

Work Experience Student Handbook

Central Bedfordshire Council

Guidance for Students and Schools/Colleges/Academies

“A great place to live and work”



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Our Values

Our values describe the type of organisation we are want to be and the principles that will guide us in achieving our priorities and vision. These values set out the way we will work and interact with everyone and they are as follows:

- Respect and empowerment – treat people as individuals who matter to us
- Stewardship and efficiency – make the best use of resources available to us
- Results focused – focused on delivering the outcomes that make a tangible difference to people's lives
- Collaboration – work closely with our colleagues, partners and customers to deliver on these outcomes

What does work experience mean for you at CBC?

This handbook will help support you to identify, secure and succeed in your work experience placement and get the most out of it during your time with us.

Your work experience placement will give you a real experience with real people and we are committed to providing you with the best opportunities.

Our aim for your placement with us is:

- to gain an insight into the world of work
- to gain an insight into the public sector and services we provide
- to gain additional skills and learn more about the qualifications you may need to help you make decisions about choosing a career path in the future

All you need to do now is

- Decide on the service area you would like your placement to take place in
- Decide on the type of placement available
- Decide on the location you can work from, and
- Apply!

How can you find out what work placements are available?

– *this section to be updated when service areas are confirmed*

We are pleased to be able to offer work placements in some of the following service areas of our organisation:

Service Areas - these are subject to change depending upon availability

Admin, Secretarial, Clerical	Adults Social Care*	Children's social care*
Property & Facilities	Communications, Marketing	Customer Services
Economic Growth & Regeneration	Environment & Conservations	Finance & Accounting
Health & Safety	Housing	Human Resources
Information Technology	Leisure, Community	Libraries
Licensing	Planning, Transportation & Highways	Policy
Project work Schools	Youth Work	Training & Development

*subject to availability

Locations

As our teams are based in different locations across Bedfordshire, you will need to bear this in mind when making your placement choice so that you can be sure you can travel to and from your placement. Information on local bus services can be found here <http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/transport/public/bus-timetables-routes.aspx>, so please take the time to consider your travel in advance.

Within your application please let us know which areas you can travel to. Here are some of the locations that we are based at:



For the full list of Service areas, types of placement and locations available please ask your School representative for full details or go to our website at <http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/xxxxxxxxxxxx>

How to apply for a work experience placement?

Now you have chosen your service area, location and the type of placement you want, please work with your School/College/Academy to follow the application process:

Step 1

Application Process

- Visit our website at xxx and view the placements available and make your choice(s) then work with your school/College/Academy contact to:
 - complete a pre-work experience questionnaire
 - (give your personal, school and education details)
 - discuss and record the type of work you are interested in doing and why
 - decide on the location you are able to work from , and
 - (please make sure that you discuss and agree your transport arrangements before submitting your application for your chosen location
 - agree what you would like to achieve from the placement
 - (for example: I want to work as part of a team, I want to understand how decisions are made, I want to attend a meeting, I want to improve my confidence
- Select a second placement opportunity just in case we are unable to provide you with your first choice
- You will find the pre-work experience questionnaire to apply on line at xxxxxx
- You can print this form and complete it manually and post it back to us if you
- prefer

Step 2

Selection Process

- When applications are received in response to an advertised Work Experience Placement we will:
- arrange to meet informally with those who closest match the placement requirements to find out more about you, your interests and career aspirations
- ask you about your expectations and goals you wish to achieve during the placement and explain what you need to know about how the placement will work. The pre-work experience questionnaire will provide the starting point for this discussion
- Following the discussion you will be provided with feedback as to whether your application has been successful or not

Please note that it may not always be possible to provide you with an exact match for your placement and in some circumstances it may not be possible to provide you with a placement at all. This will depend on your requirements and our available placement opportunities. We may discuss alternative placements with you if your choices are not available or in the event you are unsuccessful.

