

Modern Work Experience Guide



YOUNG PEOPLE
SCHOOLS
PARENTS & CARERS
EMPLOYERS

Powered by



youth fed



Westminster
Foundation

Introduction and acknowledgements

The Cheshire and Warrington Pledge has ten years of experience of connecting employers and young people. The Pledge was originally set up in Crewe, with the aim of ensuring that:



ALL YOUNG PEOPLE

have the chance to connect with local employers to help both the young person to explore their future options, develop the skills required, gain confidence in engaging with employers and understand the local progression routes to get into those careers



EMPLOYERS

could connect with all of the local young people to inspire them about their local opportunities

Since then, the Pledge has grown to cover all of Cheshire and Warrington and expand beyond the sub-region in certain areas, working with over 500 partners, including many employers and all of the secondary schools, colleges, and special needs providers in the area.

We have supported many different work experience programmes which have provided innovative ways to put employers at the heart of inspiring the next generation. Whilst the core Pledge team work for Youthfed, we work closely with the Cheshire and Warrington Careers Hub and many other partners without which, the programme would not be possible.

Youthfed is a youth charity (registered charity 1143231) that annually supports over 20,000 young people between the ages of 8 and 29, helping to improve their lives through a range of programmes and services to support development and celebrate progression and achievement. Our vital charitable work enables young people to thrive and achieve their full potential, regardless of background or circumstances.

Since the inception of the Pledge, we have been very fortunate to have received funding from the Careers and Enterprise Company, Cheshire and Warrington Careers Hub, European Social Fund, local authorities (Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester, Warrington and Stockport/Greater Manchester Combined Authority), the Local Skills Improvement Plan, the NHS, Bank of America, Higher Horizons and the Westminster Foundation.

We hope that in bringing our expertise to this guide we can help employers, young people, parents and schools/ colleges to think about how they can benefit from work experience in the future.

This Modern Work Experience Guide has been made possible thanks to generous funding from the Westminster Foundation who supported the Pledge's development as an exemplar programme for over five years, for which we are very grateful. Thank you!



**Westminster
Foundation**

Contents:

4 What is good, modern work experience?

5 Why does it matter?

6 Employers

10 Young People

14 Secondary & Special Schools

16 Parents & Carers

18 Resources & Contacts



What is Good, Modern Work Experience?

Work experience is one of the most important stepping stones for young people as they move from education into the world of work. It offers the chance for young people to see what workplaces are really like, gain valuable insights into different career options and develop transferable skills that will be useful, no matter which path is chosen. It provides opportunities to develop the confidence to talk to staff and find out about their career journeys.

It is also a great way for employers to inspire the next generation, identify future talent and provide experience for their employees in supporting young people.

Modern work experience is much more than the traditional one week experience, which often didn't benefit the young person or the business; traditionally, a young person often visited a busy organisation without a plan in place as to what both sides wanted to get out of the experience. The week was a big commitment for the business, with limited benefits, and the young person often ended up doing tasks that didn't give a true feeling for the job as they were often not very challenging.

Modern work experience practices allow different ways for both the business and young person to benefit. A progressive model of experiences of the workplace is developing as the best practice at time of writing. This involves young people having various experiences

with employers, starting from a younger age. Businesses are increasingly working with larger groups of students in younger year groups, either through projects or tasks, visits to businesses or employers going into schools and colleges. This then progresses on to employers working with older students who are showing a real aptitude and interest in the work so their work experience is more in-depth and targeted.

Young people benefit from seeing more than one employer and employers can make more efficient use of their time to work with a wider range of young people than under the traditional model.

In this guide, we will give you some hints and tips on how everyone can benefit from employers and young people connecting together, and highlight some examples of where this has worked well.

“It is so important that businesses get involved in work experience because it is an opportunity to inform and shape our future. We need these young people. They are the future talent. They need to understand that the world is full of good people who want to help them and to build confidence and curiosity.”

Helen Tonks MBE, Co-Founder and Director of Hydraulics Online and member of the Business Advisory Board at Enterprise Cheshire and Warrington





Why it matters?



FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

It boosts confidence, helps them make informed career choices, and develops key life skills.



FOR PARENTS/CARERS

It provides a practical way to support their child's future, sparking conversations about goals and ambitions.



FOR SCHOOLS

It strengthens employer links, supports careers education, and enhances the curriculum by connecting learning to real life.



