

Workforce Shadowing

Information Sheet



Workforce development
Stronger together

Gain a new perspective... by being a work shadow

Thank you...

...for your interest in the Workforce Shadowing Programme. This guidance has been written for both shadows and hosts to help everyone gain the most out of the Workforce Shadowing experience.

The importance of working together in partnership for the benefit of families has never been greater. One of the key aims of the programme is to give those shadowing an **insight into the role of other members of the Families First workforce.**

This should be a mutually beneficial experience for both shadows and hosts which will:

- build on partnerships working
- enhance ongoing relationships and
- broaden both parties knowledge of other peoples' roles and priorities within teams and organisations

What is workforce shadowing?

Workforce shadowing provides a unique and exciting opportunity to gain experience of practice outside your organisation, to find out how other people work and to understand other peoples' job roles and priorities. This fosters a greater understanding amongst the Families First workforce and enables more effective integrated working.

The Workforce Shadowing Programme applies to all members of the Families First workforce in Hertfordshire - whether you work directly with children and young people, or provide support to those that do.

Principles of workforce shadowing

- To see how other members of the workforce do their job
- To see how other organisations work and understand the rationale behind processes and procedures
- To explain what we do and show other members of the workforce the value of our work
- To learn from each other
- To gain an understanding of other peoples' priorities and specialisms
- To look at things from a new perspective
- To reflect on what we do
- To see the 'bigger picture'
- To work effectively together to ensure better outcomes for families

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What does workforce shadowing involve?

For the shadow	For the host
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Commit time to explore how another member of the workforce does their job• Being clear about what you would like to get out of the workforce shadowing experience• Experience the culture and demands of a different working environment• Observe and analyse the way your host works• Questioning in a constructive way• Reflect on your experience• Apply what you have experienced to your behaviour, attitude and work practices• Share your learning and experience with others• Provide feedback on your experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Opening up your workplace to another member of the workforce• Prepare for your shadow to spend time with you• Share your reasons for how you work• Respond informatively to your shadow's questions• Provide constructive feedback to your shadow• Benefit from feedback from your shadow• Learn from other peoples' job roles/organisation• Reflect on your experience• Provide feedback on your experience

What are the benefits?

Key benefits of workforce shadowing include:

- Understand more about particular roles and priorities and the current issues facing the Families First workforce
- Work together more effectively
- Enhance your own professional development
- Enhance communication across the Families First workforce
- Develop ongoing professional relationships and networking skills
- To experience the culture of another organisation and breakdown organisation barriers to work more effectively together
- Develop observation, questioning, listening and feedback skills

How to get the most out of your workforce shadowing experience

For workforce shadowing to be a positive experience, both the shadow and the host should consider and agree some key points prior to the placement:

What are your expectations?

Both parties should have a clear understanding of what each other expects to get out of the workforce shadowing experience. Every shadow should have been clear about their aims and objectives on their application form – this form is shared with their host. When the shadow contacts their host to arrange a date for the workforce shadowing placement, this is an ideal opportunity to reiterate what they hope to gain from the experience and also for the host to discuss what their own expectations are.

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How long will the placement last?

A mutually agreeable period of workforce shadowing should be agreed from the outset – in most cases this will be a full day, but some placements might last longer than this. In some cases, you may find it beneficial to arrange short bursts of shadowing activity over a number of weeks. Both parties should agree on the timescale and wherever possible, the placement should take place within three months of the shadow making contact with their host.

What types of activities will be shadowed?

It is the host's responsibility to determine the activities that their shadow will experience in order to make the placement as relevant as it can be. The host should make it as clear as possible to their shadow the types of activities they will be experiencing during their placement. There are some activities that it would not be appropriate to shadow such as appraisal interviews, job interviews and disciplinary and complaint hearings.

DBS checks

Each shadow is asked to declare on their shadowing application form whether they have had a DBS check in the last 3 years. Their line manager is asked to counter-sign the form to confirm the information that has been provided is correct, before sending it to the host for consideration.

