

Frequently Asked Questions

1. How are applications processed?

Applications will be submitted by a Disability Organisation on behalf of individuals via NICS HR. The application will name a support officer from the organisation who is willing to provide appropriate support, guidance and assistance to the individual during their period of work placement and also to staff who will be directly working with the individual. NICS HR will review the information contained within the application form and decide which department would be best suited to facilitate a placement with the desired experience. The full application process is outlined in the attached process map.

2. Is the completion of the indemnity form mandatory?

No, where indemnity is not available for an individual seeking an unpaid work placement the Department should assess the risk of potential personal injury, damage to property or other loss in light of the nature and location of the work. Where such risk is insignificant an application for an unpaid work placement should be accepted. No individual accepted for a work placement should be unsupervised and any risks should be managed in the same way as for other employees.

3. Are there typical attendance patterns / durations for these placements?

No, requests for work pattern and duration can vary greatly depending on the individual's situation and requirements. They can range from a ½ day per week for up to 1 year to 5 days per week for a few months. Departments are not obligated to meet the exact terms requested in the application, a compromised position can be offered if the full request cannot be met.

4. Is the department obligated to facilitate a placement if an application is received?

No, however the NICS Board is clear that departments should be proactive in identifying potential placements within their business areas and fully consider the application with the view to facilitating a placement where possible.

5. Is there any cost to the department?

No, these placements are unpaid and as with all work experience/work placement opportunities, NICS HR or Departmental are not expected to fund any external support or adjustments. There is also no expectation of a permanent job being offered as a result of an individual completing a period of work placement with a Department.

6. Is security clearance required for individuals on placement?

For placements of more than 4 weeks or where access to systems or sensitive information is required the individual may be asked to provide a basic AccessNI clearance certificate. However, if the placement is only work shadowing or has minimal access to sensitive information then an AccessNI may not be required. Departments will be asked to confirm if the position will require a clearance if / when the placement is agreed in principle therefore Branches should liaise with their Assistant Departmental Security Officer (ADSO) at the earliest opportunity to assess the risks involved and decide if a clearance is necessary.

7. Are additional checks required for staff who will be working alongside these individuals?

No, security checks for staff that will be mentoring or supervising placement individuals are not required however; it is not advisable to structure a placement where any member of staff could be on a one to one situation with a vulnerable adult or young person during a work placement.

8. Will there be an opportunity to meet with the support officer prior to placement?

Yes, the support officer will be available to meet with the placing department to agree a plan which outlines the responsibilities of the placement provider (branch), the organisation, support officer and the individual.

This plan should cover aspects such as;

- The individual's aims for the placement, expectations and interests;
- Agreed role, attendance, duration of the placement and agree a basic work plan;
- Physical access to the workplace;
- Agreement of adjustments / training required and where the responsibility lies for providing necessary adjustments;
- Procedures for risk assessments to be completed for the placement;
- Procedures for responding to any difficulties encountered during the placement;
- Any other information which the support officer may deem relevant to the proposed placement.

A pre-placement meeting checklist is available for information.

9. Is training available for staff prior to commencement of the placement?

Some disability organisations can facilitate short training or awareness sessions with the staff / branch prior to the placement. This can be discussed and agreed at the pre placement meeting between the Branch and the support officer from the disability organisation.

10. Should I notify all staff within the branch of the details of the individual's disability?

Individuals may be reluctant to disclose their disability and not all information about an individual's disability may be related to their proposed work placement. If this is the

case, such information should only be shared with staff members who need to know in order to proceed with the placement. The support officer can advise on this issue (if required) and can be asked to advise staff who will be working directly with the individual.

11. Who do I contact if I have any questions about the scheme / placement?

Queries can be emailed to resourcingchr@dfpni.gov.uk for the attention of Karen Wallace.

12. Will I be asked to provide feedback in relation to the placement?

NICS HR may ask Branches, support officers and individuals to provide feedback on facilitated placements to improve and develop the process for future placements. This will also allow lessons learned from placements to be shared with departments who receive similar placement applications.