

Sold Service Review September 2014

1. Do we need to provide this service at all and if not please explain why we are providing it?

Bromley Work Experience Network, Service Package, Pre-Placement Visit Service and Placement Provision

Under the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, the LAs is responsible for the approval of work experience schemes for school age children. It is able to delegate this authority to the governing bodies of schools including Academies, Free and Independent Schools However, it retains responsibility for monitoring the standards of schemes, including ensuring that they comply with local, regional and national standards and that they fulfil their duty of care for their students by placing them safely and appropriately.

To help the LA fulfil its statutory responsibilities, Bromley Education Business Partnership, provides a package of work experience services for schools which gives them the tools to deliver a high quality scheme. The package includes training, professional development opportunities and arrangements for sharing information and good practice. Collectively the schools buying into the package form the Bromley Work Experience Network and ensure

- there is a safe and consistent approach to the organisation of work experience schemes in the Borough
- there is a critical mass large enough to enable the services can be offered on a cost effective basis
- schools and employers can benefit from information sharing arrangements which reduces the administrative burden on all parties

Bromley EBP provides a placement finding and management service for colleagues in other LBB Departments e.g. SEN, LAC and the Behaviour Service, and for schools and colleges looking to provide alternative locations and styles of learning for young people struggling to access the school curriculum because of learning, behaviour or other issues. By successfully placing young people in work experience placements, either on a short or long term basis, BEBP contributes to the Council's obligations for raising the participation age, reducing the number of young people who are NEET or at risk of becoming so and tackling youth unemployment.

BEBP also provides a pre-placement visit service for schools/colleges in the Borough and for external agencies who wish to buy into it. The aim of a pre-placement visit is to assess the suitability of an employer as a work experience provider. BEBP provides this service because

- 1) it can - it has a very extensive database of employers who have offered work experience placements in recent years and whether or not they have a PPV in place and can share this information with those who need to know.
- 2) It's desirable for it to do so – as it allows BEBP to retain an overview of which employers in the Borough are providing work experience and which may offer other opportunities to young people to enhance their employability skills.

Bromley EBP – Work Experience Network and Placement Provision

2. Is this a new charge to be considered or an amendment/change to our existing charging policy?

Existing charges apply.
Any proposals would be an amendment to existing fees and charging rates, which are reviewed on an annual basis, following indicative funding information becoming available for the following academic / financial year.

3. Is the charge set by Statute?

No

4. Is the level of charge set by Statute?

No

5. If 3 & 4 above are not applicable, is the proposed charge based on full cost recovery and if not please specify why not

The delivery plan and charges for the Bromley EBP Work Experience Network and Placement Provision Programmes are based on recovery of controllable expenditure only, as the trading account was not set up as full cost recovery. The service is profiled to balance salaries, overheads and specific training expenditure or resources with income that is generated through sold service revenue plus contribution from LBB for statutory duties and income generated from national funding through external contracts.

➤ Political

➤ Mean Tested

➤ Statutory

This service satisfies the statutory obligations of the Council and is part funded by the Council.
Charges for discretionary or bespoke services are based on an assessment of the cost of staff time required to deliver the service plus any necessary resources and expenses, plus a percentage uplift to cover management costs, overheads and other administrative costs.

Bromley EBP – Work Experience Network and Placement Provision

- Negative impact on the environment

- Other – please specify

6. Who uses the service and when, and can they go elsewhere?

The Work Experience Service Package is available, on a renewable annual basis, to all secondary schools who operate a work experience scheme for pupils in Y10 and Y11. It is predominantly bought by Bromley schools but several schools in the London Borough of Bexley also buy into it.

The package has been developed in consultation with SMTs in Bromley schools/colleges and with the Bromley Work Experience Network so that it meets the specific needs of Bromley schools. No other organisation offers exactly the same service. If they wished Bromley schools could approach organisations who organise work experience schemes on behalf of schools (rather than provide services to enable them to do themselves. This includes Capital South (formerly Croydon EBP), Lewisham Work Experience (part of Lewisham Council) or the Skills Team at Greenwich Council. However, in the first instance, these organisations would refer schools/colleges back to Bromley EBP, who would do the same if the situation was reversed.

7. What impact will any change in charging have on the service?

If charges increase to the extent that some members withdraw then it would be necessary to either reduce the service offer or further increase charges to remaining members. If schools/colleges withdraw and decide to 'go it alone' the benefits of partnership working and economies of scale are lost.

8. Will consultation need to be undertaken out and how long will this take?

The Bromley Work Experience Coordinators Networks and SMTs in schools/colleges would need to be consulted. This would not necessarily be a lengthy process. Initial consultation could take place at a network meeting of work experience co-ordinators which are held termly.

