

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR – CUSTOMERS, GOVERNANCE AND EMPLOYEES

DEVELOPMENT OF WORK EXPERIENCE OPPORTUNITIES

Purpose of the Report

1. To update Personnel Committee on the current options available for Work Experience opportunities with the Authority
2. To seek approval for changes to the process and delivery options for the Work Experience Programme

Information

3. The Work Experience programme is part of the Council's continued aspiration to be an employer of choice and contribute to the fulfilment of the commitments in the Council Plan, specifically Commitment 4 (Nottinghamshire has a thriving jobs market). Engagement in the wider Work Experience programme has resulted in some participants going on to gain employment with the Council.
4. The Council is committed to providing a range of work-based learning opportunities for people considering a career in local government. These opportunities are available to school students, local young people considering their future career options, undergraduates and post graduates, adults seeking to return to employment and career changers. The programme has a specific focus on the provision of placements for applicants who are a Nottinghamshire Looked after Child, a Care Leaver or vulnerable of Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) and engaged with the Council's Family Service or Youth Justice Teams.
5. The Council's Work Experience offer is a programme of unpaid placements for short periods of time hosted by teams across the Council. These placements are applied for through the Council's public website and requests to support applicants are sent to relevant teams by the HR Workforce & Organisational Development (HRWOD) team. The Council has a high number of applications every year, and whilst some of these applications are out of scope of the work offered by the Council, the success rate of securing a placement is low as illustrated in the table below.

Work Experience Applications

2018/19 whole year		2019/20 April - August	
Total number of Applications	548	Total number of Applications	180
Requests outside scope of NCC	146	Requests outside scope of NCC	43
Total number of placements arranged	58	Total number of placements arranged	10

6. Placement requests for the general Work Experience programme remain a challenge. Managers cite a number of barriers to taking a Work Experience placement including:
 - Access to IT
 - Flexible working (as people are often out of the office base)
 - Capacity to support placements
 - Confidentiality of the work teams undertake.
7. In addition to the above-mentioned Work Experience placements, the HRWOD team also has several initiatives designed to attract local graduates into the workforce. These initiatives include the Change100 Programme offered in partnership with Leonard Cheshire and a new initiative for business placements developed in partnership with the University of Nottingham (UoN).
8. Change100 is a programme that offers summer internships for disabled undergraduates or those newly graduated. The application and selection processes are managed by the Leonard Cheshire Organisation and matches are made to opportunities within the Council identified by the HRWOD team. The interns are placed with the Council for three months between June and September. Due to the length of placement, these interns receive a salary commensurate to the Living Wage whilst employed with us. The Council has been involved with the scheme for the past three years and has hosted 10 placements in this time with two individuals remaining in employment with the Council.
9. The new initiative with UoN is part of their offer to students in developing key skills for the current jobs market. This year saw the first placement offered by the Council as a pilot opportunity. The placement was hosted in the HRWOD team for 16 days over summer. The recruitment process was conducted by the HRWOD team and looked for applicants that matched the skill set required for the activity to be undertaken by the intern whilst on placement. The pilot had a successful outcome and subject to approval by Personnel Committee, this programme will be rolled out to teams across the Council for placements in 2020. It is hoped that three interns will be supported each academic year.
10. Also included in the wider Work Experience programme is the Council's support to Social Work Placements for trainee Social Workers. The Council places around 50 social work students per year from local universities and from those further afield such as Lincoln and Derby. The Council also participates in a Masters level fast track Social Work training programme called Step up to Social Work. These initiatives are long standing and as they work extremely well, sit outside of the scope of this report.

Options for considerations

11. As part of the Council's aspiration to be an employer of choice, it is proposed that work is undertaken to consider a variety of options regarding widening participation through opportunities to undertake Work Experience within the Council.
12. **Engagement of managers.** The success of the Work Experience offer relies on the commitment of managers to the programme and their engagement with the process. One option is for a system to be implemented where each department commits to supporting a number of Work Experience placements and intern initiatives each year and provide a summary of the roles available. The number of placements can then be included on the website application process.
13. **Redesigning the application process.** A large number of applications received are requests for Work Experience that as a local authority we cannot provide, such as animal care, photography and policing. Whenever possible, the team refer applicants on to appropriate organisations that may be able to accommodate these requests.
14. A redesign of the application process is being considered which would use an interactive form, with filters applied to ensure that applicants can apply for placements within their requested location and by type of experience being requested.
15. **ICT access - developing a portal on the eLearning platform.** There is a fragile balance between allowing access to systems for those on work placements and maintaining the security of the Council's data. Currently, interns that are on placement for a number of weeks are set up on the system in the same way that an employee would be so that they can engage in meaningful activity that is beneficial to both the individual and the placement team. However, for Work Experience placements, it has been a challenge to set up accounts with limited access for a short period of time. One potential solution to the access issue is to develop a portal which sits on the eLearning platform and is accessible through a personal email address. This will allow anyone on Work Experience to access relevant learning modules and will provide a site for managers to submit tasks that can be undertaken during the placement. Access to the portal will be withdrawn at the end of the placement.
16. **Giving priority to Nottinghamshire residents and disadvantaged groups/communities.** The current Work Experience programme is open to city and county residents. Personnel Committee may wish to consider whether this is the correct approach given the scarcity of placements available.
17. **Developing a work experience programme which reflects the business needs of the Council.** The Work Experience programme could encourage applicants to consider careers that they may not have previously thought about. With the support of departments and team managers commitment, a specific offer could be developed to address business shortages such as ICT and Adult Care.

Other Options Considered

18. There is the option not to make any changes to the current process and for it to continue as it is. If no changes are implemented, then it is likely that there will continue to be a large number of applications that cannot be accommodated.

Reasons for Recommendations

19. This report seeks the approval of Personnel Committee to change the processes and approach to the delivery of the Council's Work Experience programme. The programme contributes to both the Council Plan and the recently approved People Strategy.

Statutory and Policy Implications

20. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability and the environment and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Data Protection and Information Governance

21. The requirements of the General Data Protection Regulations have been considered as part of the Work Experience programme.

Financial Implications

22. There are no new costs associated with the Work Experience programme. Change 100 placements are funded by the HRWOD team budget with re charges made to the placing teams.

Public Sector Equality Duty Implications

23. The proposals in this report meet the Council's existing commitment to meeting, and where possible exceeding, the statutory requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

- 1) Agree the proposed changes to the Work Experience Programme.
- 2) Consider the criteria for applicants based on their home address.
- 3) Approve the roll out of the initiative with University of Nottingham.

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Constitutional Comments (KK 05/11/19)

24. The proposals in this report are within the remit of the Personnel Committee.

Financial Comments (SES 05/11/19)

25. There are no specific financial implications arising directly from the report.

HR Comments (JP 07/11/19)

26. The human resources implications are set out in the body of the report.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

- None

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

- All