



**Work Opportunities for Young People
in our Care or Leaving our Care
Policy**

CONTENTS	PAGE
1. INTRODUCTION	3
2. DEFINITIONS UNDER THIS POLICY	4
3. VALUABLE WORK EXPERIENCE: THE QUALITY CHARTER	4
4. WORK EXPERIENCE PLACEMENTS	5-6
5. TRAINEESHIPS AND APPRENTICESHIPS	7
6. HEALTH AND SAFETY	7
7. PROCESS FLOW CHART	8

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council is committed to the children and young people in our care or leaving our care for whom we are their corporate parent.
- 1.2 Like any reasonable parent, we want our children and young people to have access to training, further or higher education or employment, as this is a key part of supporting their transition into adulthood.
- 1.3 In our offer to care leavers, 'Hidden Ambitions', Merthyr Tydfil CBC has committed to providing:
- Support to achieve educational outcomes at the point of leaving school.
 - Early careers advice and work experience.
 - An active offer of education, work or training.
 - Access to employment, training programmes and apprenticeship schemes within Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council and through the networks of private business and industry.
 - Support to attend college or go to university.
- 1.4 As corporate parents we need to enable our young people to work 'in the family business' as would be the case in other families.
- 1.5 In order to achieve this MTCBC will develop work experience opportunities within the Local Authority and through its connections with local businesses for our care experienced young people aged 16 to 25.
- 1.6 We will be developing links with work based learning.
- 1.7 In Year 1, 2020-2021 we aim to place 4 care experienced young people in Council settings to undertake work experience.
- 1.8 In Year 2, 2021-2022 we aim to have created one traineeship for a care experienced young person.
- 1.9 In Year 3, 2022-2023 we aim to have one care experienced young person completing an apprenticeship with the Council.
- 1.10 ***Benefits for our young people who are Looked After or Leaving Care:***
- Provides routes into employment.
 - Supports the development of employability skills, which will promote economic development.
 - Provides an opportunity for our care experienced young people to gain experience of a workplace.
 - Promotes greater engagement and understanding of the community and the Council and its services.
- 1.11 ***Benefits for the Council:***
- Creates a talent pipeline for future vacancies, aiding succession planning.
 - Brings in new ideas and thinking, reinvigorating the workplace.
 - Supports the learning and development of existing staff through mentoring opportunities.

- Engages the public who witness the Council providing opportunities for the local people it serves.

1.12 This policy clarifies the application process for work experience placements, the traineeship scheme and the apprenticeship scheme for care experienced young people and provides guidance to members of staff who are involved in supporting the young people in their placements.

2. Definitions under this Policy

2.1 The following definitions should be referred to in using this policy:

Work experience/placement Unpaid placement over a short period of time by which an individual experiences a real working environment within the Council. The experience couples job shadowing with the carrying out of a range of tasks, more or less as would an employee, but with an emphasis on learning.

Traineeships Offered at 3 different levels depending on need and support requirements:

- Engagement - these prepare young people for the world of work or further learning and can offer work tasters. The training allowance is £30 per week plus travel costs over £3 per week.
- Level 1 - this is a placement with an employer whilst following a relevant Level 1 vocational qualification. The training allowance is £50 per week plus travel costs over £5 per week.
- Level 2 Bridge to Employment - this is a placement with an employer whilst following a relevant Level 2 vocational qualification. The training allowance is £50 per week plus travel costs over £5 per week.

Apprenticeship This is a job with an approved programme of training whilst following relevant vocational qualifications and they last between two and three years, depending on the vocational route and level of qualification to be gained. There is a minimum wage for apprentices that is age dependent, but employers can pay more.

The applicant The individual who has applied for work experience.

The participant The individual who is taking part in work experience.

The Council Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council.

3. Work Experience Placements

- 3.1 The many benefits of work experience need to be appreciated throughout the Council. Service areas are encouraged to consider work experience as a fundamental element of their workforce development and succession planning strategies and in relation to care experienced children, a critical part of being a good corporate parent. Service areas are therefore encouraged to provide four work placements per year for care experienced children and young people.
- 3.2 The length of any placement will be established on a case by case basis, with reference to the participant's requirements and the Council's capacity to meet the same.
- 3.3 The service areas offering work experience placements will complete a work experience placement profile. This profile will provide information about the department and the potential tasks which a participant can expect to be involved in. The profiles will be advertised and used to inform a participant's decision as to which area they would like to obtain experience in.