Does the shadow have any accessibility needs?

If a shadow has any accessibility needs or additional requirements, they should discuss these with their host so arrangements can be made to meet them. Similarly, if a shadow has any anxieties at all about the placement, they should discuss their concerns with their host.

What are the host organisation's health and safety practices?

The host should make their shadow aware of any relevant health and safety practices related to their workplace. Hosts should do their utmost to reasonably avoid putting their shadow, clients/customers or others in the organisation at risk.

What are the host organisation's confidentiality practices?

During the course of their placement, shadows may come across confidential information relating to their host's organisation or to children, young people and families. It is expected that shadows keep any such information confidential and hosts make their organisation's confidentiality practices clear from the outset. Shadows should show tact and discretion during the placement by withdrawing from activities, where appropriate. They should also make and keep notes responsibly, discretely and with the permission of those involved, remembering to maintain confidentiality.

What behaviour is expected?

Both the shadow and the host should be punctual and polite throughout the placement. Both parties should question and offer feedback constructively and hosts should answer their shadow's questions as fully and informatively as possible. If a placement has to be postponed or cancelled, the host or shadow (as applicable) should contact each other at the earliest opportunity.

If you are hosting and work directly with clients, either in their home or at other locations, please ensure you get their consent for your shadow to be present while you work with them.

What to do after?

We are very keen to receive feedback about the scheme and ask that you please take the time to complete the evaluation form (on the Families First website) after the workforce shadowing placement has taken place. You can also email us with your feedback at any time:

WorkForceDevelopment.FamiliesFirst@hertfordshire.gov.uk

Families First Workforce Shadowing Scheme CHECKLIST

For the shadow	For the host
<p>Before the placement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Consider how shadowing fits in with your development needs and what you expect to gain from the experience ✓ Fill in the Application Form and send to the Workforce Development email to organise a host ✓ Once your application form has been accepted, contact your host (with your line manager) to arrange a date for your workforce shadowing placement ✓ Discuss expectations with your host (including any areas of special interest) and the format of the placement ✓ Confirm practical arrangements such as start time, meeting place and check basics such as dress code, access, parking etc. ✓ Discuss any accessibility needs you have and any concerns or anxieties ✓ Ensure relevant personnel know when your placement is taking place so any necessary cover can be arranged ✓ Research your host's role and organisation ✓ Plan your journey to your host's workplace <p>After the placement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Reflect on the experience and what you have learned ➤ Complete an evaluation form this will enable us to improve the workforce shadowing scheme and ensure it meets future needs. ➤ Share good practice with your team and apply what you have learned in your own workplace <p><i>Please download the relevant evaluation forms from the Families First website and send to:</i> WorkForceDevelopment.FamiliesFirst@hertfordshire.gov.uk</p>	<p>Before the placement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Consider how being shadowed fits in with your development needs and what you expect to gain from the experience ✓ Discuss expectations with your shadow, ask them what their hopes are, tell them what you can offer and negotiate a plan for the placement ✓ Provide practical information to your shadow such as start time, where to meet, who will meet them, directions etc. ✓ Ensure you are able to meet any accessibility needs your shadow may have and address any concerns or anxieties ✓ Consider the health and safety and confidentiality practices you need to inform your shadow of ✓ Ensure your shadow will have a safe and appropriate space from which to participate ✓ Make sure your line manager and team know you are being shadowed and discuss any impact this may have on them ✓ If you work directly with clients, don't forget to ask for their consent for your shadow to be present ✓ Put together a brief plan for the placement <p>After the placement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Reflect on the experience and what you have learned ➤ Complete an evaluation form this will enable us to improve the workforce shadowing scheme and ensure it meets future needs. ➤ Share your shadow's feedback with your team and apply what you have learned in the workplace <p><i>Please download the relevant evaluation forms from the Families First website and send to:</i> WorkForceDevelopment.FamiliesFirst@hertfordshire.gov.uk</p>