**Work Experience: Guidance for Employers**

This document has been created as a guide to accompany our example of a Work Experience Welcome Pack that can be given to a young person prior to undertaking a placement with your organisation.

We hope you find both useful in both the planning, preparation and undertaking of work placements within your organisation and thank you again for your support in providing these incredibly valuable experiences for young people within your local community.

**Initial preparation and planning**

To prepare for hosting a work placement, here are some steps you can take in advance:

**Notify staff**: inform your team that a young person will be joining for work experience and gather their suggestions for suitable and meaningful tasks.

**Assign a mentor/s**: identify staff members who can supervise and support the young person during their placement. This has the additional benefit of offering existing staff the chance to develop their own management, professional, and personal skills.

**Create a timetable**: develop a schedule for the week, detailing who the student will be young person will be working, including lunch and other breaks (see page 4 of this guide)

**Prepare a checklist**: list everything the young person will need, such as protective clothing, tools, equipment, computer login details, security passes, and a place for personal belongings (see page 2 for correspondence)

**Inform Reception**: let reception know about the young person’s arrival and arrange for a visitor’s badge if necessary

**Employer Agreement forms**

The school/college will usually send you an Employer Agreement form to sign and return before the placement takes place. Depending on the nature of your business, they may also wish to undertake additional Health and Safety visits to check your health and safety policies, procedures and insurances and ensure that the location and type of work the young person can undertake is appropriate.

**Pre-experience correspondence**

It’s important to provide clear and comprehensive information to help a young person to prepare for a work placement. In addition to sending your Welcome Pack, suggestions of what to include in an initial email or written correspondence include:

**Placement Details**: confirmation of the start and end dates of the placement, including daily start and finish times

**Location**: the address of the workplace and any specific instructions for entering the building

**What to Bring**: list any items the young person should bring, such as protective clothing, tools, equipment, notebook, and pen.

**Lunch arrangements**: clarify what lunch arrangements will be e.g., should they bring a packed lunch, does the company have a paid canteen etc.

**Dress Code**: Explain the dress code, being as explicit as possible as many young people will not understand what terms such as “smart/casual” mean

**Schedule and Activities**: these will be included in your Welcome Pack and should include:

* a detailed timetable for the week, specifying who the young person will be working with and when, including key start and finish times
* an outline of the main tasks and responsibilities they will be involved in
* key staff and contact details

**Reminder to bring ‘Right to Work’ documentation:** all employers must verify an individual’s legal right to work within the UK before an unpaid placement begins so **you will need to ask them to bring in** documentation such as a current passport, birth, or adoption certification on their first day (see page 7 of this guide for further details)

**Pre-experience informal interview/meeting**

An informal interview before a work placement can be beneficial for both you and the young person:

**Reducing pressure**

A relaxed and informal first meeting can make it easier for a young person to showcase their true personality and skills and helps build confidence and ease the transition into the work environment. It also encourages a more open and honest conversation and should provide an insight into their motivations and interests.

**Relationship building**

A successful placement is often built on good rapport between the young person and potential mentors or colleagues. Ideally, your initial meeting should be in person as it provides the opportunity for richer communication and can help prevent misunderstandings. If it is appropriate to meet via Teams or Zoom, we would encourage the use of having their camera turned on as this helps to develop a personal connection as well demonstrating professionalism within a work environment.

**Addressing concerns**

It provides an opportunity to address any questions or concerns the candidate might have about the placement. Meeting in person also has the additional benefit of allowing the young person to familiarise themselves with the location, facilities, and key areas they will be using.

**Creating a Welcome Pack**

As well as providing all the necessary information a young person needs to prepare for their placement, sending a well-prepared Welcome Pack creates a positive first impression and shows that you value them joining your organisation. It also provides reassurance and clarity to parents/carers and educational partners supporting the individual:



**Useful Information** (Welcome Pack example, p2)

Providing contact details before a work experience placement helps facilitate:

* **Support and Reassurance**: offers a direct line of communication for any questions or concerns, providing reassurance and reducing anxiety for both young people and their parents/carers
* **Accessibility**: ensures they can reach out if they need assistance with accessibility or accommodations
* **Emergency Contact**: in case of any issues or emergencies, they have a reliable contact
* **Clear Communication**: facilitates clear and effective communication, which is crucial for understanding their needs and ensuring a positive experience
* **Building Trust:** helps build trust and rapport, making them feel valued and supported

