

**CITY AND COUNTY OF CARDIFF
DINAS A SIR CAERDYDD**

Employment Conditions Committee: 27 March 2007

Report of the Chief Executive

PROPOSED WORK EXPERIENCE POLICY

Background

1. In 2003 statistical data gathered in support of the Council's workforce planning exercise revealed that one third of workers employed Cardiff Council was over 50 years old years. This evidenced that the Council would need to take measures to avoid a severe skills shortage in future, in order to ensure that it could continue to provide quality services on an ongoing basis.
2. It was decided that measures should be adopted to encourage younger workers to consider the Council as an employer of choice, the view being that a "grow your own" approach would prove to be a sound method of retention.
3. An integral part of the Council's strategy for recruiting a younger workforce should be a well managed programme of work experience. This would present an opportunity for the Council to raise awareness of its wide range of employment opportunities and would also enable pupils to gather evidence, in respect of the key skills which are essential for them to be effective members of a flexible adaptable workforce.
4. The view was that a different approach to work experience in the council was required in order to drive the process forward and the decision was taken that the process should be centrally co-ordinated within Human Resources. This would ensure that the programme was consistently applied and would also provide an opportunity for identifying areas of potential growth, in terms of new placement options.

Issues

5. Following the centralisation of the programme it was observed that some areas of the Council did not accept pupils on work experience and whilst it is understood that from time to time the availability of resources, or the impact on the day to day operation of the service may be deciding factors in why a placement should not be offered, it also became apparent that many managers were not aware that the Council supported this initiative.
6. In addition where work experience had been supported, managers had not been provided with necessary guidance in areas such as, their responsibilities under Health and Safety legislation, clarity around the issue of CRB Disclosure, induction arrangements and also the need to ensure equality of opportunity.

Proposals

7. The draft Work Experience Policy is adopted, in order to raise the profile of work experience within the Council and to provide a structural framework for its practical application.

Investment for Reform/Benefit to service user

8. The introduction of a co-ordinated Work Experience Policy will help to support the Council's commitment to being an employer of choice , will assist in addressing the age profile of the organisation and help address future skills shortages. This will ultimately result in improved service delivery to customers .

Council Policies Supported

9. The proposed policy will support the Corporate Plan (the Serving the City theme) and the Community Strategy. Addressing the age and skills issues within the organisation is part of implementing the corporate Workforce Planning processes.

Advice

10. This report has been prepared in consultation with relevant Corporate Directors and reflects their advice. It contains all the information necessary to allow Members to arrive at a reasonable view, taking into account the following advice.

Legal Implications

11. This is a proposed Policy and there are no unusual legal implications

Financial Implications

12. The Policy indicates that the Council will not be required to make any payments to students, either for work undertaken, or for out of pocket expenses that may have been incurred. However, should any incidental costs relating to a placement be incurred such as a requirement for protective clothing then these will have to be met by service areas from within existing budgets.

Human Resource Implications

13. The implementation of a new corporate Work Experience Policy will provide a co-ordinated, quality and balanced experience for young people contemplating a career in local government. A positive work experience will help the Council to better balance its age profile via Workforce Planning techniques and become an employer of choice. All Service Areas will be encouraged to offer placements which will be planned, appropriately managed and have feedback arrangements for student and school respectively. Careers Wales will assist in this process by resourcing a post to supplement the existing HR resource in this area. The strengthening of key themes such as guidance on induction; clarity of respective roles of student/HR Manager/School's H&S/Induction/CRB requirements will aid understanding

Trade Union Comments

14. The Trade Unions welcomed the principle of a centrally co-ordinated Work Experience Policy. They also recognised the value of an effective and balanced work experience policy in order to attract young people into jobs and careers in local government generally and into the Council as an employer of choice. As part of consultation, the Trade Unions raised issue of CRB checks, both for the young person and the Supervising Manager. Particular guidance was required where male managers would be in a position of supervising young female students e.g. site visits, etc. Information on incoming pupils would be required. Concern was expressed about Career Wales' capacity to undertake health and safety risk assessments required. Concerns were also raised about source of funding for protective clothing for work experience youngsters, particularly protective footwear. The Trade Unions felt strongly that Service Areas should not bear these costs and that a central fund should be established. They also commented that the policy would work effectively where managers volunteered to participate rather than it be imposed on unwilling managers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

15. It is recommended that:-

- (i) the proposed Work Experience Policy attached as Appendix A be approved
- (ii) an update report be provided to this Committee following 12 months of operational experience.

BYRON DAVIES
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Appendices Attached:
Appendix A : Proposed Work Experience Policy

APPENDIX A

CARDIFF COUNCIL

WORK EXPERIENCE POLICY AND PROCEDURE (Full Time Students Aged 14 – 19 Years)

PURPOSE

1. Work Experience is a placement at an employer's premises in which a student carries out and/or observes a range of tasks or duties as would an employee, but with the emphasis on the learning aspect of the experience.
2. The purpose of the Council's Policy is to encourage and increase the availability of work experience placements, with the aim of promoting a positive image of itself as an employer, and of developing recruitment links with schools and colleges

SCOPE

3. This policy applies to all Service Areas of the Council with the exception of its Schools based services. The policy is commended to all School Governing Bodies.

