

Successful work placements: A guide for employers

What does a

successful work placement programme look like?

Work placements should enable young people to experience a relevant, challenging, enjoyable and appropriate learning experience within the workplace. 'A placement should help the young person to make informed decisions about their future career'

(Work Placements Standard, 2015).

During their school careers, young people will experience the world of work through a range of activities. Taking place in the senior phase (S4-S6), work placements are an important part of careers education, offering young people an opportunity to experience a work environment and help them to plan their future career.

As an employer, you can play an important part in preparing young people for the realities of the world of work. Poorly organised, unstructured work placements don't really benefit anyone, but a great work placement can have a positive lasting impact on young people and employers.

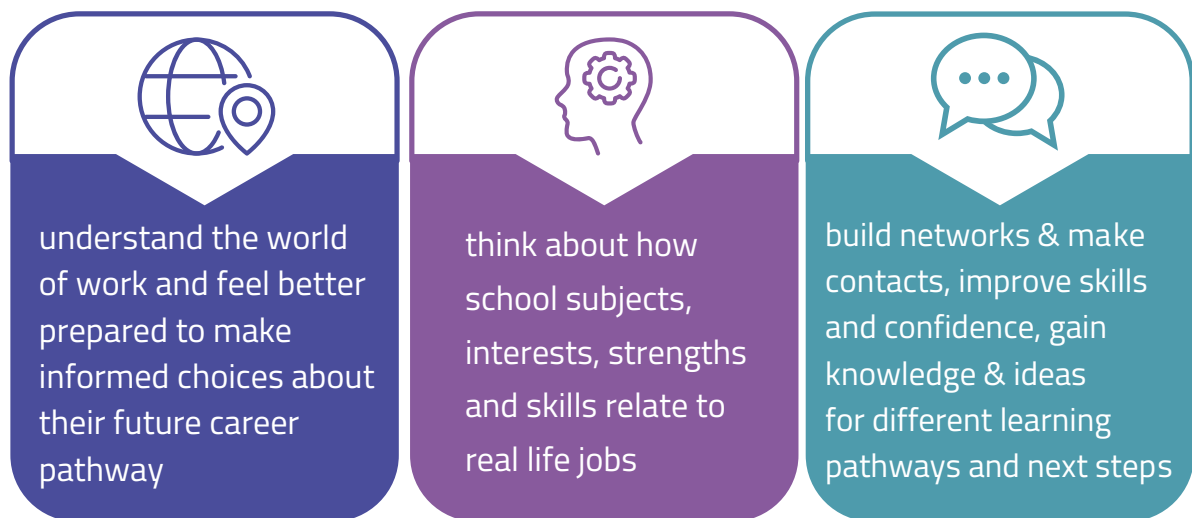
(Source: DYW Work Placement Resources)

The purpose of this guide is to give you practical advice and access to a range of resources and useful websites that enable you to deliver a meaningful and successful work placement to a young person in education.



The **benefits** for young people

Young people can really benefit from the insight into working life that a work placement gives them. A work placement can support them to:



A work placement can also support a young person to better understand the expectations and demands of the workplace, allowing them to experience practical realities such as:

the need to turn up on time every day

dressing appropriately for work

working as part of a team

adjusting to the 'culture' of the workplace

representing the company in interactions with customers

Considerations

Although the working environment may feel very familiar to you, to a young person who has not experienced it before, it can be daunting. Young people can have unrealistic expectations, which can lead to disappointment if they haven't had a chance to adapt these expectations to the reality. Hosting a young person in education for a work placement is your opportunity to help them get off on the right footing, and to boost their chances of a happy and successful start into employment.

(Source: DYW Work Placement Resources)

Did you know?

Young people from disadvantaged backgrounds are twice as likely to become disengaged from education and experience repeated periods of unemployment in adulthood. Research has shown that young people who have four or more meaningful contacts with employers are more likely to experience full employment in adulthood, with the likelihood of long-term unemployment being reduced by 86%.

