Employing Young people – Internships and Work experience

There are a number of different ways you may wish to engage with young people in an employment capacity within your parish which will benefit the young person and the parish. The options available to you range from offering short 1 or 2 weeks work experience to 15-17 year olds, Work Placements for up to a year for students who are studying, to Internships for graduates or school leavers entering the workforce.

Work experience is vital to young people at school, college and as they enter the labour market. It helps young people to make the transition from education into working life by giving them:

* First-hand experience of the workplace and an insight into jobs and sectors
* Increased confidence and employability skills
* Experience to build their CVs and access to networks
* An understanding of how recruitment works
* Insight into how their skills and abilities translate to the workplace.

For employers, offering work experience is beneficial for a number of reasons:

* Recruitment opportunities and building talent pipelines: work experience placements enable employers to access a wider range of talent while also making a useful contribution to strategic talent management and workforce planning.
* Fresh ideas: young people offer new ideas and ways of thinking, reflecting the interests and needs of the next generation of customers and consumers.
* Staff development: offering work experience placements can provide opportunities for existing staff to supervise and mentor a young person, therefore helping to develop their management and other professional and personal skills.
* More engaged workforce: providing work experience sends a positive message to the wider workforce about the values of the organisation.

Work experience is the most popular way for employers to bring young people into their organisation. 85% of employers that take on young people on work experience and other schemes use these as a recruitment channel and offer employment opportunities to young people afterwards. However, if you are in doubt at Parish level about what you need to do to set up a successful programme or want to improve your current offer, follow these basic guidelines for offering good-quality work experience placements.

Different types of ‘Work Experience’:

Work Experience

This is usually undertaken by pupils at secondary school between the ages of 15 to 17, it typically lasts around 2 weeks and is unpaid.

The pupil themselves are usually responsible for organising their work experience and may approach directly, however sometimes the school secure work experience spaces with various organisations for their pupils.

As work experience placements are generally unpaid, it is important to remember that they are not there to fulfil a role but to gain an overview of a department or organisation. With this in mind you should consider making a schedule for what they will do or observe while they are with you. You can assign them tasks to complete while they are there, again to provide insight into the working world however there should be guidance and supervision and you should carefully consider that any tasks you give them are appropriate to their age and level of experience.

You should assign a member of staff to act as the pupil’s mentor, who is there to answer any questions and provide guidance and support. You should also consider what you will do when their work experience concludes, you may wish to get them to complete a review form that encourages them to consider what they have learned, what they would like to have done more or less of, what knowledge they have gained about employment generally which will assist them in the work place. Not only will this help the pupil when they return to school and reflect on their learning, but it will also help you to establish a more meaningful process for future work experience pupils.

What you need to know when employing young people under the age of 18

Before introducing a work experience placement scheme, it’s important to be aware of the basics:

* No DBS is required for staff supervising young people aged 16-17

The Disclosure and Barring Service, or DBS (formerly CRB), check is not compulsory for staff supervising work experience pupils aged 16–17. In the case of work experience, a DBS check will only be required if an employee’s specific job purpose includes looking after under 16 work experience students. For more information, visit [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service)

* Liability Insurance cover work experience students

Individuals on work experience are now covered by the employer’s existing employers’ liability insurance policy, provided the insurer is a member of the Association of British Insurers. Find out more at [www.abi.org.uk](http://www.abi.org.uk)

* Employers can use existing arrangements for assessments and management of risk to young people

If you have already conducted a general risk assessment for your workplace a further one is not required. Furthermore, employers that have fewer than five employees are not required to have a written risk assessment at all. However, if you have not taken on a young person in the last few years or are taking on a work experience student for the first time, it’s important to take care to identify the particular needs of the individual and review risk assessments before they start.

More information about risks affecting young people can be found at; <http://www.hse.gov.uk/youngpeople/law/index.htm>

You should carefully consider the tasks you asked a young person (under 18) to carry out, for example, they shouldn’t be alone for any length time, they should not carry out any tasks involving lifting or ladders etc.

it’s important to remember that as an employer, you have primary responsibility for the health and safety of the intern just as employers do with all other staff and should be managing any significant risks. But it’s easy to do this, by:

* explaining the risks and how they are controlled when inducting any individual undertaking work experience, checking that they understand what they have been told and know how to raise health and safety concerns
* relying on past or pooled experience when thinking about health and safety
* keeping checks in proportion to the environment the young person will be working in – for further advice on health and safety, visit [www.hse.gov.uk/youngpeople/workexperience/placeprovide.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/youngpeople/workexperience/placeprovide.htm)

Work Placements

A work placement is generally undertaken during a degree or other course and can last between 3 months and 1 year.

The purpose is to provide some relevant work experience which perhaps supports their degree, studies or chosen career path. Given the length of a work placement is longer, it is recommended that this be a paid placement, therefore you will need to adhere to the National minimum wage applicable to the individual, or you may whose to pay expenses.

