

Work Experience Placements in DWP - A Guide for Managers

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Introduction

1. This guidance is aimed at managers who are responsible for managing Work Experience placement participants within the Department and its businesses, i.e. where DWP is the host for the placement.
2. It covers the aims and objectives of the Work Experience placement, how to identify a Work Experience placement participant and the role of managers before, during and at the end of their Work Experience placement in DWP.
3. The guidance outlines the key actions that host managers, Personal Advisers, Work Experience Teams and others will take when placing Work Experience participants into DWP. This information is provided to help managers understand the process that will be followed.
4. This guidance is not intended to provide the detailed processes for Jobcentre Plus Personal Advisers or Work Experience Teams. These processes for placing customers and supporting participant in Work Experience placements (irrespective

of who the host organisation is) are set out in existing [Work Experience Procedural Guidance](#).

Background to Work Experience

5. Work Experience is part of the package of Get Britain Working pre-Work Programme measures that can be used to help individuals into work or self employment.

6. Work Experience will offer eligible customers a period of work experience with a large or small employer of between 4 and 8 weeks in length ([see paragraph 13 of this guidance for duration of Work Experience placements in DWP](#)) and usually between 25 and 30 hours per week, but not more than 30. It is aimed at Jobseekers Allowance customers aged 18-24, with little or no work history who find the lack of experience a barrier to finding work.

7. The fundamental aim of Work Experience is to contribute to an improvement in the participant's employability by providing a real experience of work.

Aims and Objectives of Work Experience

8. The key features and benefits of Work Experience placements for participants are to:

- Improve their job prospects
 - See how the skills they have can be adapted to the workplace
 - Gain real life work experience
 - Build their confidence
 - Add to their CV
 - Obtain a work related reference
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Work Experience in DWP

9. The Department is participating in the Work Experience programme as part of our commitment to Get Britain Working. By offering Work Experience, the Department will help the participant to develop work-related skills and qualities within a work environment. Placements will be available throughout all DWP delivery businesses and across all Corporate and Shared Service Business areas.

10. A designated Scheme Co-ordinator has been appointed to manage delivery of the programme in DWP. All opportunities and placing of Work Experience participants into DWP must be done via the Scheme Co-ordinator. This is to ensure that the Department is able to provide the necessary management information to Ministers and senior managers. In addition it will also ensure that the required Baseline Personnel Security Standard Checks can be co-ordinated via a central point to Shared Services.

Important note: Work Experience placement participants are **not** Department for Work and Pensions employees. As they are not DWP employees they are not subject to the Department's usual terms and conditions or HR policies.

11. The Civil Service Commissioners' rules on fair and open competition, which govern the Department's recruitment, and the current Civil Service Recruitment Freeze mean that participants cannot be offered either a permanent or temporary job with the Department at the end of the Work Experience placement.

12. Work Experience placements in DWP will provide participants with the opportunity to gain some experience of the world of work with the aim of helping them improve their job prospects.

13. DWP will offer Work Experience placements of between 4 and 8 weeks in length. The length of the placements, within these boundaries, are subject to local managers' discretion, and can take account of the size of the office and nature of the business conducted.

14. Work Experience placement participants must not be used to replace employees who may be leaving DWP.

Payments for Work Experience Placements

15. The Department will not receive any payment for the participant. The Work Experience placement participant is not employed by DWP to undertake either a permanent or temporary job; therefore the participant will not receive a wage and will not be on the DWP payroll.

16. The participant will continue to claim Jobseekers Allowance plus any other benefits that they are entitled to, provided they continue to fulfil the conditions for receipt. Their travel costs will be reimbursed and participants can also receive funding to help with any childcare costs that they incur whilst undertaking the Work Experience placement. The Jobcentre Plus Personal Adviser or Work Experience Team are responsible for establishing and authorising the expenses that participants can claim and for arranging to reimburse these costs.

Please note: The participant must **not** receive any payment from managers or the business in which they are placed.

Identifying a Work Experience Placement

Placement participants should not undertake a placement in any JCP office which deals with any element of their JSA claim. However in **unavoidable circumstances only** (e.g. in rural areas where no other DWP site is available) DM's discretion may allow this as long as the host manager ensures that the participant has no access to their own personal records.

