



Gofal Cymdeithasol **Cymru**
Social Care **Wales**

Supporting learner placements during Covid-19

Guidance on how to support early years and childcare settings to place learners during Covid-19.

First published: 8 December 2020

Last updated: 16 June 2023

This document was downloaded from socialcare.wales and may not be the latest version.

Go to <https://socialcare.wales/qualifications-funding/work-placement-guide/supporting-learner-placements-during-covid-19> for the latest version.

During the uncertainty of Covid-19 some childcare settings have been less likely to provide learners with placements. Here's guidance and resources for learning providers and learners to support safe working during the pandemic.

Why learner placements are important

Learner placements are an important part of the qualification system in Wales as it allows learners to show that they can practice in a safe way.

Childcare providers offer high quality placements for learners helping them to understand what they have learnt in practise.

What are the benefits of learner placements?

Offering learner placement opportunities can provide a number of benefits for both the settings and learners.

For childcare settings:

- Tapping into a potential pool of workers from the community
- Contributing to the development of the next generation of a highly skilled workforce
- Reflecting on feedback and comments from learners
- Regularly reviewing standards and practices to make sure they are up to date and of good quality
- Highlighting the range of roles available
- Motivating people to work in health, social care, playwork or early years and childcare as a career of choice

- Promoting your own service and what it has to offer
- Supporting the development of your own workforce through mentoring.

For learners:

- Having 'on the job' experiential learning and assessment of practice for you to achieve the practical part of work-based qualifications
- Demonstrating practical skills for assessment
- Trying out a variety of work settings
- Learning about a range of roles which will help you make informed choices about your future career
- Building confidence, developing knowledge, understanding and skills which may lead to employment
- Developing reflective practice skills
- Providing feedback to employers which helps them improve practice in the work setting.

Welsh Government Covid-19 guidance

The [Welsh Government Protective measures in childcare settings: Keep Childcare Safe](#) guidance details how childcare settings protect children and staff from coronavirus. These guidelines state that:

- those on work placements or learners in regular attendance can be included as 'staff' for the purpose of Covid-19 guidance, but placements should always be considered in terms of staff ratios etc in regard of the [National Minimum Standards for Regulated Childcare](#).
- learning provider staff - for example assessors and tutors - are included in the list of 'essential visitors' to childcare settings. Learners should follow local

guidance, safety measures and policies put in place by their learning provider and placement provider (the setting).

Early years and childcare settings should work together with the learning provider and the learners to decide if a placement is possible. This may mean some settings can't provide a suitable learning environment which meet Welsh Government guidelines. For example, a lack of space to ensure a two-meter distance between staff or there are not enough hours of provision.

What can providers and learners do before a placement

Learning providers and learners are taking extra steps during Covid-19 to make sure learners, and children and staff within settings are safe.

Here are some examples of what learners and settings can do before placements:

Telephone risk assessment

Learning providers, learners and manager/RI/Leader can have a telephone conversation before the placement begins.

Learning providers can carry out a risk assessment over the phone and share the risk assessments with the settings.

Settings can digitally share their policies, procedures and what they expect from learners in relation to infection and prevention control.

This risk assessment for learning providers to fill in before a placement starts during Covid-19. Learning providers may contact settings prior to an agreed placement to run through the risk assessment.

Early years risk assessment in the context of Covid-19 (November 2020 to June 2021)

DOCX 107KB

Checklist to help discussions:

This checklist can be used to help discussions between learning providers, learners and settings.

- Best practice on handwashing
- Putting on and removing of PPE
- The Signs and Symptoms of Covid-19 and what to do about positive or potential cases and self isolation
- Discussions about social distancing inside the setting and staying safe outside of the setting. Implications of bringing a virus into the setting.
- Travelling to and from the setting
- Student uniform – changing in the setting, spare uniform, fresh uniform
- What to do if a child or member of staff shows signs and symptoms in the setting.
- Confidentiality where there are positive cases in the setting (e.g. people's personal health information must be kept confidential)
- Cleaning routines and disinfectants detergents used and their role with regards to Infection Prevention and Control
- Maintaining bubbles in the setting (keeping with same groups of children and staff)
- Shared spaces such as toilets and kitchens/staffrooms
- Settings' risk assessment and the importance of highlighting any safety concerns to staff and leaders
- Pre-placement checklists and

- Personal details of learner's held at setting including out of hours contact details
- Contact details of leader during day and evening time should they have any concerns regarding symptoms or being a contact of a positive case (details of the students next of kin in case of emergency etc).

Helping learners to stay safe and protect others

Learners can "self-care" to protect themselves and others.

It is important for learners to keep themselves safe leading up to and during the placement. Learners should:

- follow Welsh Government guidance, Public Health Wales and local Covid-19 guidelines to keep those in placement settings safe.
- download and use the [NHS Covid-19 track and trace app](#).

Helpful tips for childcare settings:

Taking a learner on placement needs some extra thought, even more so during the current pandemic. Here is a list of things that can help carry on with placements whilst adhering to guidelines in relation to Covid-19.

Managing bubbles

Learners count as staff for the purpose of placement. Include learners within specific bubbles in rooms/teams to lower risk by keeping contact to a minimum.

Prioritising age ranges for completion of assessment

For learners completing more than one age range unit, prioritise placements within certain age ranges for those who need to complete formal assessment.

Block placements

Lower the risk of infection by letting the learner be in 'one' place for a number of weeks, reducing contact with others outside of the placement instead of previous 2/3 day a week placement over more time.

Here are some real-life case study examples to help with placements.

[Little Lambs Day Nursery - case study](#)

PDF 123KB

[Childcare placements during a pandemic – Bridgend College case study](#)

PDF 355KB

Resources to support a safe placement

Learning providers may be able to offer [pre-placement training opportunities](#) to support learners about to take up a placement in a setting.

Learners should also download and install the [NHS track and trace app](#).

Contact us

If you have a question or if you can't find what you are looking for [get in touch with us](#).