

## Working with Young People

This guidance will help you if you are working with young people in Parliament. It is aimed at supervisors, but it is also helpful if you have a young person working in your team.

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### Overview

Offering work experience provides a great opportunity for us to promote Parliament's diversity strategy, and give young people a valuable insight into the work environment. If you are supervising young people in the House you need to be aware of the responsibilities you have with regard to the Safeguarding Policy, their health and safety, and induction. You will need to ensure that you provide appropriate work for your student, help them set objectives and give them constructive feedback. You will also need to ensure that your team are aware of how they should treat young people on work experience.

#### What is the definition of 'young people'?

Young people in this document refers to those who are in secondary or sixth-form education or training who are on the parliamentary estate. The two most common examples of this are students completing work placements in Parliament, and young visitors to the estate. The Safeguarding Policy considers 'young people and children' to refer to any child up to the age of 18, however as most children working at Parliament will be in their mid to late teens, this document will refer to them as young people or students.

#### What is work experience?

Work experience is a period of time a young person spends in a work environment. They do unpaid work under the supervision of an employee of the organisation.

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### What are the benefits of work experience placements for the House of Commons?

Work experience:

- offers a chance for employees to get supervisory experience
- is a cost-effective way of meeting young people who could be potential future employees
- helps us demonstrate the variety of jobs/careers in the House of Commons
- promotes the House of Commons in a positive way and helps to raise our profile in the local community
- enables us to support the local community
- increases access and inclusion for a diverse range of people, which supports House values of equality, diversity and inclusion

### Do we need insurance cover for work experience placements?

The House of Commons, like most public organisations, including government departments and agencies, local authorities and police authorities, is exempt from the Employers' Liability (Compulsory Insurance) Act. This means that, instead of having an insurance policy with a third party, the House of Commons "self-insures". Claims against the House of Commons Commission (for employer's liability) are managed in house and any settlements are made from the public purse. The same arrangements exist for public liability except that the responsible person is the Corporate Officer of the House of Commons. It should be noted that the House of Commons and the House of Lords are separate corporate entities and different arrangements exist for the House of Lords. If you need any further information, contact [REDACTED] on ext. [REDACTED]

Section 40 (2)

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### Your Role as a Manager: key points

Young people working at the House will have little experience of a work environment and your role is one of a supervisor and a mentor.

You are responsible for:

- building self-esteem – this is an important aspect of the placement. The student should leave the placement feeling confident
- giving positive, constructive feedback
- coaching, encouraging and assisting young people to meet their objectives
- providing a full induction
- doing everything reasonably practicable to ensure the student's health and safety (duty of care)
- compliance with Child Protection legislation and our Safeguarding Policy.

You will require a range of skills and competencies to support development including:

#### Leadership & Development

- Encouraging learning
- Setting objectives
- Relationship building
- Valuing others and building relationships

If you would like further help in any of these areas please contact the Learning and Development team or see [ACT](#).

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## Safeguarding

Within the Houses of Parliament, we take seriously our responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults, both during visits to the Parliamentary Estate, and whenever our staff engage with people in the community. We are committed to providing a safe environment and ensuring that we can confidently and competently fulfil our safeguarding responsibilities. Further information about Safeguarding is available on the [Intranet](#).

## Duty of Care

The duty of care is a general legal duty on all individuals and organisations to avoid carelessly causing injury to persons. It requires you to do everything 'reasonably practicable' to protect the health and safety of others in the workplace.

Here are some important things to remember:

- brief the student on health and safety policies at the beginning of the placement
- supervise the student at all times while he/she is on the estate during working hours
- avoid being in a room alone with a student. If this is a necessary part of work, tell someone where you are and leave the door open
- before the placement starts, check for special requirements the student may have; for example, a disability that requires adjustments, or a medical condition you need to be aware of such as asthma
- read the Safeguarding Guidance and ensure that anyone else working with the young person is aware of the requirements around Safeguarding.

## Child Protection

The relationship with a student you are supervising is a confidential one, except where you become aware that they may be at risk of harm.

If your student tells you, or you become concerned that he or she is suffering, has suffered or is likely to suffer:

- significant harm through forms of self-harming
- ill treatment through sexual, physical, emotional abuse or neglect
- other forms of violence or criminal activity

you must communicate your concerns with the individuals that have a responsibility to follow up on your concerns or can offer advice.

Stay calm and do not take hasty action. Listen to what the young person tells you, and take him or her seriously. Say "thank you for telling me this".

Remember, it is not your concern to verify facts. Explain that you cannot promise to keep the information confidential. Reassure him or her by saying "how can I help make you safe now?" or "what do you need to be safe?"

The Safeguarding Guidelines on the [Safeguarding pages of the intranet](#) hold further information about who to contact if you have any concerns.

