safety Executive.
- 2.2 Schools play a vital role in the delivery of effective work experience for pupils. The following aspects are important in this delivery:
 - Young people should be involved in the choice of their work placements.
 - Young people should be provided with opportunities to learn about the national and local economy, and the expectations of employers.
 - Partnerships should be developed with employers to help young people to contextualise and enhance their work placements.
 - Young people should be prepared for work experience and be given the opportunity for reflection and review of their placement.
 - Young people should be supported in their extended placements.
 - All young people should be provided with an opportunity to participate in work experience prior to them leaving school.

- 2.3 Employability and Economic Development are key goals for Highland Council. The provision of skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work for young people is a key goal of the Curriculum for Excellence. A well planned and delivered work experience programme will support the achieving of these goals.

3. Implications

- 3.1 There no legal, climate change or risk assessment implications following from this report. There are no immediate resource implications.

4.	Recommendation
4.1	Members are asked to agree the attached policy.

Signature: H Fraser

Designation: Director of ECS

Date: 7th January 2014

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Background Papers: Work Experience policy

WORK EXPERIENCE

“Curriculum for Excellence offers the flexibility for a more individualised approach to work placements which is relevant and meaningful for young people providing opportunities for them to consider the skills they will need in advance of their placement, to practise and develop their skills and to reflect on their experience post-placement.”

Building the Curriculum 4 - Skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work. (Scottish Government 2009)

BACKGROUND

Work related learning prepares young people for life after school, helping them develop the skills and attitudes they will need to become responsible citizens, successful learners, confident individuals, and effective contributors to the workplace and to society.

The term “Work Experience” or “Experience of Work” is now being used to describe much more than a work placement, towards the end of secondary education. “Work Experience” now involves learning through work, about work and for work, at all ages from 3 to 18. With Curriculum for Excellence, the introduction to the world of work can start in the early years with, for example, visits to work environments or visits from employers.

In 2003 *Determined to Succeed*, the Scottish Government strategy for enterprise in education, set out a requirement for all pupils over the age of 14 to have an opportunity for work-based vocational learning linked to accompanying relevant qualifications. Subsequently *Skills for Work* courses were developed to provide vocationally based qualifications which enable young people to gain employability skills.

In 2009 *Building the Curriculum 4* set out key messages about how children and young people develop and apply skills as part of Curriculum for Excellence. All children and young people are entitled to opportunities for developing skills for learning, life and work. It is important that they have opportunities for work related learning to enable them to achieve these skills and understand their context in the world of work.

In 2013, the Interim Report of the Commission for Developing Scotland’s Young Workforce chaired by Sir Ian Wood made specific reference to work experience within the context of its interim recommendation to schools:

A good understanding of the world of work and employment opportunities available is fundamentally important to all young people, irrespective of the educational and career pathways they choose. This needs to start earlier and be delivered in a way which inspires and excites young people. It must also be sustained and focused throughout young people's education, helping them to manage their careers, develop skills to secure employment and succeed in the workplace.

Within this, the approach to work experience needs to be developed to allow young people to have a richer experience of the workplace. For those young people who have already formed a clear set of career aspirations, a meaningful exposure to the requirements of their chosen field related to their studies will better prepare them for success. For those who are less certain about their future career, a range of experiences will help provide them with a good basis on which to make decisions....

Experiences gained with employers must therefore be managed effectively within the learner's whole school experience and planned and viewed by schools as part of his/her learning, particularly in the Senior Phase and as they approach their leaving date.

Work related learning provides opportunities for young people to experience a real or simulated working environment; acquire vocational and other work skills; understand and conform to the demands of different workplaces; acquire employability skills such as good timekeeping, customer care, health and safety, teamwork and reliability. It should allow young people to experience work safely and constructively, and be integral to their education.

It may take a number of forms, including: Work Experience; Work Shadowing or volunteering; Enterprise Education; *Skills for Work* or other vocational courses with an employer or college; SQA Group Awards such as 'Steps to Work', or other employability awards such as ASDAN; other achievements such as Duke of Edinburgh or Youth Achievement Awards.