If you don't succeed on the first time of applying, you can save your details on line and then apply again when another placement opportunity arises. Remember to check our web site for details of placements available on a regular basis. We will post details of placements available on line at xxxxxxxxx)

Step 3 Clearances

- Some roles may involve activities with vulnerable groups of people, i.e. working with Children/Adults, or being privy to sensitive and confidential information about the Council or its service users
- Before you begin a placement with us we will let you know how you may be involved with these types of activities and what will be expected of you, in order to prepare you for this type of work
- You will be asked to sign a declaration of compliance before you join us

Step 4 Confirmation of Placement

- On receipt of satisfactory clearances (if required), and if you have been successfully selected, we will have a discussion with you and your School/College/Academy to agree a start date and time and confirm the details of the placement with you

***Congratulations,
you are now ready to start your placement with us!***

So, you have secured your first placement, what happens next



The following information is designed to help you understand the details of what it means for you to be on a work placement with us. We will go through the most relevant information with you when you start with us on your first day, but in the meantime here's what you need to know:

Preparation is key

Now you have secured your placement, make sure you prepare for your first day. If you feel organised and confident you will create this impression for yourself and the rest of the team you will be part of. We know it may be daunting to come in and meet new people but here are some tips which should help you when you are here:

- Make sure you know what time you need to arrive for your placement and where and who to report to. Your school will confirm this with you before you join us
- Plan the journey and your travel time to your placement location at least one day beforehand so that you don't arrive on your first day feeling flustered
- Consider bringing some food and drink or some money with you to keep your energy levels up during the day
- Make an effort to introduce yourself to others, once you start to feel comfortable you will feel able to work more efficiently
- Take notes at the Introduction meeting and during your placement, ask questions – you aren't expected to know everything on day one!
- Agree what skills you want to learn, and commit to achieving them
- Get involved and participate, show enthusiasm and interest in what you are doing, it will make things go quicker
- Ask questions if you are unsure about anything
- Offer to help out, we appreciate any support offered

Your contact

We will appoint a responsible person (CBC student officer) who will oversee your placement and give you guidance and support in the activities that you carry out. They will be your first point of contact and they will keep you up to date with any changes or news that you need to be aware of.

If there is anything you're not sure of, or if you have any questions you should speak with them. You will be provided with their contact details during your introduction.

You may also be allocated a "mentor" and/or a "buddy" who will accompany you and give you guidance and instructions on your work place activities whilst you are with us. We will let you know who they are on your first day.

My key contacts	The name of my student officer is Their number is: 0300 300
The name of my mentor is	The name of my buddy is

Helping you to settle in.....

What can you expect on your first day?

When you begin your work experience placement with us, your appointed CBC student officer will greet you on your arrival and carry out an introduction meeting with you.

Here's what you can expect to cover in your introduction meeting



You can find more details on what will be covered on your first day on our checklist which is available [xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx](#) or speak to your schools/College/Academy careers contact.

Health & Safety

We want to be sure that you remain safe whilst on our premises. Your appointed student officer at CBC is responsible for making sure that you receive any relevant training linked to activities you will be undertaking in your role.

Your training may be in the form of a demonstration, briefing, reading material, explanation, e-learning, or as part of an assessment. In any event we are required to provide you with an overview of the following:



CBC will ensure that Risk Assessments and Safe Working Practices will be carried out and completed for all common activities specific to the individual or location. You are expected to follow all health and safety protocols in the same way as paid staff.

It is important to discuss with your CBC student officer any special requirements you may have to protect your health, safety and wellbeing. This may include disclosing any disability or medical condition which may require additional precautions to be considered.

We will notify your school of the key findings of the risk assessment and any control measures we are taking.

What activities will I be involved in?

We will aim to provide you with activities that match, as closely as possible, the work you wish to undertake with us, taking into consideration the responses noted on your pre-work assessment questionnaire.

We will provide you with a Work Activities plan relative to the service area you are placed in and your CBC student officer will go through this with you at the Introduction meeting.

