



Work experience placements within the Skills Zone

One of the key barriers identified by Skills Zone partners as preventing some local residents from getting a job was a lack of work experience. People looking for their first job or returning to the workplace after a period away are often told they do not have the right experience, but finding an employer willing to give them the opportunity to gain this experience proves very difficult. Skills Zone partners decided therefore to lead by example and offer placements within their own organisations.

Since identifying the issue and designing the process, a number of successful placements have been arranged. Job seekers have so far been placed with Sentinel Housing, Queen Mary's College, R.C.S Ltd and Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council.

Managers have found the placements easy to arrange either by working with JCP to recruit potential candidates, or arranging placements for their clients within partner organisations.

"Chloe registered for our STEP (support towards employment programme) with Sentinel Housing to gain experience in an administration role. Chloe had lots of experience in care, but wanted to build a career in another area. Through the Skills zone work placement programme, Chloe's profile was sent to all partners and resulted in Queen Mary's college offering Chloe a placement.

Julie Grove, Step employability and engagement coordinator, Sentinel Housing Association

"Terri at JCP organised the interviews for us, we just had to tell her how many we wanted to see and on what day. We interviewed 4 people, one of whom came to work in our Economic Development team for a 6 week placement. We also managed to secure a placement for one of the other people we interviewed within the Council's legal team and are hoping to secure one of the other interviewees a placement within our Corporate Support Team."

Lisa Edwards, Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council

The scheme offers vital practical work experience but also support to help people with their future job applications. Those on placements complete work diaries to help them capture the skills and experience they gain and are given advice on how to portray this in job applications and at interviews.

Those who have been on placements have found the process really positive; gaining experience, developing skills and growing in confidence. A number have already been successful in securing an apprenticeship or job offer as a result of the placement.

The Skills Zone has developed a series of templates to make the process simple for employers. This process is currently being trialled within the partnership and is working well.

To build on these successes we need more partners to take an active role; to identify clients they are working with who could benefit from a placement and also to work within their own organisations to encourage managers to offer placements.

If you have someone looking to get some experience, think you can offer a placement or would like some more information please get in touch.

“...once I started my placement I realised I was enjoying myself. It wasn't as hard as I thought it would be. Even I have noticed how much more confident I am in myself now that I have been on this work placement. It has opened my eyes to career paths I hadn't even thought to look at...I'm grateful that I was given this chance!”

“My placement has really allowed me to develop my skills and knowledge of my desired field of employment... This experience has provided me with skills applicable to all jobs including the ability to work to tight deadlines and improving my administrative skills...”

“Doing work experience at Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council has really helped me improve a wide range of skills. The experience has been invaluable and I now have the confidence and the experience to progress my career. I am very happy that it has helped me and my future but also that I have been a help to the people I was working with.”



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