17. Where a manager considers that they may be able to offer a suitable Work Experience opportunity they should discuss and agree the potential placement with their relevant management team

18. Where it is agreed that a suitable and valuable opportunity exists, the manager should e-mail a completed "Work Experience – Opportunity for Placements" form

The manager should also indicate whether the opportunity is a rolling placement i.e. as one placement finishes another can start.

19. The Scheme Co-ordinator will then contact the Employer Delivery Team in the Jobcentre Plus National Employer Service Team. This team will provide a named contact within the relevant District, who will work with the Scheme Co-ordinator to ensure eligible customers are matched to the Work Experience opportunities.

Note: in this guidance the Jobcentre Plus roles are stated as sitting with the relevant Work Experience Team. In practice, these roles may, in some districts, be undertaken by Personal Advisors. Hence the terms Work Experience Team and Personal Advisors are interchangeable, subject to local arrangements.

Arranging a Work Experience Placement

20. The Work Experience Team will match the placement opportunity against their caseload and select a suitable participant.

21. Once a potential participant has been identified the Work Experience Team will ask that customer to complete a Personal Details form, a Diversity & Equality monitoring form and a Reasonable Adjustments form. The information on the Personal Details form will be used to undertake the required Baseline Personnel Security Standard (BPSS) Checks. Detailed guidance about these forms and information required to complete them is being made available to Work Experience Teams.

22. The completed forms will be sent by the Work Experience Team to the Scheme Co-ordinator.

23. All Work Experience placement participants must have satisfactorily completed the BPSS Checks prior to them starting the placement. These checks include;

- Identity
- Nationality/immigration status (to establish the right to work in the UK).
- Employment history (to ensure that the last three years are accounted for and any gaps are checked)
- Criminal Records check (see para 24)

24. Criminal Records Check

It has been agreed that only customer facing placements within the DWP will require CRB checks to be undertaken. If the placement is not customer facing then the Grade 7 within the chain of command will need to authorise the waiver of the check.

25. A basic CRB check searches your details against criminal records and other sources, including the Police National Computer. The check will give details of current convictions, cautions, reprimands and warnings. This check could take up to 6 weeks to be conducted.

26. Participants identified to undertake a Work Experience placement in Private Office must have also completed and passed an additional National Security Vetting check and undergo the Counter Terrorist Clearance before the start of their placement. Private Offices should factor the additional timescales required for this check into their planning.

27. Upon receipt of the completed forms the Scheme Co-ordinator will forward to Shared Services the forms required to undertake the BPSS checks and will forward details of the participant and confirm whether any reasonable adjustments are required with details where applicable to the Host Contact.

28. Even though the Work Experience participant is not employed by DWP, when offering a placement the manager should always be aware of the Department's obligations under the [Equality Act 2010](#). If the participant has a disability the manager must ensure that any necessary reasonable adjustments are made whilst the participant is on the placement.

29. If required, managers should contact the [Reasonable Adjustments Specialist Team](#) for further support or guidance.

30. Shared Services will confirm to the Scheme Co-ordinator whether the CRB checks have been passed. This process takes 6 – 8 weeks. The Scheme Co-ordinator will advise the Work Experience Team and the host manager of the outcome, and if the checks are passed, advise the Work Experience Team to liaise with the host manager to organise the details of the placement and confirm a start date.

31. The Work Experience Team will undertake the required Pre-Start interview with the participant. Once this is completed the Work Experience Team will notify the Scheme Coordinator / Host Contact of the confirmed start date, and duration of the placement.

Starting the Work Experience Placement

Day 1 action

32. The host manager will contact the Work Experience team and the DWP Work Experience Scheme Co-ordinator on the first day of the placement to confirm that the participant has started.

33. If the participant has not started the Work Experience team will contact them to find out the reasons why. Depending on the outcome of the conversation the Work Experience Team may ask the host manager if they are still willing to take on the participant and, if so, they will then agree a new start date and inform the Scheme Co-ordinator. If an alternative participant is required the WE will refer someone as soon as possible

34. The following actions must be taken for all placements:-

Step	Action
1	Managers must check participants' proof of identity on the first day - using standard processes for a new member of staff. i.e. check photo id - any doubt should be raised immediately with the WE team
2	It is good practice for managers to draw up an itinerary for the placement for issue to Participants to cover the duration of their WE placement. (link to