Adding photos of a specified meeting place can help with:

* **Familiarity**: helps individuals and their families become familiar with the environment, reducing anxiety, and making them feel more comfortable
* **Preparation**: allows them to prepare for the visit, knowing what to expect in terms of layout and facilities
* **Accessibility**: helps assess the accessibility of the location, ensuring it meets the specific needs of the individuals
* **Orientation**: makes it easier for individuals to navigate the space when they arrive

**Planned activities and providing a timetable** (Welcome Pack example, from page 17)

**Activities**

As an employer, it can be challenging to decide what tasks to assign to a young person during their work experience. By preparing activities in advance, you can alleviate the stress of last-minute planning as well as ensure that tasks are engaging, meaningful and allow a sense of accomplishment by the end of the week.

The following are examples of activities that could be undertaken during a work placement, remembering that each young person will have different levels of ability, so it can be useful to have different ideas to adapt your plan accordingly:

**Project work**

Assigning the young person a project provides focus and helps them understand how your company operates within the broader industry. The project could include:

* addressing a specific question (as per the example on pages 19/20) and include speaking to staff as well as research and presentation skills
* creating an advertising campaign, designing online posters, flyers, or leaflets for one of your products
* developing a concept for a new product
* undertaking market research on competitors
* data analysis
* event planning

This approach not only engages the young person but also gives them a comprehensive view of the different aspects of your business.

**Interviewing staff/key stakeholders**

They could meet with members of staff to talk their roles, how they got into the industry and what they enjoy about their jobs. This could relate to specific project work or be followed with further research into careers of interest.

**Employee Experiences**

Allow them to observe customer interactions or have them meet and greet visitors to gain firsthand experience. Invite them to attend meetings or events, encouraging them to take notes and share their insights and observations with the team afterwards.

**Social Media**

Many young people are well-versed in social media, making them ideal for evaluating how your company targets audiences online. As young people are often up to date with the latest promotional and communication trends this could provide you with a fresh perspective could help broaden your customer base.

**Administrative tasks**

Many young people are IT literate and enjoy using the computer. Consider:

* data entry activities
* typing up notes from meetings
* creating spreadsheets
* updating sheets or databases

**Practical activities**

Depending on the nature of your work, the young person could assist with simple tasks under supervision. Please note that there are specific restrictions on what tasks a young person on a work placement can undertake to ensure their safety and well-being such as operating dangerous machinery or undertaking heavy lifting – see <https://www.hse.gov.uk/young-workers/employer/law.htm> for further details.

**Providing a Timetable**

Whilst we appreciate that it is not always possible to adhere to an exact plan due to business constraints, providing a timetable can benefit both your organisation and young person coming into your business:

* **Clarity and Structure:** helps the individual understand what to expect each day, reducing anxiety and confusion. Knowing the schedule allows them to prepare mentally and physically for the tasks ahead
* **Time Management**: enables better time management for both your organisation and young person and they can plan activities around the timetable, ensuring they are punctual and prepared
* **Goal Setting**: can outline specific goals and milestones, helping the young person track their progress and stay motivated. It also allows supervisors to monitor and provide feedback effectively
* **Resource Allocation**: helps your organisation allocate resources efficiently, ensuring that the intern has access to the necessary tools, information, and support when needed
* **Professionalism**: demonstrates professionalism and respect for the young person’s time, setting a positive tone for the work experience
* **Learning Opportunities**: ensures that the young person is exposed to a variety of tasks and learning opportunities, making the experience more enriching and comprehensive

An example and blank timetable can be found on pages 17 and 18 of the example Welcome Pack.

**Induction activities**

As good practice, we would encourage you to include the following on the young person’s first day within your organisation:

**Right to work documentation**

UK employers are still required to conduct right to work checks even though work experience is unpaid. Employers must verify an individual’s legal right to work within the UK before an unpaid placement begins, so **you must request in advance** that the young person bring the one form of documentation with them on their first day such as:

* Current passport
* Biometric residence permit
* Birth or adoption certificate

For more information on Right to work please see: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/right-to-work-checklist>

**Orientation of your location**

As well as providing reassurance and reducing anxiety and confusion, orientation of your building enhances safety, encourages social interaction, clarifies expectations, and increases efficiency. We would suggest including:

* toilet facilities
* where to have lunch
* location of the First Aid kit (and an introduction to your designated First Aider)
* fire assembly points and along with an explanation of fire evacuation procedures
* breakout or “quiet” spaces as appropriate

Many schools will provide a work experience booklet/diary which the young person will have to complete during their time with you and most of the above are typically included as key information.

