

Social Work Apprenticeship Policy & Guidance – Children's Social Care and Children and Family Wellbeing Service

1. Purpose of this document

This document is to set out how the social work apprenticeship will function with Children's Social Care and Children and Family Wellbeing Service.

2. Program

Leicestershire County Council are working jointly with Warwick University who provide a 3 year BA (Hons) Social Work Apprenticeship programme. This consists of 4 days per week in the workplace and 1 day per week learning (delivered as face-to-face academic teaching, online learning & self-directed study).

Any further time required to complete requirements from the course will need to be completed within personal time, or as annual leave, unpaid leave or toil (with agreement from line manager). Participation in all elements of the learning is required and annual leave will need to be planned around this. At the end of the program successful apprentices receive a BA in Social Work and are able to register with Social Work England.

3. Application Criteria

Applicants must meet the following criteria:

- Evidence of Maths and English GCSE at grade C or equivalent (qualification needs to be checked against Warwick's list of approved equivalents)
- A minimum of two years employment history with Leicestershire County Council working directly with service users within a social care or child and family wellbeing team in a permanent full-time contract
- Employment record devoid of any capability and misconduct concerns
- Reference and support from your current line manager. Your line manager must have a full understanding of the commitment they are making.
- Evidence to support your ability to cope with university study alongside full time working
- Personal capacity to complete the apprenticeship course within 3 years
- Independent learning skills – such as the ability to work on own initiative to prioritise tasks and structure own learning, by undertaking appropriate wider research and reading to support learning
- Critical thinking skills – such as the ability to objectively analyse facts, information, concepts or beliefs
- Interpersonal skills – such as working effectively in groups by seeking to achieve cooperation and consensus to achieve common goals
- Communication skills – listening, written and oral

- Commitment to the values and ethics of social work practice, in line with Social Work England

4. Process of Application

4.1 Stage 1

An internal selection process based on your application submissions, undertaken by Children & Family Services, with a panel made up of representatives from across the service.

4.2 Stage 2

University assessment day and selection process, group interview. Mathematics and English language screening and testing. Applicants who do not meet the requirements to study at undergraduate level will not progress onto the course.

4.3 Stage 3

Final selection based on scores from the university assessments.

Candidates and team managers notified.

5. Contract Details

For candidates from Children's Social Care, they remain on their existing contract for the duration of the program and retain their existing line management. Candidates will retain the current level of pay of their contract and job role during the 3 years, and will receive normal increments.

For candidates from Children and Family Wellbeing Service, it is a requirement to move into the role of Support and Assessment Worker, Grade 9, within a Children's Social Care team for the duration of the course. Candidates will receive pay associated with that contract, job role and grade for the duration of the course, and will receive normal increments.

Social Work Apprenticeship is funded by Leicestershire County Council via the apprenticeship levy.

6. Outcome of the program

On successful completion of the programme, apprentices will be offered a vacant newly qualified social work post within Children's Social Care with a permanent contract as a newly qualified social worker. This will be as the top of grade 9 for the length of the Assessed and Supported Year in Employment.

A preference process will take place to aim to match apprentices with their role preferences.

7. Shadowing and Learning Opportunities

- 7.1 During the three-year program we will endeavour to provide learning opportunities to enrich the program.
- 7.2 Year 1 will be focused on commencing the course and balancing this alongside work.
- 7.3 Within Year 1, a minimum of one shadowing opportunity during the year will be offered with another team for a maximum of 1 week.
- 7.4 Within Year 2, further shadowing opportunities will be offered, including 1 week in First Response, and 1 week within another social care team.
- 7.5 At the end of year 2 and beginning of year 3, **Contrasting Learning Experience** placements take place which is a 30-day placement within a contrasting setting, usually adult services.
- 7.6 Within Year 3, focus will be on completing the course and remaining assignments.
- 7.7 During Year 2 or Year 3, each apprentice should have the opportunity to be a co-worker for a child subject to a child protection plan alongside an experienced social worker. This is to support learning and development around key child protection policies and practices. For the period of co-working, a workload adjustment would need to be agreed by the line manager.