If there is an activity that you would like to undertake please let your CBC student officer know so that we can try to accommodate it within your activity plan.

How am I doing?

We want to make sure that you are getting the best experience from your time with us and we will ensure that during your placement we will discuss with you:

Daily:

- how your day went
- what you have learned
- whether your activities met your expectations
- what activities are planned for the next day

You can record your activities on the Student Diary Activity form to help you record your achievements if you want to.

The Student Diary Activity form can be found at xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

End of First week:

At the end of the first week we will meet with you informally to:

- ask you to complete a student evaluation form to record your achievements
- give you the opportunity to discuss how you are getting on
- identify any further training or other support that you may need
- prepare for the next week's activities

Last Day: On completion of your placement ...

We hope that you will have enjoyed your time with us and that it has opened your eyes to the world of work and given you some ideas as to potential future career opportunities with CBC.

On your last day we will ask you:

- to complete a Student Evaluation form before we meet with you
- to attend a pre-arranged meeting to discuss and record:
 - how you feel your placement with us has gone
 - what went well?
 - what skills you have learnt?
 - What was the best part of your time with us?
 - What did you enjoy the most?
 - What did you least enjoy and why?
 - in what ways could we have improved your time with us?

We will complete our CBC Student Officer Evaluation Form and give you some feedback on how we think things have gone and you will receive a copy of this to take back and discuss the outcomes with your School.

We will issue you with a certificate of attendance on completion as confirmation of you undertaking your work experience placement with us.

Will I get a Reference?

We will provide you with a reference on request.

Have your say

We value feedback as it lets us know what we are doing well or not so well. With this in mind, we encourage you to give us feedback on your work experience placement and share your ideas and suggestions with your CBC student officer so that we can continually improve what we do.

What else is there to know about your work experience placement ..

Here are some other facts, information and requirements you should know about relating to your work placement:

Pay

As your work experience placement is part of your education, you will not be paid a salary for the work you do and you will not enter into a contract of employment with us for the role. If your parents receive income support you must let us know before you join us so we can make lunch arrangements for you when you attend work.

Working hours and rest periods

Your hours will usually mean no more than 6-8 hours a day, Monday to Friday, 8.30am – 4.30pm, usually with a one hour lunch break.

Your actual hours will be agreed in advance between you and your School and CBC if you are successfully selected for a work experience placement.

You will not be expected to work more than 40 hours per week, or between the hours of 10pm and 6am.

Work Placements will usually last for one or two weeks.

Accidents and Incidents

In order to help us prevent accidents and to meet our statutory requirements, you must ensure you report **all** accidents or other incidents which occur during the course of your work experience placement. Your CBC student officer will cover CBC's arrangements for the reporting of accidents and incidents (including violence and aggression) during your introduction.

Use of equipment

We will provide you with the necessary tools and equipment to fulfil your work placement activities. You must only use the tools and equipment as instructed and must not use them if you have not been trained or briefed on how to do so.

Our equipment will be serviced regularly but sometimes faults or defects can occur. It is important that before using any equipment (which may include IT equipment, machinery or power tools, for example) that you conduct a visual check of its condition. Your CBC student officer will guide you through these requirements if needed.

CBC will ensure that the appropriate risk assessments are in place and that you are made aware of the precautions that are in place and which must be followed to prevent the use of any faulty or defective equipment.

If you notice any fault or defect you must not use the equipment and you must report the issues immediately to your CBC student officer.

Social Media

You should be aware that social media networking websites such as Facebook, twitter YouTube, LinkedIn, Instagram etc. are in the public domain and therefore can be seen by most people. When/if you are using social networking sites you should refrain from making any negative comments or references to CBC, or providing details of its service providers and service users.

Any communication with the media should not be made without prior discussion and agreement with your CBC student officer.

We will go through this in more detail during your placement with us.