## Appropriate Behaviour

It is important that you and your team behave in an appropriate manner when working with young people. Treat young people with the same consideration and respect as you would any other employee. Remind yourself of the [Behaviour Code](#), the [ICGS](#) and the [Safeguarding Guidance](#).

### Structuring a work experience placement:

Responding to requests for work experience

There are a number of opportunities for work experience at the House of Commons. The applicant will need to make sure that they are eligible for whichever scheme they apply for. Details are on the [Work Experience intranet page](#).

Guidance on how to structure your work placement is below; a checklist is available at the end of this document in Annex A.

#### Beginning a Work Placement

Remember that this is likely to be the first time the student has experienced a work environment. Some students may be nervous, so it is important to spend some time making them feel at ease. Once you have met and welcomed the student, find a suitable area where you can sit down and talk them through all the relevant induction and health and safety information.

#### Induction

You need to give the student a thorough induction before he or she starts working. This needs to include information on:

- the behaviour you expect from them while they are working at the House, including attendance, professionalism and conduct
- where they will be working
- the sort of jobs they will be asked to do and how to do them
- who to go to for help if they are unsure at any point
- the need to comply fully with the House policy on confidentiality
- any areas they must not go into or tasks they should not perform even if asked
- any other information relevant to the area they will be working in

#### Setting objectives

It is a good idea to work with the student to set some written objectives about what they would like to get out of the placement, both in terms of experience and development. Objectives need to be SMART. Monitor progress against these objectives and review them at the end of the placement.

#### Health and Safety

It is very important that young people receive a full health and safety briefing. Ensure that you cover the following:

- what to do in the event of fire and all other emergencies  
Safety travelling to and from work – remember the student may have no experience of a London rush hour
- being aware of traffic when inside the palace grounds or when crossing the Estate
- safety around electrical and office equipment
- safety in the craft or catering environment (if applicable)
- who to ask if they are unsure about anything

If you are in any doubt about what else to include you should contact the Parliamentary Safety team at [safety@parliament.uk](mailto:safety@parliament.uk).

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## During a Work Placement

### **Feedback**

Ensure you make time to speak with the student to give them feedback, to get their feedback about placement is going, and to answer any questions they may have.

### **Subsistence allowance**

There is no corporate budget allocated towards meeting a subsistence allowance for students.

### **Appropriate work**

The type of work that is appropriate depends very much on the capability of the student. Start by giving them some straightforward tasks to carry out and assess whether they are comfortable with this before giving them something more demanding.

Remember that the student may gain more valuable experience from shadowing you or a colleague than from endless filing so try to strike a balance.

Some teams like to construct a project for the student to do as a way of giving them a wide range of experience without overburdening them. This works very well but can be time consuming to arrange so plan this in advance.

It is inappropriate to assign students tasks which:

- mean they come into contact with sensitive or confidential material
- are too complex and make them feel out of their depth
- they have little chance of being able to complete successfully
- put them at risk of physical or psychological harm

## The End of the Placement

At the end of the placement meet the student and discuss how you feel the placement went and get his or her feedback.

Include:

- whether they feel their objectives have been achieved
- whether there were any issues which detracted from their experience
- what parts of the placement they found most and least rewarding

Make sure that you return the student's security pass to the Pass Office at the end of the placement. You may also be asked to complete an end of placement assessment for the school. This is likely to ask you to give feedback on the student's performance in a number of areas.

If there are any issues surrounding the placement (such as behaviour or attendance) it is best to address these when they arise by telling your team's work experience co-ordinator. Do not leave reporting substantial issues until the end of the placement.

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| Work Experience Checklist  |  |
| <b>Before the placement:</b>   |  |
| Once the placement is confirmed, inform your team.   |  |
| Identify work to be done before the placement begins and draw up a timetable.  |  |
| Carry out health and safety checks.  |  |
| Set up computer access for the student, if necessary.  |  |
| Make sure the student has been security cleared in time for their start date.  |  |
| <b>During the placement:</b>   |  |
| Give a full health and safety briefing before the student begins any work.   |  |
| Monitor the student's work, provide constructive feedback and advice.  |  |
| Give an induction into the organisation, team, and section.  |  |
| Sit down with the student and discuss what they want to achieve in their placement. Agree on achievable personal objectives to review at the end of the placement. |  |
| Set aside time during the placement to sit and discuss progress and any issues.  |  |
| Do not wait to address any serious behaviour or disclosure issues. Report them to the school contact immediately.  |  |
| <b>At the end of the placement:</b>  |  |
| Review how the placement has gone. Assess with the student how they think their goals have been achieved. Find out what they have learnt from the placement.       |  |
| Ask the student for feedback on the organisation and section they have worked in. This feedback may help you next time.  |  |
| Make sure the student hands their security pass back to you before they leave the estate.  |  |
| Complete any feedback forms thoroughly and honestly and return them to the school.   |  |