The nature of a work placement is aimed towards enhancing young person’s employability skills and therefore they can be treated more as an employee by being given tasks to complete but should be provided with constant support and supervision due to their limited experience.

You should allocate an appropriate mentor and for the duration of the placement you should consider how the mentor will maintain contact and provide feedback to the placement student. For example a weekly one-to-one with them to touch base on how they are getting on, reviewing and giving feedback on work so far etc. It would also be a good idea to hold a mid-point review and a review at the end of the placement.

Internships

Internships are often undertaken by graduates entering the labour market for the first time, this could also apply to school leavers. Many organisations offer ‘graduate schemes’ which offer a fixed term contract, usually a year with the opportunity to gain paid experience within their chosen field or profession.

Internships are usually paid, and although the candidates filling the role will be new to the labour market, they should be treated as an employee by being encouraged to bring ideas and display their skills and experience gained during their studies. it is imperative that the intern is given as much responsibility and diversity in their work as possible. From your perspective, you want to make the most out of having them.

However it is important that you develop an internship scheme which incorporates and induction, training and development, time spent with various departments or key staff and specific tasks or projects to undertake. This will allow them the opportunity to gain some well-rounded experience.

Recruitment Process

Interns should be recruited in broadly the same way and manner as any other employee and for this reason, the main bulk of this recruitment guide can be used as guidance on the recruitment process as a whole, but here are some key details for recruiting interns.

An internship is about professional development of a young person and therefore it is important to give proper consideration to the specific skills and potential qualifications that may be needed by you and which the intern is expected to deliver against and in what timescale. It is always useful to remember that recruitment should be conducted in an open and honest way in order to ensure that there can be fair and equal access to the internship. Job adverts or any discussions should give a clear indication as to how long the internship is expected to last. At any interview the intern should be told quite clearly where there is any expectation of more permanent status.

It is also very useful for them to have experience in the processes and demands that job applications require. By openly advertising the position rather than just relying on family and friends, you can also widen the talent pool available and make a real difference. Don’t forget that a poorly devised internship programme might mean that you have to put in extra time, effort and resources at a later date.

Job Advert for an Internship

The following details are recommended for inclusion in your advertisement:

* The length of the internship, the expected working hours and the start date
* The main duties of the intern will be (the more explicit you can be, the better-suited applicants you are likely to get)
* Salary or expenses
* Qualifications and previous experience required or beneficial for the application
* A clear statement about whether there is a realistic possibility of the internship developing into a permanent position.

Interviews for Internships

Consideration should be given when devising interview questions to the fact that many young people may have limited experience and much of the relevant experience they do have might be from their school and university education in addition to extracurricular activities. It is recommended therefore to focus on interview questions around employability skills (for example, problem-solving skills, teamwork, communication, their enthusiasm and commitment to the values of the Parish and life in general) rather than strict qualification and technical requirements. You could however ask them to draw on their experiences gained at school or university to demonstrate specific skills or competencies.

In addition, if you intend to have your intern working on a particular project, the interview is a good opportunity for you to ask questions about how they would approach it and what ideas they might have about it. You could even place these sorts of project-based questions in an application form or advertisement.

What does the law say?

If someone is expected to undertake ‘work’ for any organisation (contributing to your Parish, has a list of duties and is working set hours) they count as a ‘worker’

and are entitled to be paid National Minimum Wage (NMW) – even if there is no written contract in place. The National Minimum Wage is the minimum pay per

hour almost all workers are entitled to by law – regardless of the size of the organisation offering internship placements – and covers almost all workers in the UK. However, workers must be school leaving age (typically 16 years old or over) to receive the minimum wage. It makes no difference whether an intern works part time or full time. They are still entitled to receive the NMW. Furthermore, any travel costs incurred while attending external meetings/events should be paid. When making decisions about how much to pay interns, it is essential to adhere to the relevant legislation at all times.

* National Minimum Wage rates

There are currently four age based National Minimum Wage rates which may apply to individuals undertaking an internship placement, and they are usually updated in April each year. The rates that apply from 1 April 2021 are as follows:

For workers aged over 23 years: £8.91 per hour

For workers aged 21-22 years: £8.36 per hour

For workers aged 18-20 years: £6.56 per hour

For workers aged 16-17 years: £4.62 per hour

However, there are a number of circumstances where the NMW does not apply; these include students doing work experience as part of a UK-based further or higher education course; young people of compulsory school age; a volunteer or doing voluntary work; on a government or European programme, or work shadowing.

It is recommended that interns receive travel expenses for any journeys they undertake on behalf of the Parish, such as travel to and from external meetings and events.

If you have any questions about the NMW legislation, you can find more information at [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk) or by calling the Pay and Work Rights Helpline on 0800 917 2368

* Volunteers

Volunteers are an essential part of voluntary organisations, and can provide a motivated and flexible work force to those struggling with limited resources looking to achieve their charitable objectives. However, it’s important not to blur the distinction between volunteers and paid employees, this includes interns.

