

Arranging Work Placements



Introduction

This case study focuses on the strategies developed at a training hotel and catering college when arranging work placements for young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. These strategies have led to considerable success in skill development and work readiness for the learners.

This case study would help other providers to broker work placements successfully and to overcome the difficulties in managing placements to ensure they are appropriate for disabled young people and also successful for the employer.

Overview

Ben is the Work Placement Manager at Foxes Academy, a training hotel and catering college for young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in Minehead, Somerset. Learners at the Academy work in the various departments of the hotel, undertaking food preparation, food services duties and housekeeping tasks. Learners also have the opportunity to live in one of the Academy owned houses and to develop independent living skills. Ben has had particular success in brokering work placements for learners from the Academy in the local area, and believes the success of these placements is due to the detailed preparation and rigorous systems that are now in place to support both the learner and the work place provider. From past experience Ben believes that many work placements for disabled young people fail simply through lack of information.

Ben has developed a system that ensures each work placement is planned well in advance; learners are supported initially by staff from the Academy with a gradual transference of this support to the provider and the learner themselves. The placements last for one nine week term; some very successful placements are extended. The learners spend one day each week at the placement and are supported by staff from the Academy for the first two to three weeks. This may involve the member of staff being in the workplace for the full day or they may be there for a short period of time and then return after a couple of hours. The learners are supported at a level appropriate to them and the support is gradually reduced over time whilst the learners are encouraged to develop independence. Work placements are either within walking distance from the learner's place of residence or a short bus ride away. Where this is the case learners are travel trained in advance.

Initial preparation with potential employers involves two meetings. Providers are encouraged to visit Foxes Academy to spend some time working alongside learners to discover how

experienced staff work with the learners and to consider how the necessary adjustments can be managed in their own workplace.

The first meeting is a detailed discussion of the work tasks that the provider would want learners to undertake and the level of support they are able to provide. It is expected that there should be a detailed and specific job description not just a limited range of activities that would be suitable for a disabled learner. This is negotiated to meet the needs of the learner and the workplace provider. At this stage a Risk Assessment of the workplace (Appendix A) is completed and also an individual Risk Assessment for the learner. A check is also made to ensure the learner is covered by the providers insurance.

At the second meeting the individual learner is discussed in more detail giving the provider details of the learner's support needs, any medication that the learner takes, specific details relating to their condition and what actions to take in case of concern. It is at this stage that the provider would have the opportunity to visit the Academy to work alongside the potential learner in order to see them in action and develop a rapport, or at the very least to make sure the learner has already met the provider before going to the workplace.

There is a very careful matching process to ensure that the learner can undertake the tasks required by the employer and also that the employer fully understands the needs of the learner so that appropriate adjustments can be made. Each learner has an 'About Me' Passport that contains information provided by the learner relating to how they see themselves, their aspirations and achievements, their needs and abilities and specific personal information that the work placement provider may need. This is a vital component in helping the provider to understand the learner and how they will fit in to the workplace.

Safeguarding training is often given to employers working with Foxes Academy to make sure that they have an up-to-date understanding of the requirements and expectations. Successful placements depend on the time and energy that the employer commits to finding ways to accommodate the learner's needs and to provide the initial support for potential development. Much depends on staff availability to support the learner and how busy the employer is during the early stages of the placement.

With these preparations and support in place many of the learners have experienced life changing skill developments that have enabled them to move on to work and a level of independent living. Each employer offer a placement is given a certificate from the Academy in recognition of providing a learner with a Community Placement.

Foxes Academy Work Experience Risk Assessment Form



Placement employer's details

Employer's name:		Number of employees:	
Nature of business:		Main Contact:	
Workplace address: (Tel/fax/email)		Health & Safety contact:	
Type of work carried out at workplace location:			
Occupational activities assessed:			

Assessment Outcome:

Recommendations:	Suitable	Suitable with conditional action plan <input type="checkbox"/>	Unsuitable <input type="checkbox"/>
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Risk Category:	High <input type="checkbox"/>	Medium <input type="checkbox"/>	Low
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Assessment Type:

Initial Assessment	Re-assessment <input type="checkbox"/>	Other (please specify)	Date of next assessment:
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The Employer or their representative – Please sign to agree that this is an accurate record of the assessment:

Signed:	Print name:	Job Title:	Date:
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Work Experience organisation – Assessment undertaken by:

Signed:	Print name:	Job Title:	Date:
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ACTION PLAN

Ref	Further action required (if necessary)	Target date	Confirmation of completed actions

Foxes Academy
Work Experience Risk Assessment Form



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CRB Disclosure recommended? Yes No

For office use only – Quality assured by:

Name:

Job Title:

Date:

Foxes Academy Work Experience Risk Assessment Form



Health & Safety Standards (1-9)

(1)	Basic health and safety requirements	Yes / No	Comments
1.1			
1.2			
1.3			
1.4			
1.5			

(2)	Health and Safety Policy	Yes / No	Comments
2.1			
2.2			

(3)	Risk assessment and control	Yes / No	Comments
3.1			

(4)	Accidents, incidents and first aid	Yes / No	Comments
4.1			
4.2			
4.3			
4.4			

(5)	Supervision, information, instruction and training	Yes / No	Comments
5.1			

Foxes Academy
Work Experience Risk Assessment Form



5.2			
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(6)			Comments
6.1			
6.2			
6.3			

(7)	Personal protective equipment and clothing	Yes / No	Comments
7.1			
7.2			

(8)	Fire and emergencies	Yes / No	Comments
8.1			
8.2			

(9)	Safe and healthy working environment	Yes / No	Comments
9.1			
9.2			
9.3			

PLACEMENT EMPLOYER RISK ASSESSMENT FOR YOUNG PERSONS

Foxes Academy Work Experience Risk Assessment Form



Learning activities:

Learner's name:

Employer's name:

EMERGENCY CONTACT NUMBER:

Key considerations

When assessing the risks to young people, the employer should ensure that they:

- Take into account the young persons' age, inexperience, immaturity and lack of awareness of risks.
- Give consideration to any other learning difficulties, disabilities or medical / health condition.
- Consider the young person's aptitude, ability and attitude initially and on an ongoing basis.
- Consider the need for adequate supervision and, where necessary, suitability checks for child protection purposes.
- Result in adequate control measures that are explained to the young person and their supervisor.
- Determine the need for any personal protective equipment.
- Result in the provision of adequate information, instruction and training for the young person.
- Identify any necessary prohibitions or restrictions relating to tasks, areas and work equipment.

Prohibited or restricted tasks, areas or work equipment:

Detail any relevant learning / behavioural difficulties, disabilities or medical / health conditions that may be restrictive or require special consideration prior to the young person starting their work experience:

The risk levels have been reduced as far as is reasonably practicable (ALARP)