Dress Code

Whilst you are on CBC premises you should adhere to the applicable dress code for the team you will be working with. In most cases, smart casual clothing should be worn and we will confirm whether any restrictions are in place prior to you commencing your placement with us.

For the avoidance of doubt you could wear trousers, a polo shirt, shirt, jumper or smart T-shirt, skirt/blouse/dress and appropriate footwear. No football shirts or tracksuits/hoodies please,

Should you be required to wear personal protective equipment (PPE) during some/all of your time with us, for example if you are out on a site visit,, any mandatory PPE will be provided and, if supplied, must be worn as directed. PPE could include safety glasses, helmets, safety shoes and workwear/overalls. The appropriate dress code will be discussed with you and your School/College/Academy prior to your placement commencing if required.

If you are ill and/or unable to attend your work placement

If you are unable to attend your planned work placement activity for any reason, we would be grateful if you would let your CBC student officer and your School/College/Academy know as soon as possible.

Please ensure you call in by 9.00 a.m. on your first day of absence and let us know when you think you may be well enough to return.

If you have any problems during your placement

We hope your work placement experience with us is an enjoyable one, but we recognise that there may be times when a problem arises.

If you have a problem relating to your work experience, you should raise it directly with your CBC student officer who will aim to resolve it with you. If you feel the matter is not satisfactorily resolved, or you feel the need to escalate your concern, you should raise your problem with the HR Department or your School/College/Academy.

If we identify there is a problem

If there are issues raised about your contribution, ability or conduct during your work placement, your CBC student officer will discuss it with you straight away so that you can be made aware of their concerns and have the opportunity to address them.

If there are concerns that even with the necessary training, mentoring or support you will not be able to fulfill your work placement goals with us there may be no alternative but to withdraw you from your placement. . We will discuss this with the school beforehand if this was to be considered.

We would hope to be able to resolve any issues without taking this decision and we will always meet with you to discuss how we can resolve things before taking such a decision.

Access to information

Data Protection / Confidentiality

Most businesses operate within the Data Protection Act 1998 and therefore it is important to let you know what this means for you while you are on your work experience placement with CBC.

In short you must not discuss or disclose confidential information that relates in anyway to us, with anyone. By doing so, this is likely to be a breach of the Data Protection Act and you will be held liable, as may be the School/College/Academy.

While you are at CBC you also agree to the processing of your personal data by CBC for the purposes of and maintaining records on such things as attendance and health, such as are necessary for the performance of your work experience (if applicable). The Council is registered with the Data Protection Commissioner for this purpose.

Your CBC student officer will discuss our [Confidential Reporting Policy](#) with you to help you understand how you should raise any particular concerns you may have.

In any event you will be required to sign a Confidentiality Agreement prior to commencing your placement with us.

The Confidentiality Agreement can be found at xxxxxxxx

Insurance

You will be covered by our Employer Liability Insurance and Public Liability Insurance while you are undertaking your work experience placement with us. This means that you are covered against accidents, diseases or injuries that may occur due to negligence on our behalf.

Gifts and Hospitality

There may be times when it is acceptable for you or your family to receive items or gifts of small value given to you in appreciation of your work experience placement activity. For example, a box of chocolates, flowers.

However, in cases of hospitality or gifts with a value in excess of £25 you should politely decline them and let your CBC student officer know about the offer made to you as soon as possible.

Ending your work experience placement early

If you decide that you no longer wish to undertake your work placement with us, you must let your CBC student officer and your School/College/Academy know of your intentions. If there is an underlying reason why you do not wish to return we would appreciate it if you would let us know.

Obligation to offer and accept

No obligation exists from either party and your work placement does not constitute an offer of employment.

Working for us in the future

We really hope that we have given you a real flavour of what it is like to work for us. If you would like to know more about pursuing a career in local government, have a look at some of these sites for more information about the opportunities on offer:

Jobs and Apprenticeships with Central Bedfordshire Council

Check out jobs in our area at <http://www.centralbedfordshirecouncil.gov.uk>

National Graduate Development Programme for local government offers a series of 2 year graduate programmes at Councils across the country. The site gives details on what the scheme involves, what qualifications you need to apply, salary breakdown and video profiles of current graduates and what they do at work.

