

ECC Paid Work Experience

The summary:

I am providing a wage subsidy to organisations in the voluntary sector across Essex, or to social enterprises, that can host a young person on a 6-month work experience placement. My funding will allow an organisation to employ a 16 or 17 year-old for 26 hours a week, paying them national minimum wage (£3.68), for up to 26 weeks. Funding totals £2487.68, the first half of which is paid when I receive a copy of the young person's contract and a job description, and after 3 months the remaining funding is paid -presuming the young person remains in post. I have covered the cost of a CRB where required, and in some cases, paid reasonable PPE costs.

I ask that the organisation provides meaningful work experience, as well as support to the candidate to help them source something longer term beyond their time in post. This may mean assistance with formulating a CV and job-searching or perhaps interview practice, as well as possibly helping their employee to access formal training opportunities where possible. This is in addition to normal line management support. The young person is the employee of the organisation for the time of their placement, and is therefore contracted by them and subject to their conduct/attendance policies etc.

The candidates:

In terms of the young people, we are aiming this scheme at 'disadvantaged' candidates aged 16/17, (though we will accept referrals of young people aged between 18 and 20 if from a care background or with a disability*). Those referring to date include the Youth Offending Team, ECC's Leaving and Aftercare Service, Connexions before it's demise, and the organisations involved themselves. 'Disadvantage' may mean one of the following:

'Long-term' NEET
Care Leaver / those on the 'edge of care'
Young offender
Low academic achiever
Those living in more deprived areas
Teen parents

The point is, I am relying generally on the judgement of the person referring the candidate, to decide whether the young person is eligible for the scheme. The young person's details are supplied to me using the attached referral form, the form includes a field to add general info that will help guide where to refer the candidate etc.

****Please note: Candidates aged 18-20 attract the same level of funding as above. Organisations wishing to recruit this older candidate may choose to contract the employee for 19.2 hours, meaning my funding will still cover the wage on this basis for the full 26 weeks.***

The process:

I would ask initially that the organisation wishing to host a placement or placements, provide me with a job description when possible. This will help guide referrals to those organisations. At the same time, I will send a Service Level Agreement for you to read, sign and return to me. Depending on number of posts, I will then send sufficient number of referrals to you for consideration by email. Organisations can reject immediately for sound reasons, although I'd hope that job preference alone wouldn't be a deciding factor as we know that they may not have considered what they are being referred for. The candidates would then be contacted and invited in for interview (whatever your usual process is), and when a decision has been taken and the young person informed, I'd ask that I am made aware of a start date etc. Once I receive a copy of the contract, then I will send a payment schedule for your organisation to invoice for the first half of the wage subsidy.

Rejected candidates are made aware to me using the attached 'outcome form', once the candidates themselves have been given feedback.

The young person commences their placement, and works the 26 hours* (or where it's felt less hours are possible and are agreed with myself and the candidate – I wouldn't be able to fund posts certainly offering less than 16 hours for example) each week. Posts to date have seen the young person working for four days a week, leaving the fifth day clear to pursue positive additional opportunities (college / additional work experience / volunteering) but this is flexible.

If the candidate leaves prior to 3 months, I'd ask that the organisation advises me and we will then agree to either replace the candidate, or credit the overpayment back to ECC. Otherwise, after 3 months I am advised as to the young person's progress, and the organisation claims the remaining funding. In ideal circumstances, the candidate gains sufficient knowledge, skills and experience over their time with the host company to enable them to be successful in securing a job / apprenticeship / college place beyond their placement. If I am contacted in advance of the end of the placement, I may be able to assist with promoting candidates to the private sector etc.

In addition:

I can offer a wage subsidy of £2500 to firms taking on an apprentice from a care background. Once again I am receiving referrals of young people for this scheme and can provide candidates where a vacancy is possible.

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