KEY PRINCIPLES

4. The Council will work in partnership with Careerswales Cardiff and Vale to support the principals of the "Framework for Work Related Education in Wales", which includes the Government target that each full time student aged 14-19 years has the equivalent of at least 3 weeks work experience.
5. All young people in Schools in Cardiff and the Vale will have the opportunity of taking part in the Council's Work Experience Programme, regardless of their race, ethnic origin, gender, disability, sexuality or religion.
6. Work experience placements need not be linked to a specific career choice, but can be used to provide the opportunity for key skills to be practised in context.
7. Human Resources (Resourcing), in conjunction with Service Areas will co-ordinate and regularly update the information held on the Careerswales database.

8. All requests for work experience will be processed centrally via Human Resources, (Resourcing).
9. Service Areas may reserve the right to withhold the opportunity of work experience in areas of work where a genuine occupational requirement would deem the placement inappropriate.
10. Every work experience student will be assigned a nominated supervisor who will be responsible for overseeing the work placement.
11. The supervisors will co-ordinate the arrangements for induction, work programmes, and providing feedback. They will also act as role models who will motivate, encourage and support students to maximise the work experience opportunity.

Conditions of Placements

12. Students on work experience will be expected to work normal office hours i.e. 37 hours per week between Monday and Friday. Start and finish times will be determined by mutual agreement. Under no circumstance should overtime or unsocial hours be worked.
13. The Council will not be required to make any payments to students, either for work undertaken, or for out of pocket expenses that may have been incurred.
14. When work experience is requested in areas involving access to children or vulnerable adults it will not be practical for students to pursue an enhanced Disclosure Certificate. In view of this supervisors must ensure that no unsupervised access takes place.
15. Similarly, supervisors of work experience placements should not undertake any activity that involves unsupervised access to students if they do not hold an enhanced Disclosure Certificate.

Health & Safety

16. All students on work experience placement will be covered by the Council's comprehensive insurance cover arrangements.
17. Prior to taking up a placement with the Council, students will be required to complete a Personal Information Form, (subject to parental consent) providing emergency contact details and also information relating to any illness or disability for which special arrangements may need to be made. The information obtained will form part of the risk assessment process.

18. Managers are required to assess the risk associated with the job role, taking account of the Code of Guidance for the Employment of Young Persons (1.CM.074). In addition Careerswales will undertake an assessment of the suitability of the placement. The frequency of the assessment will depend on the level of associated risk. High-risk workplaces will be assessed on an annual basis, medium risk every two years and low risk every three years.
19. If as a result of the risk assessment it has been identified that protective clothing/equipment is required, then this must be provided as necessary.
20. In the case of absence or accident the supervisor must immediately inform the student's school or college. When an accident has been sustained, Form 4.C 043 Accident/Dangerous Occurrence Report Form should be completed in accordance with normal accident reporting procedures.

PROCEDURE

21. At the start of each academic year, Human Resources (Resourcing) will ensure that the information held on the Careerswales database is accurate and up to date.
22. Students will access the database via their school/college and select the placement opportunity of their choice. The school/college Work Experience Co-ordinator will then write to the Council (using the Careerswales standard documentation) to confirm whether the request is accepted or declined.
23. Upon receipt of the request, H.R. Resourcing will contact the appropriate Manager to confirm whether they are in a position to accept the student on the dates required and will subsequently relay that decision back to the school/college. (again using the Careerswales standard documentation).
24. Where the decision to accept the placement has been made, the manager must make available to H.R Resourcing, a copy of their Health & Safety Risk Assessment, in order that a copy may be forwarded to the student's parents, (via the school/college) prior to the commencement of the placement.
25. Nearer the time that the placement is due to commence, H.R. will write to the student via the school/college (Ref x), providing details of their supervisor in order that they may contact them to discuss relevant issues such as reporting arrangements, dress codes etc. At this point the student will also be required to complete and return the Personal Information Form. (Ref xx)

26. On the first day of the placement the supervisor will be required undertake an induction exercise with the student using the Work Experience Induction Checklist, (Ref xxx).
27. During the course of the placement, supervisors may be required to make themselves available to meet with Teachers/Work Experience Co-ordinators from the School in order to provide feedback on the student's progress.
28. In the event of the need to terminate the placement prematurely, it is necessary that the placement supervisor informs H.R. as soon as possible in order that the school may be contacted accordingly.
29. On completion of the placement, the supervisor will be expected to provide the student with a verbal evaluation of their performance, and present them with the Work Experience Certificate of Achievement.
30. This policy will be reviewed in the light of operational experience.