

Adult Social Care

Earn and Learn College Placements

Blueprint – FAQs

Is this a new model?

No – we know that colleges already work with social care providers to offer earn and learn college placements.

The Blueprint has been developed to offer examples of best practice and high-level principles to support social care providers, and colleges, to consider these types of arrangements in their organisations.

Can I have under-18s on placement in my organisation?

Yes, under-18s can be offered earn and learn college placements. However some employers will need to employ people who are over 18.

ACAS have produced [advice](#) on the pay and hours for younger workers. HSE also provide information on [young people at work](#), including on training and supervision

Do colleges take students on at any time in the year?

Colleges normally have set semesters where students start and finish their courses - these may vary between colleges and course programme.

You should liaise with your local college to plan start and finish times for courses which can offer earn and learn placements.

Can students do all types of work?

The expectations of the student, as an employee, should be set out in a fixed, short-term contract.

SQA qualifications may require the student to complete a minimum number of hours of practice and have certain experiences. The college and employer should ensure the student has the opportunity to meet the course requirements, particularly where they are not normally part of the job role the student is employed in.

Will the student have already completed training in areas like People Handling and Health and Safety?

Colleges will normally do some relevant induction training/activities with students before they start a placement. The employer and college should discuss what the student has already covered, and any additional training which might also be required.

While some induction is nationally recognised (e.g. Manual Handling Passport, TURAS Prevention of Infection) standards around training may vary depending on the role. For example, your service may deal with complex physical needs, requiring detailed or bespoke moving and assistance training.

What are the indemnity arrangements for the student?

Employers will be responsible for putting in place the appropriate insurance for students on an earn and learn college placement, as employees of their organisation.

Does the student need to be PVG checked and who is responsible?

The application for the PVG check should be carried out by the organisation who makes the 'suitability decision' – i.e. whoever decides whether the individual student is suitable for the role. For earn and learn college placements, where the employer is taking the decision to make an offer of employment to the student they will carry out a PVG scheme check.

Where the student is not already a PVG scheme member an application to join the PVG scheme will be made. An update application may be appropriate if the individual is already part of the PVG scheme for the workforce that application applies to. For example, if the college has already made an application when the student enrolls on the course.

More information, including the fees for applications, is available on the [Scottish Government website](#)

Does the student need to be registered with the SSSC during their placement?

Yes, as they would be an employee.

The SSSC requires all employees currently working in an appropriate health and social care setting to be registered with them within 3 months of starting their role. This can be in the capacity of working towards a suitable qualification.

More information can be found on the [SSSC website](#)

Are employers assessed for a suitable learning environment? What is the criteria?

Colleges will follow their usual placement/workplace Risk Assessment process in advance of any placement.

Some colleges will require that employers sign a workplace agreement confirming access for assessment and allocation of a mentor. The student/employee also completes an induction with their employer, which is recorded and returned to the college.

Key documentation from the college should be shared in advance with the workplace including the course structure and SVQ requirements.

What if the student requires more support than I can offer as an employer?

As with other employees who are new to a role in social care, or to your organisation, you will need to put appropriate supervision arrangements in place.

The college will support the student with academic and practical skills within the remit of the requirements of the qualification. The college will work with the employer to identify support requirements.

There may be instances where the support needed for the student/employee relates to their capability. This should be discussed with the college, and an improvement support plan put in place.

What does the employer do when the student is not meeting employment standards? How will this affect their place on the course?

Performance on the placement and progress with their course are linked, and form the overall expectation.

Putting systems in place to identify any issues, and clear and frequent communication between the employer and college can help address any concerns at the earliest opportunity.

Are there any requirements or restrictions around placements for students from abroad?

Yes, there are currently restrictions placed upon the visas of international workers regarding accessing training related to work, specifically related to the funding criteria. Many students also face limitations on their work hours due to visa rules, typically restricted to 20 hours per week.

The 20 hours per week restriction is for hours that are in addition to the full-time study/employment for which they have the visa, and only apply in term time. Outside of term time they can work full time for another employer.

To better support these students/employees, employers should consider effective ways to develop their skills and offer flexibility within these limitations.

Colleges may be able to consider ESOL provision where students would benefit from this.

Support on issues relating to international recruitment can be found within the [Centre for Workforce Supply' Recruitment into Adult Social Care Toolkit](#).

Further information on student visas can be found on the [UK Government website](#)

Will undertaking an earn and learn college placement on a paid basis affect a student's other sources of financial support i.e. bursaries, benefits

Applying for sources of financial support for study, through funding for tuition fees or bursaries, will be subject to set eligibility criteria. Students should consider any income thresholds which might affect funding they may be eligible for. Students will also need to consider the eligibility for any benefits they may be in receipt of.

Further information on potential sources of financial support for qualifications at SCQF Level 6 and 7 can be found within the [SSSC Careers Toolkit](#)