(Source: Education and Employers
www.educationandemployers.org)



The **benefits** for businesses

The benefits of work experience for young people are clear, but there are also many benefits for businesses too.

Preparing
your future
workforce



introduce your business to potential future employees, capture the imagination of the brightest and the best, and build local relationships and loyalties

Promoting
your
sector



influence positive perceptions of working in your industry, enabling young people to make informed decisions about their future direction

Recruiting
talent



identify potential future employees, encouraging them to consider your company as a future employer

Developing
your
staff skills



supporting young people through work placements offers great personal/professional development opportunities to your staff, such as management, supervision, mentoring and coaching skills

Reflecting
on
processes



reflect on WHY you do the things you do in the way you do – explaining tasks and processes to someone else can help you see your business operation with fresh eyes and identify positive changes

Gaining
a new
perspective



young people can bring energy, enthusiasm, new ideas and modern skills to your business, which can enable you to see things in a different way and open up new opportunities

Engaging
with your
community



providing meaningful, impactful work placements and enhancing your profile in the community helps you meet your Corporate Social Responsibility commitments

Different types of placements

Work placements come in many different shapes and sizes; some ages/stages/skill levels of young people may be more suitable to your business than others. Your business may also have the resources and scope to support a range of different placement types.

In a rapidly changing world of work, work placements have needed to adapt to reflect the needs of young people, education and business. Examples of different work placement models are highlighted below.

Week-long Onsite Placement

A week-long experience of the workplace environment with potential for additional opportunities.

Work Taster

A good introduction to the workplace for those young people at the beginning of their employability journey, work tasters also offer employers the opportunity to trial young people before offering a work placement. Work tasters can be as little as a half day or a single day experience of the workplace.

Foundation Apprenticeship

Foundation Apprenticeship: takes place at an agreed time each week, for up to 2 years (depending on the level of qualification).

Flexible Placement

A flexible placement model enables employers to plan work placement opportunities around the needs of the business. For example, placements can be one day per week for a month or one afternoon a week for a couple of months.

Other Types of Placement / Career Ready

Placements undertaken outwith the school day (during term holidays e.g. internship model). For Example: The Career Ready Programme

What does a

great work placement

look like?



There are no strict rules when it comes to deciding what activities and tasks should be included in a work placement as long as they give a realistic insight into the world of work. Creating a timetable of meaningful and engaging activity for the placement is an important part of preparing to host a young person. It gives an overview of the entire placement experience and is a helpful way to ensure that the programme has a variety of tasks and opportunities.

Preparing for a work placement - business and educators working together



Taking a young person into the adult working environment requires careful consideration, planning and preparation. The cornerstone of a successful placement is motivation – you need to be committed to delivering a really great experience, and the young person really needs to want to be there.

The school should have done much of the work in establishing that there is a good match between the young person and the work placement. You can confirm this through the use of different pre-placement activities, such as arranging a meeting before the placement starts. You can also outline requirements in the style of a person specification/job description. It's all good practice for them, and requires a certain investment of time and focus, which is helpful in setting the tone for the placement from the start.

Once you have established that you are ready to offer a placement, you can use our system, Workit, to manage your opportunities and placements.



