



# The Work Shadowing experience

## Preparation for Work Shadowing

Once a match has been made between Host and Shadow, the staff members should arrange an initial meeting at least one week before the shadowing takes place. This is an opportunity for you to agree the objectives and ground rules.

At this meeting, you should consider the following:

- objectives of the placement (contained in the Work Shadow Application form);
- areas of particular interest;
- how work shadowing fits in with the Shadow's wider professional development;
- agreement on issues of confidentiality;
- the shadowing activities, dates and times.

## Types of work shadowing

There are different ways of arranging a work shadowing placement. The important thing is that this is discussed beforehand by the Host and Shadow and an agreement made about which approaches to adopt.

### Observation

The Shadow spends the period observing the day-to-day work of the Host and attending relevant meetings where appropriate. This is suitable where an understanding of the role of the Host is required.

### Regular briefings

The Shadow works with the Host on specific activities. This type of shadowing provides short periods of focused activity, rather than passive ongoing observation.

### Hands-on

This is an extension of the observation model, where the Shadow undertakes a task for the Host during the period. It provides the Shadow with hands-on experience in the role whilst under the Host's supervision. This type of observation provides first-hand experience of the role together with a meaningful task to undertake.

Versatility is the key to a successful work shadowing placement. A combination of the above types of shadowing experience generally works best.

Once this meeting has taken place, the information agreed can be captured in a Work Shadowing Agreement, signed by both Shadow and Host. A copy of this Agreement should be sent to the relevant line managers and to the Work Shadowing Scheme Coordinator.

## During the shadowing placement

The Shadow should:

- maintain confidentiality ;
- provide the Host with feedback and reflection on the experience;
- inform the Host if their absence is unavoidable.

The Host should:

- provide the Shadow with a work outline and a timetable for shadowing to take place;
- choose carefully when to host the shadow, dependent on work schedule and the Shadow's objectives;
- ensure colleagues and contacts are briefed about the Shadow's role and responsibilities;
- provide opportunity for the Shadow to ask questions and provide feedback;
- provide the Shadow with relevant and constructive feedback;
- provide the Shadow with appropriate notice if the shadowing activity has to be altered or cancelled.

## Reflecting on the experience

At the end of the shadowing experience it is important that the Shadow reflects on what they have learned.

- What were the main things you learned from the experience?
- What did you enjoy about it?
- What did you least enjoy?
- How can the lessons learned assist you in your current role?
- Was the experience what you expected?
- Has the shadowing identified any future areas for development?

Evaluation forms should be completed by both staff involved in the placement, and completed forms returned to the Work Shadowing Scheme Coordinator.