**Introduction to colleagues: One Page Profiles** (Welcome Pack example, p8 to p16)

As part of your Welcome Pack, we suggest including a ‘One Page Profile’ of key staff that will supporting the young person. This simple summary includes a photo of the individual, what is important to them, their key strengths and how they would like others to support them if help is needed.

The benefits of promoting this personal-centred tool includes:

**Familiarity and recognition**: receiving information/a photo beforehand can help the young person feel more familiar with the team, reducing initial awkwardness and facilitating smoother introductions

**Personal connection**: highlights that everyone has different skills and talents, preferred ways of working and support needs regardless of age, experience, or additional need

**Positive focus**: emphasising what people like and admire about the individual helps foster a positive view and helps to shift focus from deficits to strengths whilst promoting inclusion

We would also suggest that one of the first activities that a young person undertakes with you is the creation of their own One Page Profile. Not only is this an empowering activity, it can also help build rapport and ensure that the correct level of support is provided throughout the work placement.



**Explanation of your organisations/teams mission and purpose** (Welcome Pack example, p3 and p4)

Providing a brief introduction provides clarity and direction to help the young person understand the team’s goals, how their work placement role fits into the bigger picture and gives a clear sense of direction.

**Run through of timetable, activities, and breaks**

As well as providing clarity and the opportunity for the young person to ask questions, this also gives you the chance to reinforce expectations and professional behaviours and attitudes which are essential for success in any workplace.

**End of day learning checkpoint**

At the end of the day, complete a learning and well-being check in to allow for:

* **Alleviation of concerns:** provides a chance to discuss any challenges faced during the day and brainstorm solutions
* **Reflection and learning**: provides an opportunity to reflect on what they have learned throughout the day, reinforcing new skills and knowledge
* **Feedback and improvement**
* **Goal Setting**: ensures that the learning experience continues to be structured and focused
* **Confidence Building**: helps acknowledge achievements and progress, making individuals feel valued and supported

**Definitions you may find useful** (Welcome Pack example p5 to p7)

All organisations use terminology and acronyms that pertain to their area of business. Providing definitions of key business terms to a young person before their work experience can support:

* **Foundation of Understanding**: ensures that the young person has a basic understanding of the terminology they will encounter. This introductory knowledge can help them grasp complex concepts and tasks more quickly
* **Effective Communication**: facilitates more effective communication with colleagues and mentors, reduces misunderstandings and helps them integrate more smoothly into the workplace
* **Confidence Building**: provides a boost to confidence and individuals are more likely to actively participate in discussions and tasks when they understand the language being used
* **Enhanced Learning Experience**: allows a better following of instructions, further leading to improved questioning, engagement within their work and a more enriching and productive learning experience
* **Professionalism**: shows that the young person is prepared and serious about their role, which can leave a positive impression on colleagues and mentors
* **Preparation for Future Roles**: allows a head start for future roles in the industry by equipping them with the language and concepts they will need to succeed

Where appropriate, also include weblinks to encourage independent research and further understanding before the start of a work placement.

**Final day of the placement**

We would suggest that you arrange to see the young person on their last day so they can feed back on their achievements. They could also do a short presentation on any project they have been involved in, as well as providing feedback on the positives (and potential negatives) of activities undertaken which can help inform your next young person’s work experience.

**Post placement**

Providing the young person with a reference or official endorsement that they can include on their CV or employment applications can offer several benefits including:

**Enhanced credibility**: demonstrates that their skills and experiences have been validated by someone in a position of authority

**Improved job prospects**: employers often look for candidates who come recommended by previous supervisors or mentors

**Increased confidence**: knowing that someone is willing to vouch for their abilities can boost a young person’s confidence, which is especially important when they are just starting out in their journey into employment

**Further Useful Links**

<https://www.youthemployment.org.uk/work-experience-employer-guide/>

<https://www.cipd.org/uk/knowledge/guides/work-experience-guide/>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/employer-guides-to-work-experience>