	Sample WE placement itinerary)
3	Participants must be told that their placement is for a period of between 4 and 8 weeks) and there can be no expectation of a permanent or temporary job at the end of the placement. They should be reminded of the need for them to continue to attend the Jobcentre for Fortnightly Jobsearch Reviews.
4	<p>Appropriately tailored induction must be delivered, to include (but not limited to) the following DWP policy and procedures:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversity and Equality • Health and Safety • Standards of behaviour • Placement hours of attendance • Internal security • Electronic Media <p>Managers should explain to participants what is required in terms of dress standards, behaviour and time-keeping, and action to be taken if they cannot attend due to illness or other reasons.</p> <p>A name badge should be issued following normal practice – regarding the participant as a visitor</p>
	<p>WE participants should be treated in the same way as other visitors to the office and are covered by Section 23 of the <u>Social Security Admin Act 1992</u> which makes it an offence for anyone employed in social security administration to unlawfully disclose any information which relates to a particular person.</p> <p>Measures must be put in place to protect the confidentiality of customer and staff personal information during the course of the placement (see <u>Visitors to DWP Offices Guidance</u>).</p> <p>During induction, managers must make clear to the participant that any official or personal information which comes to their attention is subject to a strict duty of confidentiality, and must not be removed from official premises or disclosed unless they are directed to do so by a DWP member of staff.</p> <p>Participants should sign the “Confidentiality” form:</p>
5	Taking planned work activities into account, managers should consider whether a DSE Risk Assessment is appropriate.
6	<p>As WE participants will have very little or no experience of work, managers should consider how to provide them with more support.</p> <p>It may be helpful to identify a mentor or buddy to help the participant during their Work Experience placement. They can act as a role model and offer support and guidance in addition to that provided by the manager to help the participant to settle into their placement.</p> <p>Managers should advise participants of any such arrangements and make appropriate introductions to the mentors/buddies and teams.</p>
7	<p>Standard JCP Keeping Safe (KS) training for staff expected to deal with customers comprises 2 stages; a support pack which staff must work through and a 2 day workshop which staff must attend within 3 months and before they see customers alone.</p> <p>As it is not possible for the full KS module to be completed during WE it is recommended that participants expected to undertake customer facing activities, work through the support pack. After this they must be</p>

	accompanied by a fully trained member of staff , if they undertake any customer facing work. This satisfies KS learning requirements. In addition checks must ensure that participants do not see any Potentially Violent customers.
8	Managers should issue participants with a WE in DWP Placement record stencil for them to record their day to day activities, progress and questions during the placement. This will support later evaluation of the placement.
9	Informal arrangements must be in place throughout placements to hold discussions with participants to check on progress and to deal with any issues. Constructive feedback will help participants reflect on their performance and achievements. Discussions will also help to identify activities which could be undertaken during the placement which might help to address gaps in knowledge.

During the Work Experience Placement

35. It is important that Work Experience participants engage in a range of meaningful and real activities during their placement in order to give them a proper and useful insight into the world of work. Participants however must not displace employed staff, so care must be taken as to what activities they should be asked to undertake.

36. Whilst it may be useful for a participant to shadow different members of staff to gain an insight into the variety of roles, shadowing should not be the only activity that they participate in. Where a participant is job shadowing, attending meetings, taking minutes, etc. care should be taken not to avoid giving them with access to sensitive materials or information.

37. In the event that the participant observes interviews or other conversations with customers, the host manager must ensure that the business customer

- is aware that the person attending is on Work Experience;
- knows they are not a DWP employee;
- consents to the Work Experience participant's involvement in the business activity

38. If, during the placement, the host wishes to consider extending it, this must be discussed with the Work Experience Team. In total the placement must last no more than 8 weeks.

Access to systems

39. Host managers must ensure that the Work Experience placement participant is only given access to the appropriate IT systems (i.e. Outlook, DWP Intranet and any locally authorised applications deemed essential for the Work Placement).

Work Experience placement participants must not be given access to systems which hold personnel or customer data (Labour Market System (LMS), Pension Service Computer System (PSCS), Resource Management System (RMS), etc).

40. If the Work Experience placement participant requires a Personal Identification Device (PID – a “Smartcard”) the [normal secure allocation process](#) should be followed

41. To obtain the dummy ID required for access a DWP Non 1 form should be submitted to Employee Services, by service request (When the service request is set up ESC – Resourcing should be used as Request Type requested).

42. Host managers should explain the [security requirements](#) that are attached to holding a Smartcard to the Work Experience placement participant.

