

Children's Social Care – Guidance on Requests for Shadowing, Visits or Work Experience

1. Shadowing

Policy

- To support requests for shadowing whenever possible to:
 - promote Somerset social care services as a place to work, encouraging the recruitment of social workers in the longer term
 - provide an insight into statutory social work for under-represented groups in the workforce
 - provide opportunities which can contribute to staff development.
- Not to provide placements for any courses other than SW qualification courses as the work experience that can be offered is not at an appropriate level and protecting services users' confidentiality, anonymity and safeguarding must be a prime consideration at all times. This equally applies to applicants.
- Participants should shadow staff whose practice is agreed to be of a good standard (this will often be Advanced Practitioners, or other staff nominated by line managers).

Nature of Requests Received

- Candidates on Return to Social Work Schemes
- Required Shadowing for Readiness to Practice on Social Work Qualification Programmes
- Work Experience Days for 6th Form students
- Individuals seeking insight into social work when considering a career change and/or studying a different degree
- Other professionals and partnership agencies on induction programmes.

Principles

Priority consideration will be given to:

- All university students with Somerset bases or links who are already enrolled on a social work qualification programme
- Other students enrolled on a university social work qualification programme
- Applicants already engaged in a Return to Social Work formal scheme where specific programme requirements can be met
- All of the above where a DBS is in place

The Benefits of Shadowing

- We recognise the many benefits of shadowing for both individuals and the service; it's a valuable way of learning from others, increasing knowledge and skills, widening understanding of the roles of other practitioners, providing insights into possible career options and expanding professional networks. We encourage all internal staff wanting a shadowing experience to be proactive in talking to their line manager and seeking out opportunities with colleagues and partners.
- Hosting a colleague's shadowing experience is also a good way of the host reflecting on their own area of work and developing coaching and mentoring skills. As part of the Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership, we also welcome colleagues in Health and Police to shadow our practitioners. Please see our joint commitment [here](#) on Promoting Partnership Working.

Process for shadowing requests

All requests to be directed through the Learning and Development Team through central inbox (cfld@somerset.gov.uk) where they will be recorded and forwarded, as appropriate. Individual requests will be dealt with according to the following diagram.

Requests for Shadowing

Requests from school college students and those under 18

- Advise that we can't offer formal shadowing for this group
- Refer to work experience week as opportunity for students from specific college/s

Requests from colleagues in partner agencies

- See our joint commitment [here](#) on Promoting Partnership Working.

Requests from those *not* already on a social work qualifying or formal Return to Social Work programme

- Advise that we can't offer formal shadowing for this group
- Send routes into social work chart
- Send powerpoint on ' Day in the Life of a Social Worker' (when available)
- Refer to helpful websites for more information about social work as a profession:

Department for Education

<https://www.gov.uk/search/all?keywords=social+work&order=relevance>

Social Work England

<https://socialworkengland.org.uk/>

Health & Care Professions Council (HCPC)

<https://www.hcpc-uk.org/resources/standards/standards-of-proficiency-social-workers-in-england/>

British Association of Social Workers

<https://www.basw.co.uk/resources/become-social-worker>

Students enrolled on a social work qualifying or formal Return to Social Work

- L&D team to send shadowing request form for completion and return
- Consider home address, work base address preference and are of social work interested in shadowing
- L&D to send completed request form to area Consultant Social Worker (CSW) with a reminder of need for DBS or confidentiality agreement
- L&D to advise applicant who is now dealing with request
- CSW to check capacity in area/team before commitment made
- CSW to refer to relevant TM
- CSW/TM/Social Worker to communicate with applicant direct to confirm if placement possible

2. Requests from schools/colleges/HEIs for someone to attend events or to speak to students

Schools/Colleges

- CSC and ASC L&D reps to liaise/forward request to named people in service/s to support (in CSC this will be CSWs)
- L&D to be informed who will attend and record centrally.

Universities

- CSC and ASC L&D reps to liaise and forward request to named people in service/s to support (for CSC this will be the named CSW for specific Universities).

Process for all of above

All requests to be directed through the Learning and Development Team through central in-box (cflid@somerset.gov.uk) where they could be centrally co-ordinated;

Responses to requests for shadowing opportunities should happen in a timely way.

Central record of all shadowing and other requests to be kept by L&D Team.

3. Information for volunteering with children and young people

For internal staff:

[Central Volunteer Team](#)

Internal or external:

Many SCC services – including those working with young people - use volunteers, and opportunities are promoted via [Somerset Volunteering | Volunteer opportunities in Somerset](#) and [Facebook page](#).

External:

Outside SCC [Spark Somerset](#) promote volunteering and volunteer opportunities. They have a [dedicated portal](#) to promote volunteer opportunities and enable voluntary groups to manage their recruitment. Spark also manages the [Volunteers in Somerset Facebook group](#) which enables voluntary groups to ask for volunteers and potential volunteers to enquire about opportunities.