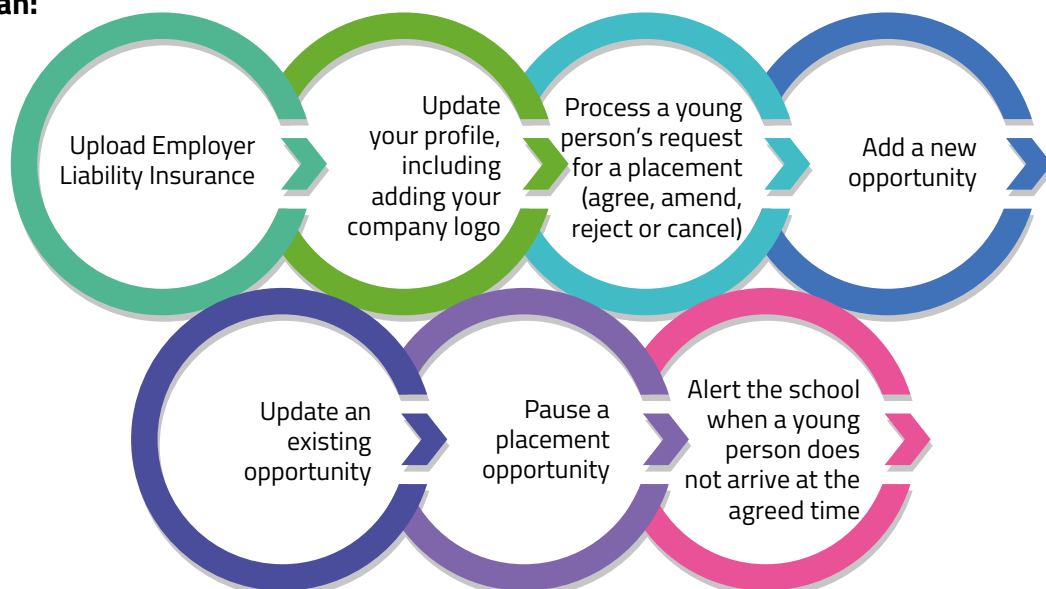
The work placement process

What is Workit?

Workit is the software used by education to manage all work placements. You can access the dedicated employer section on Workit to manage all your placement requests and update your profile.

The software is very simple to use and has been designed to be intuitive, however if you have any questions please refer to the user guide, which can be found by clicking on the resource tab.

You can:



Accessing Workit

Workit is fully mobile responsive, so you can use it at all times. However, if you find that it isn't convenient at any time, you can also manage placement requests through email.

Workit automatically sends an alert email to the employer when a young person makes a placement request. You will need to check your emails regularly if you are unable to access Workit. Scroll to the bottom of the placement request email and click on "process request", this will open a new page where you will be asked to Accept or Decline the placement request.

You can also request a paper copy of the Employer Guide from your Health and Safety Officer. Your Health and Safety Officer will be able to offer advice and guidance on all aspects of the work placement process.

Before

Before the placement starts it is good practice to ask for a pre-placement meeting with the young person. This will enable you to establish:

If they have any skills, interests or expectations

If they have any anxieties or issues that you should be aware of

Targets or goals to achieve on the placement

The practical requirements of the placement, such as working times and suitable clothing (most of this information will be in Workit, but it is still advisable to go over it when you meet)

Try to ensure that their work supervisor is involved in preliminary meetings with the purpose of fostering a positive relationship prior to the start date of the placement. If possible, have a separate mentor, to whom they will report, and who can be approached with any issues during the placement.

During

On first day of the placement, you should:

Undertake a full induction *

Introduce the young person to the team

Make clear that they are respected as a team member and expected to respond in kind

Establish the pattern for supervision (and mentoring) and provide a structured work schedule for the placement

Throughout:

Encourage the habit of reflection and feedback as a 2-way process, using their learning log to record activities and experiences

Provide meaningful and constructive feedback, encouraging them to try new things and to persevere and see tasks through to their completion.

Use plenty of praise and positive reinforcement and encourage colleagues to do likewise

Challenge any issues as they arise and report back to the school or referring agency immediately (when in doubt, ask – if you have any concerns, raise them) - refer to the child protection leaflet *

Three stages

of a

work placement

After

After the placement:

Use the Supervisor Feedback Form from the resources tab on Workit to provide feedback to the young person, focussing on what they did well and what they could do to improve their skills and employability

Tell them if there may be future opportunities for apprenticeships or work that they could apply for, and the process involved

Internally, review how the work placement went (what went well and what could be done next time to make it even better) and give feedback to the young person's supervisor and mentor so their work is reflected in their appraisal / performance management review



*Induction Checklist / Child Protection Leaflet can be downloaded from Workit

What happens next?