Jobsearch and support

43. The participant will be required to continue to attend Fortnightly Jobsearch Reviews or other advisory interviews. In addition, as the Work Experience placement will not lead to employment with the Department, participants should be allowed reasonable time to attend job interviews. Participants can be asked to provide proof of the interview if the manager feels that this is necessary.

44. The rule at para 38 regarding access to IT systems applies to the participant's own jobsearch activities as well as normal business usage. However they are permitted to use on site Jobpoints, as long as this is done in their own time.

45. Participants who need to attend other appointments (e.g. hospital, dentist etc.) should, wherever possible, be asked to attend those in their own time. If however an appointment during work hours is unavoidable, then the host manager should allow the participant reasonable time to attend. Again managers can ask for proof of the appointment if they feel that this is necessary. Although not bound by the Department's HR policies, applying some policies proportionately will help to provide the participant with a realistic work experience.

Dealing with issues during the placement

46. As outlined earlier, Work Experience placement participants are not paid employees. They are, therefore, not subject to the Department's People Performance, Discipline and Attendance procedures. They do, however, have a responsibility to behave in an appropriate manner, just as they would if they were in employment. What this means in practice will have been explained to them during their induction.

47. If a participant does not attend because of illness or other reason the host manager must contact the Work Experience Team to ensure the reason for absence is accurately recorded.

48. Managers should seek to deal informally with any minor issues that may arise such as poor timekeeping or failure to carry out reasonable management instructions. Often a brief conversation may be all that is necessary to resolve the problem, enabling the placement to continue.

49. If an informal approach however does not achieve the improvement or in instances of more serious problems such as mishandling or unauthorised access to Departmental information or there are ongoing attendance or timekeeping issues then the host manager should initially contact the Work Experience Team for advice.

Sanctions

50. Participation in WE is mandatory once an individual has accepted a placement. This will apply for all DWP WE placements.

Sanctions – [WE Procedural Guidance paras 11-19](#) will apply to those who fail to comply with the terms of the placement for the following:-

- Failure to start (FTS) the placement;
- Failure to Attend (FTA) the placement (after a 1 week probationary period);
- Leaving the placement voluntarily (after the 1 week probationary period); or
- Dismissal from the placement through misconduct.

If any non-compliance occurs for the reasons above, the Host manager must arrange for completion of form WE DMA4 immediately and send it to the WE team. The WE team will pass to the participant's Personal Adviser to take action to interview the individual and take appropriate DMA action.

51. Host managers should make themselves aware of the [benefit sanctions](#) that could be applied by Jobcentre Plus and their part in the process.

52. If it becomes apparent that there are more serious problems that cannot be resolved between the host and the participant, a decision should be made by the host manager, in conjunction with the Work Experience Team and the Scheme Co-ordinator. Ultimately the host manager will decide how to deal with the issue and whether the placement should be terminated.

End of the Work Experience Placement

53. Where the Work Experience placement is conducted satisfactorily, a formal discussion must take place between the participant and the host manager before the end of the placement. The main purpose of this meeting is to review how the placement has gone and to provide feedback on the participants overall performance. It also provides a good opportunity to ask participants how any future placements could be improved.

54. The manager should inform the Work Experience team and the DWP Work experience Team Co-ordinator at the end of the placement.

Providing a Reference

55. As a Work Experience "host" the Department must provide participants with a reference at the end of the placement. Host managers are responsible for completing these references, and issuing copies to the individual and the WE team contact.

This is the only reference that can be provided to the participant. Any future requests from the participant or a prospective employer must be refused.

56. The DWP has a duty of care to both the participant and any prospective employer; therefore the reference must be accurate, fair and not give a misleading impression. Care should be taken as to both what is and what is not included in the

reference. If it is necessary to make negative comments they must be done on direct evidence that is factual and, therefore, fair.

57. Case Law has highlighted the importance of using only factual information and shows that care must be taken by **everyone** involved in writing a reference.

Content of the Reference

58. The manager must provide the reference using the reference proforma.

59. After the reference has been completed the host manager should send a copy to the Work Experience Team. The reference can then be used by the Personal Advisor to discuss with the participant as part of their jobseeking support. The WE team will also retain these for the duration of DWP's participation in WE, for statistical and quality monitoring purposes.

60. A copy should also be sent by the host manager to the Scheme Co-ordinator.

61. The host manager must keep a copy of the reference for 6 months or for longer if there are outstanding issues or complaints to resolve.