9. Is there evidence that there will be a disproportionate impact on some Customer groups? If yes a full equality impact assessment will need to be undertaken

No

10. How acceptable are the proposals to the public?

Not applicable

11. Is the charge subject to VAT? (if you are not sure, please seek advice from the VAT Officer in Finance)

No

12. Impact on service demand – if demand increases/falls, can the Council adjust its provision accordingly?

Yes.
BEBP employs a number of staff on casual hours contracts thus ensuring that the service not only copes efficiently with the natural peaks and troughs of demand for placement finding and pre-placement vetting that occur during the year but also adapts to variation in customer demand for support with new placement programmes or as new contracts arise.

13. Which services do we offer concessions on? Please state if this happens in your area.

We do not always charge colleagues in other Council Departments for finding and managing work experience placements for young people for whom they are responsible e.g. LAC.

Benchmarking

14. Are third party commercial providers operating similar services in competition with the council?

No, historically, Education Business Partnerships have provided a service finding and managing work experience placements for schools and colleges in their area. In London this tended to be on a Borough basis. So, each EBP usually only provided services for schools/ colleges in their area

However, following the ending of government funding for education business link services, including work experience, some EBPs have ceased to exist and others have been re-formed on a different basis, e.g. as charitable trusts or commercial organisations. This has opened up the potential for competition but commercial providers are not yet operating in Bromley, primarily because of the very strong links that BEBP has built up with schools/colleges over many years, the very specific service it provides and its value for money.

Bromley EBP – Work Experience Network and Placement Provision

14b If yes, what/how do our charges compare and why are they different?

Not applicable

15. Is there a planned rate of increase for charges (above inflation) and how frequently are charges increased above inflation?

Charges are agreed and set in consultation with the Bromley Work Experience Network according to the service level deemed appropriate for the coming year. Increases have not exceeded inflation in the past and there are no plans to increase these in the future.

15b. Is member approval needed for new charges or increases above inflation (scheme of delegation allows chief officers to increase by inflation only, unless specifically agreed)?

Yes

15c. Is this consistent with third party commercial providers?

N/A

16. How do charges compare to:

- Similar councils?
- Neighbouring councils?
- Other service providers?
- How are charges structured, and why?

Bromley EBP – Work Experience Network and Placement Provision

Service/Activity	Price	Description
Work Experience Support Package	£1250	Package of services to enable subscribers to deliver high quality work experience schemes. Includes network meetings, annual training, access to databases, pre-placement visits, help line, and resources.
Scheme Management Support	£1450 plus other pay as you go charges	Includes help with scheme planning, placement checking, liaison with parents/carers and employers, co-ordination of placement paperwork
Placement Finding Support	£95 per student per placement	Help with finding short term placements for students looking for general experience of the world of work or to support a particular course or curriculum area
Extended Placement Provision	£990 per student per academic year	Providing long term placements e.g. one or two days a week for students who need vocational experience or who would benefit from an alternative style and location to learning in school.
Pre-Placement Visit Service	£55 per visit	Visits to employers to assess, in advance of the placement, their suitability as placement providers
Basic training for new work experience co-ordinators	£100 per person	Introduction to the role, training in procedures, systems and standards
Annual update training for work experience co-ordinators	£100 per person	Continuous professional development
Network meetings for work experience co-ordinators	£100 per person	Opportunities to share good practice, air and address common concerns, find out more about services and activities provided by BEBP
Student Placement Finding	£225 per half day workshop	Information for young people about how to maximise their chances of finding work experience placements

- How and when will we evaluate the impact of charges?
- What data will we need?
- Can we collect this data cost effectively?
- When should we next review our approach?

Payment Methods

17. Income collection method – does it advantage/disadvantage or encourage/discourage use?

For Work Experience Network, partners receive an invoice at the start of the summer term. This invoice is for services through-out the academic year ending July.

Schools can pay in either the Summer or Autumn term depending on the budget-setting relating to their academic year funding.

Invoices for placement provision and additional pre-placement visits are raised retrospectively on a termly basis to avoid the inconvenience of proforma invoices.

- a) Is a prompt/advance payment discount appropriate/desirable?
- b) Is the administrative process involved economic and/or efficient?

Bromley EBP – Work Experience Network and Placement Provision

The invoicing is done as a bulk request and payments are tracked monthly through FBM along with other transactions. The process for LBB is as efficient as we can make it and for partners an annual or termly charge (as applicable) saves the inefficiencies of 'pay as you go' arrangements and irregular demands per placement or visit unit .

Other

18. Please identify if there are any risks or unintended consequences as a result of the proposals.

--