Eligibility, Application Process and Support

- 3.4 For this scheme anybody over the age of 14 and currently looked after by the Local Authority (or leaving the care of the Local Authority) is welcome to apply for work experience opportunities. However, the service area manager has final discretion as to whether a placement and opportunity is suitable depending on the applicant's age.
- 3.5 Anyone under the age of 18 years must have the consent of the Local Authority that holds Parental Responsibility (the social worker) before a work experience placement can proceed. This is obtained via the placement agreement (Appendix 1).
- 3.6 ***Application***
- a) Care experienced young people are routinely discussed in the Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET) meetings and this is an ideal opportunity for discussion about young people who may benefit from work experience placements within the Council. Social workers can discuss young people with the Employment, Mentoring and Support Officer.
 - b) If the young person identified would like to take up this opportunity then they will complete the online application form on the Council's website.
 - c) A dedicated 'Work Experience' area on the website can be found which provides further information about the scheme and also lists the placement profiles so the young person can read about the different settings available and decide what they would be interested in. The young person will complete an online application which consists of personal and contact details and short questions relating to what the applicant would like to get out of the experience. The young person may have support from a parent, foster carer, social worker, Personal Assistant or the Employment, Mentoring and Support Officer (EMSO) to complete the application.
 - d) Workforce Development will contact the EMSO to gain further information. It may be the case that in order to truly tailor the experience, the participant's placement comprises more than one service area.

- e) The EMSO will meet with the young person following a discussion with their social worker to explain their role and what kind of support they can offer the young person and the setting through the work experience placement. Together the young person and the EMSO will identify the support needed to prepare the young person to fully engage with the work experience opportunity. The length of time that the young person will need preparatory support and the amount of support they will need during the placement will vary depending on the young person's needs. **The support provided under the Pathway to Work project must be included in the young person's pathway plans.**
- f) All applications will be considered and care experienced young people will be prioritised for available placements.
- g) Workforce Development will keep a record of requests and placements throughout the Council. This information can be analysed to ascertain which service areas are in demand, how many care experienced young people have made an application and how many have then taken up a work experience placement and which hard to fill roles may require further promotion.

3.7 **Confirmation**

- a) Once an application has been accepted and the service area(s) has confirmed their capacity to accommodate a placement, the young person will be sent a letter of confirmation enclosing an agreement to sign, which will include a confidentiality statement. The confirmation letter will include contact details of the area manager, start time and location. A copy of the letter will also be sent to the Employment, Mentoring and Support Officer so that any support can be put in place prior to the start date.
- b) Support will be available to the work experience setting from the Employment, Mentoring and Support Officer (EMSO) based within Children's Services prior to and for the duration of any placement.

3.8 **Induction**

- a) All participants should have a brief induction on their first day which outlines to them their potential duties and covers any health and safety issues. The induction is the responsibility of the service area manager but this will be supported by the EMSO if required. Further information and a Manager Checklist for the induction can be found in the Work Experience Guidance for Managers. Care leavers may be able to access financial support for equipment from the St David's fund. This will be considered by the EMSO and the social worker.

3.9 **End of Placement**

- a) The Manager should have an end of placement discussion with the participant in order to give open and honest feedback and celebrate achievements. This will also be an opportunity for the participant to give their feedback as to what worked well, and what could be improved.
- b) Managers are encouraged to agree to provide a reference for a participant if requested.

4. Traineeship

- 4.1 The care experienced young person would need to be 16 years old at the time of applying.
- 4.2 A face to face meeting will be held **to identify the correct route** between the young person, their social worker and/or foster carer and Workforce Development, to discuss the application, the interests of the young person and potential settings.

5. Apprenticeship

- 5.1 All applications for apprenticeships have to be made via Careers Wales. The EMSO and/or social worker can arrange an appointment for the young person to discuss what the options are.

6. Health and Safety

- 6.1 To ensure that all health and safety requirements are met, it is essential that:
 - a)** Managers have undertaken a generic risk assessment for work experience placements. Any specific risk assessments must be taken out for individual participants when necessary, for example if a participant has special needs such as a disability. This information will be made available from the young person's social worker and/or the Employment, Mentoring and Support Officer and they will contribute to the development of the risk assessment if required.
 - b)** All individuals on a placement are prepared and briefed on any hazards within the work place.
 - c)** Any necessary Personal Protective Equipment is supplied for the participant and the participant is briefed as to how to use it. Where Personal Protective Equipment is appropriate and supplied, it must be worn at all times.
- 6.2 Further information is available in the Work Experience Guidance, on the Intranet and from the Health and Safety Officers if required.