



## What is Work Experience?

It is an un-paid placement with an employer on their premises, where the young person carries out a range of supervised tasks & duties with an emphasis on the learning aspects of the experience.



The websites below have some useful, practical information regarding young persons on work placements:

[Young workers - Advice for work experience organisers \(hse.gov.uk\)](https://www.hse.gov.uk/youngworkers/)

[Young people at work - work experience - HSE](https://www.hse.gov.uk/youngpeople/)

## How to find a work placement

The young person will need to decide what kind of work they are interested in first, this could be a potential career choice or a hobby/sport you are interested in exploring further.

They can approach their contacts such as family or friends or they could approach an employer. Some employers have a bespoke work experience programme already set up for young people. For example British Airways, Celtic Horizons, McDonald's etc; you would need to contact and liaise directly with the employer for these opportunities. It is advisable to check whether your child will be alone with the employer e.g. a sole trader, for any length of time. If this is the case then the employer would need to be DBS (Disclosure & Barring Service) checked and if you don't know this person it may be better to look for another placement for your child.

If you are not sure what career interests you, try our Careers Wales career matching tool [Career Match Quiz](#) to help you get ideas of jobs that suit your interests and skills.

## Employer Liability Insurance

If you employ people, it is a **legal requirement** to have employer liability insurance. Employers can be fined if they do not hold a current employers' liability insurance policy which complies with the law. Employers are responsible for the health & safety of their employees while they are at work. The Employers' Liability (Compulsory Insurance) Act 1969 ensures that employers have at least a minimum level of insurance cover against any claims.

**Your child should only attend a work placement if the employer has an up to date employer liability insurance that covers the young person for a work experience placement.** In some cases, the employer will not need additional employers' liability insurance for volunteers or for young persons who work for them unpaid or those people who are not employed but taking part in a youth or adult training. You are entitled to see a copy of the employer liability insurance.

**Exemptions:** Only the following employers are exempt from having employer liability insurance: family businesses, where all employees are closely related to the employer, unless the business is incorporated as a limited company.



## Public Liability Insurance

Public liability insurance is different. It covers the employer for claims made against them by members of the public or other businesses, but not for claims by employees. While public liability insurance is generally voluntary, employers' liability insurance is compulsory. **N.B. Public Liability Insurance does not provide young persons on a work placement with adequate cover therefore, they should not attend the placement if this is the only insurance an employer has.**

## Premises

It is advisable for the parent/guardian and young person to visit the employer's premises for them to get a feel of the place, meet the staff, have a tour of the workplace and to ask any questions they may have. It is essential that the young person is safe whilst at work, but it is as important that the employer has the right attitude to work and the young person's welfare. Take reasonable steps to satisfy yourself that this is the case. For employers who are new to taking young persons on work experience, talk through what they will do and any relevant precautions. It might be helpful to make a note of your conversation. Remember to discuss manual handling/lifting, exposure to toxins/ chemicals, or radiation, any training required, any risk from extreme heat, cold, vibration & noise and work at height.

## Health & Safety

Under health & safety law, every employer must ensure, so far as reasonably practicable, the health & safety of all their employees, irrespective of age. As part of this, there are certain considerations that need to be made for young people. A young person is anyone under 18 and a child is anyone who has not yet reached the official minimum school leaving age (MSLA). Pupils will reach the MSLA in the school year in which they turn 16.

Any employer must tell parents and carers if there are any significant workplace risks to a child & how they are controlled. This can be done in whatever way is simplest and suitable, including a quick chat. Remember that the placement provider (employer) has primary responsibility for the health & safety of the young person & should be managing any significant risks.

If your child has any medical or behavioural conditions, for example asthma, you should let the organiser or the placement provider (who has the duties of an employer in law) know.

As a parent you must check that the employer understands about the specific factors relevant to employing young people. In addition, you should check that your child knows how to raise any health & safety concerns.



## Risk Assessments

**Employers with fewer than five employees are not required to have a written risk assessment.**

The effectiveness of the employer's risk management arrangements is very important.

Employers should already be managing the risks in their workplaces and are best placed to assess whether they need to do anything additional for new young people joining them.

Parents should simply ask sensible questions, in proportion to the level of risk, to satisfy themselves that those arrangements are in place. They should not be second-guessing employers' risk assessments or requiring additional paperwork. An appreciation of risk and how to deal with it can be one of the biggest benefits offered by a placement. We need young people (those under 18) to be offered opportunities to develop new skills and gain experience across the world of work. Risks can be categorised into: Low, e.g. shop or an office, Medium, e.g. hairdresser/barber or warehouse and High, eg. construction, or farming. Remember that although the placement might be in a higher-risk environment, the work the young person is doing and the surroundings they are working in may not be, for example it could be in a separate office area. Satisfy yourself that the instruction, training and supervisory arrangements have been properly thought through.

Children below the minimum school leaving age (MSLA) must not be employed in industrial workplaces such as factories, construction sites etc, except when on work experience. Children under 13 are generally prohibited from any form of employment.

## Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Your child may need to have PPE for their work placement, this could include safety shoes, gloves, dust masks etc. the employer generally will provide this. However, they are not obliged to do so and you may be asked to pick up the cost of the equipment yourself, particularly for safety footwear as this may be a one-off placement with the employer.

## Hours of work

You need to discuss hours of work with the employer and factor in any travel time to and from the placement. Generally, young people cannot start work before 7.00a.m. or finish work after 7.00p.m. They cannot work for more than 4 hours without taking a break of at least 1 hour. Work experience is generally around 30 hours a week if the student is working 5 days.

## Contact Details

If your child cannot attend the placement for any reason, please inform the employer as soon as possible. Arrange with the employer that they contact you if your child does not arrive for their placement. Ensure that your child and the employer has your emergency contact details. Your child may wish to put the employers contact details into their phone temporarily for the duration of the placement. Inform your child that they are only to use their phone during break times and not during work hours.



## Miscellaneous

- You may need to pay for your child's transport to and from the workplace
- Encourage your child to talk about their placement and to inform you if they have any concerns
- Discuss food arrangements eg. does your child have to provide their own food and drinks, or take money to buy their lunch
- Will your child have unsupervised breaks where they could go off site alone
- If you have any doubts or concerns about your child's placement, speak directly to the employer.