The health and safety of young people is taken very seriously, and this applies whilst they are out on placement. The Work Placement Team will validate your business details and once complete, you will be issued with log in details to access Workit. This process can take up to 72 hours, and then you can follow these five simple steps.



Step 1 – Create and Update your Opportunity

You should log in to Workit to create or edit your placement opportunity. Select the **Opportunity** tab from your dashboard to add, edit or complete the form. The information you provide will be viewed by young people to help them decide if the placement is right for them.

Step 2 - Upload your Employer Liability Insurance

We're required by law to obtain a copy of your Employer Liability Insurance (ELI). You can upload your ELI in the **Insurance documents** tab of Workit.

What if I don't have Employer Liability Insurance?
There are some organisations who may be exempt, or their head office has an ELI that covers different branches of the organisation. If you do not have Employer Liability Insurance, you should contact the Health and Safety Officer for advice. Some employers decide to purchase ELI to ensure they can offer placements.

Step 3 - Health and Safety Check

A member of your local authority Health and Safety Team will contact you and ask you a series of questions to determine if there are any risks or potential hazards. They are there to provide guidance and support. Whilst the majority of checks can be carried out over the phone, there are placements that require an onsite visit. Your Health and Safety Officer will be able to advise and arrange a suitable time to visit your premises if required.

Step 4 – Opportunity goes live

After the health and safety requirements are complete, your opportunity will go live onto Workit and be available to young people in the areas and schools you have selected.

NB: At what point you receive placement requests depends on the dates of the schools' work placement programmes - each school is unique and offer placements to pupils at different times of year. So, you may receive requests straightaway, just at certain times of year or a steady stream throughout the school year.

Step 5 – Receive Requests for your Opportunity

You will begin to receive requests directly from young people who wish to take up your opportunity. To see your requests click on the "Request to Process" icon on your dashboard

To help you select the right young person the request will contain the following information:

- name of young person
- name of school
- why the young person wants the placement
- proposed start date
- proposed end date.

If you have stipulated that you would like to meet the young person before accepting the placement, contact the school coordinator to arrange a suitable time to meet the young person.

When you have decided which young person has been successful you should "accept" the request and start the planning and preparation process.



Useful resources

We have developed a number of key resources to support you at each stage of the work placement process.

All resources are available to download from Workit

Name of resource	Resource description
Work Placement Flowchart	Designed to help employers decide which type of placement to offer young people
Induction Checklist	Activities that will help the young person settle into the placement and be aware of health and safety
Child Protection Guide for Employers	Helpful safeguarding guidance to protect adults and young people. We recommend everyone involved in the work placement reads this document
Online Behaviour and Safeguarding Policy	Safeguarding Agreement between the employer and young person in respect of online learning
Example of Young Person's Learning Log	The Learning Log is part of the Work Placement Qualification, it helps the young person to reflect on their learning and keep a record of the knowledge and skills they have acquired during the placement
Supervisor Feedback Form	Provides the young person with feedback from the employer
Virtual Work Placement Specification	Guidance on virtual placements. The guidance lists the activities that are required to be the completed when offering a virtual placement. The guide also includes information on the role of the employer and the school

Health and Safety Executive

www.hse.gov.uk/

If you have any queries relating to health and safety, the HSE website has everything you require to deliver a safe work placement

The Health and Safety Executive has provided a template to support employers to keep a simple record of the risk assessment. This may be particularly helpful for those employers who have never had a young person in the workplace

Education Scotland has a wealth of resources to support the delivery of work placements across Scotland <https://education.gov.scot/>

The Work Placements Standard has been developed by Education Scotland and provides a best practice framework for work placements. The standard is available to view and download from the Education Scotland website

Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) has lots of information on work placements, work-related learning and working with young people in education

www.dyw.scot/



If you require any support or have a query please contact us - make a request by clicking on the support menu on Workit or you can email us directly (see back page)



Work placement support service

wpsupport@ceg.org.uk