<http://www.ngdp.co.uk>

Careers in Local Government:

This site is run by the IDeA and is all about jobs and apprenticeships in local government. It also has a really useful section on career advice.

<http://www.lgcareers.com/>

Jobs in the public sector:

A job site for vacancies in the public, not for profit and charity sectors. It also has a careers advice section.

<http://www.jobsinpublicsector.co.uk/>

Forms

Student related forms

Pre-Application questionnaire for work experience
(to be completed by the Student and the School and forwarded to CBC Recruitment to match against available work placement opportunities before placement commences)

Student Evaluation form

(to be completed by the Student at the end of week 1 and/or week 2)

Service Area Activity Work Plan

Student Diary Activity form

Confidentiality Agreement

Student Workplace Agreement

CBC Officer related forms

Evaluation Form

Introduction (First day) Checklist

Certificate of Attendance

Risk Assessment

These forms can be found on our website at xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

***We hope you enjoy your time with us and
we look forward to seeing you working for CBC in
the future!***

Thank you and good luck

Abbreviations/Jargon buster

At Central Bedfordshire Council we use many abbreviations. This makes it quicker and easier to refer to something with a long title. This may be confusing and unfamiliar. Below is a short list of some of the most used abbreviations and terms you might hear us use during your placement. Don't be afraid to ask what it means if you come across an abbreviation that you are not sure of.

CBC	Central Bedfordshire Council
PH	Priory House, Monks Walk, Chicksands or Public Health
LGA	Local Government Association
SME	Small, Medium Enterprise (Subject, Matter, Expert)
LEA	Local Government Authority
DSE	Display Screen Equipment
HR	Human Resources
L&D	Learning and Development
T&Cs	Terms and conditions
NJC	National Joint Council
CMT	Corporate Management Team
HOS	Head of Service
CEX	Chief Executive
AD	Assistant Director
SRO	Senior Responsible Officer
NUT	National Union of Teachers
SMT	Senior Management Team
SCHH	Social Care, Health & Housing
CS	Community Services or Children Services or Corporate Services
ICS	Improvement and Corporate Services
ICT	Information Technology
WH	Watling House

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Unitary

The **definition** of a **unitary government** or **unitary** state is a system of political organisation with a central supreme **government** which holds the authority over and makes the decisions for subordinate local **governments**. An example of a **unitary government** is the United Kingdom overseeing Scotland.

Appendices

Pre-Application work experience questionnaire
Introduction First Day checklist
Risk Assessment form
Service Area Activity work plan
Evaluation and Assessment form – Employer and Student
Diary page for student to record activities template

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Top Tips for Interviews:

If you are shortlisted for an interview against other work experience candidates, or, if we ask to see you for an informal chat, this is your opportunity to prove yourself. Here are some top tips for making sure that meeting goes well.

- **Research:** make sure you know as much as you can about what we do
- **Plan your journey** and do a trial run if necessary to ensure you arrive on time for the meeting
- **Be smartly dressed**
- **Turn OFF your mobile phone** prior to the meeting
- **Ensure you have prepared some questions** to ask about the organisation/work placement service area you are interested in
- **Don't fidget!**
- **Maintain eye contact** with your interviewer
- **No chewing gum or eating/drinking**
- **SMILE!**
- **Remember to ask** when you can expect to hear that you have been successfully selected for the placement

Frequently asked questions on work experience, go on-line at [xxxxxxx](#)



Central Bedfordshire

A great place to live and work

Contact us...

by telephone: 0300 300 8000

by email: customer.services@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

on the web: www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

Write to Central Bedfordshire Council, Priory House,
Monks Walk, Chicksands, Shefford, Bedfordshire SG17 5TQ