WORK EXPERIENCE

Work experience may be one element of a young person's education which helps them gain skills for work. The young person's entitlement can also be fulfilled through other activities (see paragraph above). Work experience may also be part of an Activity Agreement after a young person has left school, but planning can (and usually should) begin before the leaving date.

The National Review of Work Experience identified among others

Key Strengths of

- The universal principle of entitlement to Work experience
- High participation rates
- Employer commitment
- Commitment and enthusiasm of teachers remitted with work experience
- Impact on many people

- Popularity amongst pupils

While highlighting the following

Weaknesses

- The lack of universal participation
- Lack of shared understanding of work experience aims
- Lack of detail on resources and impact
- The inflexibility of the current mainstream delivery model
- Weak links to the wider curriculum and limited engagement with subject teachers
- Weak recognition of achievement
- Limited parental engagement
- Weak quality assurance
- Limited role of the public sector as an employer

In the past most pupils went out on a week's work experience in either S3 or S4 at a predetermined time for that particular school. Some pupils were ready for such a placement and benefited from it; others less so

The Highland Working Group was set up to review Work Experience and reflected on all these aspects.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

HIGHLAND COUNCIL

1 Scope

Highland Council recognises the importance for all young people of a broad curriculum which gives them opportunities to gain experience of the workplace.

The Education Authority supports schools to provide work-related learning through enterprise education, work experience, extended work placements, work shadowing, college courses, volunteering, vocational courses delivered in partnership with businesses and other organisations and career related events.

The Education Authority will support schools to develop flexible approaches to work related learning to meet the needs of individual pupils, taking account of their interests, aspirations, and current experiences of work, e.g. in part time jobs. This learning will support the development of the four capacities within Curriculum for Excellence. This will reflect the wider definition of the curriculum, especially in relation to promoting and recognising Achievement, to skills development and to profiling approaches.

The Authority will co-ordinate all work experience placements, ensuring compliance with relevant Health and Safety guidance.

2 Planning of Work Experience

As far as possible, young people should take responsibility for choosing and planning their own placement. This works best when they are ready, willing, and can make best use of a placement which reflects their interests and career aspirations. Planning should take into account the young person's maturity and ability to fulfil an employer's requirements, their likely leaving date and the other opportunities they have in and out of school to gain experiences of the workplace. The planned placement should be part of a young person's developing understanding of the World of Work and related skills and not be an isolated experience. It should complement Careers Education including use of various tools such as My World of Work.

The Education Authority expects schools to consult with pupils and their parents when considering work placements for pupils.

Young people should be supported, as far as possible, to gain accreditation of work related learning through e.g. the SQA Employability Award; Skills for Work qualifications; ASDAN Awards.

In planning, the placement should be contextualized within the school curriculum, skills development, supportive learning conversations, the achievement agenda and personal profiling – in summary, it should be seen as part of the pupil's whole learning experience.

3 Timing of Placements

The timing of Work Experience placements to fit in with the Broad General Education and Senior Phase needs to be considered.

Feedback during consultation indicated that a number of schools saw value for some pupils in the earlier one week placement. Weekly placements at an earlier stage can increase confidence for these pupils and support possible career aspirations, whether these are clear or less certain.

If this were to occur in the Broad General Education, it would need to be later in S3 and schools would have to be confident of the young person's readiness and maturity to engage with a placement at this stage. It may be that a number of schools feel that various other work related experiences may remove the need to have a single placement in S3. It would be the expectation that entire cohorts are not put forward for Work Experience placements at the same time

Schools should ensure that potential school leavers, who would benefit from a placement in S4, have been offered the opportunity.

The senior phase is where almost all pupils have opportunity to undertake a work experience placement. This placement should occur at the point most appropriate to the needs of that young person

4 Type of Placement

Short Placements

These could be the traditional one week placement or a near variation of this. The placement might typically be designed around either a clear career aspiration or as an aid towards gaining a clearer career focus.