According to the NCVO, volunteers don’t have a contract of employment and can come and go as they please. Also, as volunteers are under no formal or contractual obligations they are not paid for their time. Whereas interns undertake regular paid work for an employer and are bound by a contract of employment and are entitled to receive the National Minimum Wage. Whilst employers aren’t legally required to pay volunteers, employers should agree to cover any expenses, such as food and drink, as well as any travel the individual undertakes as part of their role. Not only does this help improve people’s access to opportunities, but it shows that you appreciate volunteer’s time and expense which will help individuals remain engaged and committed. Being clear about the expectations and intentions of both parties is essential when beginning a volunteering arrangement. To do this, Gov.uk and NCVO recommend putting your intentions in writing in a volunteer agreement. Also, clearly stating volunteer role descriptions and agreements can further help to reinforce the distinction between interns and volunteers. .

Induction

Even though interns may have excellent qualifications or some previous experience, it will still feel like a very new experience for them when they start. In addition, because internships can be relatively short compared with a full-time position, it is essential that interns settle in as quickly as possible. Some sort of induction process can make an intern’s transition into the world of work disciplines a smooth and enjoyable experience as well as helping by integrating them as quickly and effortlessly as possible. Even though the internship may only last for a few months, you must still prepare for their arrival.

You may wish to consider the following elements in any short induction programme:

* an introduction to the Parish, including its history, Service patterns, and values.
* how your Parish and PCC is structured (providing the intern with photos and names of key people is always very helpful, if you can manage it)
* a brief introduction to the senior members of the Parish as well as the people that the intern will be working with on a regular basis
* a tour of the premises, including work area,
* health and safety information (this is a legal requirement)
* a clear outline of the job/role requirements

The line manager or mentor should have a discussion with the intern about the day-to-day duties that they will be responsible for in addition to any short-term and long-term objectives that are relevant at the beginning of the internship (for example projects that the intern will be working on). Depending on the nature of the Parish organisation, you may also need to inform colleagues of the intern’s arrival on their first morning, set up computer login details that they will be able to use and provide them with any documentation that they need to read before they can begin work. Try not to overburden the intern on their first morning, so give them plenty of time to digest any information or forms that you pass over to them. It may also be helpful for you to arrange dates and times during the intern’s first couple of weeks for them to have short individual meetings with everyone that they will be working alongside as well as any relevant senior Parish staff. This saves you having to go into too much detail during the induction.

Managing and Mentoring

As interns may be relatively new to the world of work, the way that they are managed is crucial. Just like any other employee, good management and supervision will make the intern more productive and develop more quickly. Although interns

will become more self-sufficient as the internship progresses, it is recommended that someone local with line management experience acts as a mentor for the intern

throughout their time with you.

It is recommended that mentors are tasked with the following duties:

* building a supportive working relationship with the intern
* meeting the intern for lunch each day during their first week
* acting as a point of contact for any concerns that the intern might have
* discussing career options and the intern’s plans for the future.

Ideally, an intern will be working with a range of people in the Parish. In any case, it is not essential for the mentor to work alongside the intern throughout the working day. That said, they should maintain regular contact with the intern, particularly in their first few weeks, to help them settle in and give them any informal help and guidance.

The mentor should have regular conversations about the intern’s performance in terms of their achievements, conduct and development as well as discussing what they will be concentrating on in future.

Final review meeting

As the internship draws to a close, regardless of how long it has lasted, it is good practice to arrange a final review meeting with the intern to discuss a number of

issues. It is suggested that this review meeting is carried out by the intern’s line manager. During the review, you can discuss:

* What has the intern learned and how have they developed over this internship?
* How well do you think they have met your objectives (set either at the beginning of or during the internship)?
* What have been their biggest/proudest achievements?
* What projects have they completed or contributed to?
* In what ways are they better prepared for the jobs market after completing this internship (this can include ‘soft’ skills as well as specific projects)?
* How well do you think they have performed (in general and/or on specific projects)?
* What are their strengths and weaknesses?
* What areas of development do you suggest that they concentrate on in future jobs?
* What did they most and least enjoy about the internship?

Remember to write down the intern’s responses to these questions, as this will form the basis of any reference letters that you provide for them (discussed below). To help the flow of the conversation, it might be easier to give the intern the review questions in advance to give them time to think about the topics that you will be discussing. Always make sure that the conversation is constructive and focuses as much as possible on positive elements of the intern and the internship.

Providing a reference

A reference letter is the best way that an intern can demonstrate to a future employer what skills they have developed and what they have achieved. In terms of content, it is easiest to use the content of the review meeting as the basis for a reference letter, seeing as this will include what the intern has learned, achieved, developed and undertaken during the internship. It is also helpful if you can include positive comments, if appropriate, regarding their punctuality, attitude and any exceptional skills or aptitude that they showed. Typically, employer reference letters for interns are no more than one side of A4. Combining the outcomes of the review meeting with standard reference information (for example the dates that they worked for you and their main duties) is normally sufficient.