

Work Shadowing Scheme Briefing Note

This Work Shadowing Briefing note has been prepared to provide some key points to consider when joining the scheme, including:

- 1. What is work shadowing?**
- 2. Who is work shadowing suitable for?**
- 3. What are the different types of shadowing available?**
- 4. What is the time period for shadowing?**
- 5. What are the responsibilities for the *guest and **host?**
- 6. Cancellation of arrangements**
- 7. Who do I contact with any queries?**

For the purpose of the scheme the *Guest is the person doing the shadowing and the **Host is the person being shadowed.

1) What is work shadowing?

The Work Shadowing Scheme is designed to provide development opportunities for participants to shadow individuals working at Leicestershire County Council.

Work shadowing is an opportunity to shadow or follow the work of another employee within the organisation. It has many potential benefits for an organisation and can help to improve communication and networking across Departments. Work shadowing is an opportunity for sharing best practice and for self-development.

2) Who is work shadowing suitable for?

Participation in the work shadowing scheme is suitable for employees who wish to increase their confidence, knowledge and skills to enhance their career development prospects.

As this is a short term undertaking participants need to be clear about their objectives and ensure that work shadowing is the most appropriate way to meet these.

Work shadowing is most likely to be useful for the following areas:

- To develop an understanding of what is required in terms of knowledge, skills and experience to increase your chances of getting short-listed for vacancies you may be considering apply for.
- To identify your current career stage in order to inform future career options and the impact of such options.
- To spend time with a manager or in a role at the next level to gain a deeper understanding of skills required within the role.
- To gain refreshed perspectives and greater insight into different Departments and Sections within the County Council.
- To give you a chance to reflect on your own work practices and possibly highlight areas for change or improvement.



Work shadowing in itself is unlikely to provide skills development, however it may give a better idea of what is required to move into a particular area and identify avenues for the development of relevant skills or experience. Other development activities such as mentoring or coaching may complement or be a suitable alternative to work shadowing.

3) What different types of work shadowing are available?

There are two main types of work shadowing which are:

i) Observation

The guest spends full days during the shadowing period observing the day to day work of the host and attending relevant meetings, where appropriate. The host will provide opportunities for debriefing to ensure both parties benefit from the shadowing period. The value of this type of shadowing is that it provides clear boundaries of expectations on either side.

ii) Regular briefings

Rather than a prolonged shadowing period, the guest will shadow for specific activities which are preceded by a mini briefing and followed by a debrief discussion. This type of shadowing is most effective if the guest and host are within the same location thereby enabling the guest to attend in shorter blocks. The value of this type of shadowing is that it provides short periods of focused activity, rather than passive ongoing observation. However, this type of shadowing can prove disruptive for both guest and host if it is not carefully scheduled.

The host and guest may decide whether to adopt one or a combination of the shadowing approaches described above.

4) What is the time period of the shadowing?

The shadowing experience is flexible and the length of time needs to be decided between the guest and host depending upon the objectives for joining the scheme. It is important to agree at the outset what the expectations are from each party and the activities that would be most beneficial for the guest to shadow. However it is anticipated that the experience should be completed in a short term period.

5) What are the responsibilities of learning & development, the host and guest?

The following checklist sets out the role and responsibilities for each party in the work shadowing experience to help them prepare for the visit.

Corporate Learning & Development Service will:-

- Work with Departmental Management Teams, Departmental Workforce Groups, Workers Groups and Managers to publicise the scheme and to identify a list of hosts who are willing to participate in the shadowing scheme.
- Publicise the scheme, provide a pre-brief form, work shadowing briefing note and list of hosts on CIS.
- Provide the host & guest with an evaluation template.

- Respond to any queries from the host & guest.

The Line Manager will:-

- Discuss and agree the suitability of the participant engaging in work shadowing as part of their PDR and Learning Pathway, and agree the objectives.
- Agree a suitable timeframe for the work shadowing experience.
- Work with the participant to find a suitable match and ensure that the host is fully briefed.
- Ensure that cover is arranged during the participant's absence.
- Carry out a post brief discussion to:-
 - See if the initial objectives were achieved
 - Identify whether any further development is required
 - Agree how the learning will be put into practice

The Host will:

- Provide the guest with a job outline/job description.
- Agree a suitable timeframe for shadowing to take place.
- Find a safe and suitable workplace/area for the guest to observe from.
- Ensure colleagues and contacts are briefed about the guest's role and responsibilities and assure them of confidentiality.
- Seek feedback from the guest and respond to any questions.
- Provide the guest with relevant and constructive feedback.
- Be punctual at all times.
- Complete the evaluation template after the event so that experiences can be captured and forward to nominations@leics.gov.uk. Please note that quotations from this may be used in further publicity of the scheme, however no names or events will be attributable to individuals.

The Guest will:

- Discuss and request their line manager's permission to participate in the work shadowing scheme as part of their PDR and Learning Pathway. This discussion should agree their objectives.
- Complete the pre-brief questionnaire identifying what you are looking to achieve, and forward to the Host.



- Work with their line manager to find a suitable match and brief the host accordingly.
- Agree a suitable timeframe for the work shadowing experience with their line manager and host.
- Email nominations@leics.gov.uk with their name, the name of the host, and the start date of the shadowing experience.
- Prepare for the visits and provide the host with an outline of their expectations for the period including:-
 - how the work shadowing fits with their personal development needs,
 - what they hope to gain from the experience,
 - what needs or anxieties they have that the host should be made aware of,
 - any particular questions that they want to find the answers to,
 - any preconceptions they have of the role of the host?
- Familiarise themselves with procedures and working practices of the host.
- Show tact, discretion and awareness by withdrawing when circumstances deem it appropriate.
- Make and keep records responsibly with the permission of those involved.
- Maintain confidentiality at all times.
- Provide the host with feedback and reflection on the experience.
- Be punctual at all times.
- Reflect on the experience, share good practice and apply what has been learned in the workplace.
- Notify nominations@leics.gov.uk when the experience has been completed.
- Complete the evaluation template after the event so that experiences can be captured and forward to nominations@leics.gov.uk. Please note that quotations from this may be used in further publicity of the scheme, however no names or events will be attributable to individuals.

6) Cancellations

Guests and Hosts are requested to give as much notice as possible of any cancellations of planned shadowing activities that are due to unforeseen circumstances.

However because of the short-term focus of the scheme it is hoped that any cancellations or altered appointments will be kept to a minimum.

The responsibility for rearranging any cancelled appointments, at a mutually convenient time, lies with the individual who cancelled the original appointment.

7) Who to contact for questions/queries:-

If you have any questions or queries during the shadowing experience then please contact Mandy Baughurst, Learning & Development Advisor on 0116 305 7546 or via email Mandy.baughurst@leics.gov.uk