Extended placements

These would fall into two categories

1. Where pupils are out of school on placement for most of the week. This would apply mainly to the Christmas Leavers whose birthdays mean they have to stay on to Christmas of S5 or other exceptional cases of pupils who have not reached school leaving age.

In such cases the school still has responsibility for the young person and needs to build in provision for the young person in terms of other entitlements such as progress with core skills. A young person, where they are capable of doing so, should not be leaving school without level 3 in both Literacy and Numeracy.

The young person's school contact (Named Person) is required to maintain contact with them and with the employer to monitor progress.

2. Extended placements for S4-6 pupils as part of their overall curricular provision, where the placement constitutes a minority of the school week. This would be a placement for a pupil to support a definite career aspiration pathway.

The Education Authority expects schools to consult with pupils and their parents when considering extended work placements for pupils in their final year of school, and to take responsibility at senior management level for the planning and monitoring of these placements, including the health and safety of pupils while on placement, by way of the Local Authority sanctioning the placement.

Skills for Work and other qualification-based Courses

A number of these courses constitute Experience of Work. Examples would be Rural Skills and Construction Skills (where a work placement is included)

Thus, pupils undertaking a Skills for Work vocational course with a clearly defined work placement as part of the course, would not require to undertake a separate work experience placement

Part Time-Employment (in compliance with local bye-laws)

A good number of pupils will have part time employment. Schools should consider to what extent this meets the work experience entitlement. It is expected that in the context of Personal Support, schools would be capturing and recognising this experience of work and its related skills.

Family Firm

Highland Council, in its role as Corporate Parent for Looked After Children and Young People, will provide additional placements which in almost all cases, will be within the Local Authority for those young people. The young people who will benefit include many who experience difficulties in formal settings and with building trusting relationships. Referrals will be made by the Lead Professional, but should be planned with the young person's Guidance teacher or other professional responsible for his/her education.

Priority for Placements

In general, where there is a capacity issue, priority will be given to extended placements and/or those related to qualifications, or generated by Family Firm or Activity Agreements over standard short placements.

6 Employers

The burden on employers needs to be minimised to maintain the excellent goodwill we currently have with employers while at the same time meeting the Council's duty of care to its young people. All employers will have their own Health and Safety protocols, the only additional requirement being the Young Person's risk assessment.

Through involvement in the programme, employers exercise their corporate social responsibility and help our young people become more prepared to enter the labour market.

Supporting a placement can also provide opportunities for staff development, as employers and employees are given the chance to acquire new skills through the planning of the placement content and the supervision of the young people during their placement.

7 Health and Safety

Highland Council will provide guidance in accordance with current national legislation and advice on health and safety in relation to work experience, and assistance with sourcing suitable placements.

Health and Safety checks will be carried out for all new placements, and site visits will be carried out annually for high risk placements; every two years for those judged medium risk and every three years for those judged low risk.

8 Key Points for Schools

Tasks may be allocated differently in different schools, but the Head Teacher or his/her nominated Depute must take overall responsibility for all Work Based Learning.

Schools must provide a Senior Phase curriculum which gives pupils a range of opportunities to experience working life and to gain employability and other work related skills. Special consideration should be given to the needs of pupils with Additional Support Needs.

Schools must involve pupils in their choice of work placement, and support them to build work related learning around their career aspirations and goals.

Schools should provide opportunities for pupils to learn about the national and local economy, and the expectations of employers.

Schools should develop partnerships with employers to help them contextualise and enhance pupils' work related learning.

Schools must ensure that the Authority is made aware of placements timeously so that relevant health and safety checks can be done prior to authorising the placement and no placement should go ahead without agreement being reached.

Schools must prepare pupils for work experience and they should be given opportunities for reflection and review following the placement.

Schools must support pupils on extended placements, and maintain contact with the pupil and the employer.

Summary

Employability and Economic Development are key goals for Highland Council. The provision of Skills for learning, skills for life and skills for work for young people is a key goal of Curriculum for Excellence.

A well planned and delivered work experience programme will support the achieving of these goals in Highland.