FOR EMPLOYERS

It builds future talent pipelines, promotes diversity, and strengthens relationships with the local community.

Work experience is more than a week away from school – it's an opportunity to open doors, experience multiple workplaces, explore options never previously considered, inspire ambition and prepare for life beyond education.

Guidance for Employers



Modern work experience can bring so many benefits to a business. The traditional work experience model, where a business brings one young person into the business for a week, is time-intensive, has a limited reach and may well not be the best way to invest time and effort.



Why should a business get involved in providing work experience?



INSPIRE AND INFORM help young people make decisions about local career opportunities and pathways.



BUILD AWARENESS of your business and sector among young people.



DEVELOP YOUR FUTURE WORKFORCE – placements can lead to apprenticeships, internships, or future employees.



HELP BRIDGE THE LOCAL SKILLS GAP and build your talent pipeline.



CREATE AN IMPACT - deliver social value in your local community.

How can a business do it?

There are a number of ways to provide experiences that can also give you the chance to meet many young people and have a big impact. In each case, there are people who have done this before and can support you in planning and evaluating your work.



Employer visit

A group of students visit your business, you give them a tour and/ or talk about the business and give them the chance to meet as many people as you can, ideally including young people who have recently joined your company from various routes; you could set them a small task to do that they could present back to you at the end of the visit and you could provide feedback. At the Pledge, we run various visits, often as part of an Explore programme where young people visit a variety of different employers to see what opportunities exist. For example Cheryl Grainger from Amaze Hotels told us of a day visit they do with 45 students from 3 different schools coming together. They do a tour, meet with various staff and undertake a variety of tasks including traditional table setting, customer service activities and a challenge around digital marketing.

Visit to a school or college

Go into a school and meet a group of students. Tell them about the business, and what you do, and set them an employer-led task to present back and provide feedback.

Virtual visit

Dial into a school from your business. Show them virtually what the workplace looks like, tell them what you do and set them an

employer-led task. Leave them to it and then visit again to give the students chance to present their work and give them feedback. This could be at the end of the day, a week later or any appropriate period of time. If it is a longer project, other employees could dial in at specific times to explain their role and give more information and interim feedback.

Virtual work experience

You create resources and videos which students can access in their own time. Students work through the tasks set by the employer. There are organisations that exist to support you in developing this programme. AstraZeneca run a programme with year 10 students, which is set to be delivered during specific weeks. Other employers make the resources available for anyone to access at any time.

Hybrid models

A mix of the above methods could be used. For example, you could dial into the school to set an employer-led task for the students to work on remotely and then they could visit the business at the end of the project for the students to present their findings.

Work with other employers

For example, the Pledge recently delivered two work experience projects which engaged employers within specific sectors: the first

was in the Life Sciences sector at Alderley Park in Cheshire, and the second was with the Nuclear industry at Birchwood Park in Warrington. There is a link to a video on the latter project available at the end of this booklet. In each project, five employers worked with five schools, with each employer linked to a school. They dialled into the school to set an employer-led brief. The students then worked on the project and brought it to an event that brought everyone together. During the morning, the employers each ran a short carousel with each group of students so that all students got to meet all employers, not just the business their school is linked to. In the afternoon the students presented their work on the employer brief to the business they were linked with and received feedback.

Linking work experience to other visits

If students are already going on a visit, for example to a theatre or sports stadium, you can include a 'meet the staff' section, or set a task for the day and ask them to present back at the end of the day.

More traditional work experience

There is still a place for a student to spend a period of days with an employer - the more planned and structured this is, the better.

“This enables us to educate a large number of young people and their parents and carers, to inspire them of the wide range of roles and careers in our industry.”

Cheryl Grainger, Amaze Hotels

Extended placements


For those employers really wanting to 'try before you buy', there is an opportunity for employers to work with students completing T-Level qualifications at local Further Education (FE) colleges. T-Level courses are two-year vocational courses, in specific career sectors where young people spend 45 days in a business as part of the course. These young people tend to be focused on their future career aims and develop industry-specific skills through the programme. For a business with live vacancies, this is a chance to develop a young person and then hopefully bring them into the workforce at the end of the programme. To offer a T-Level placement contact your local Further Education provider (for example in Cheshire and Warrington courses are offered at Cheshire College South and West, Crewe Engineering and Design UTC, Reaseheath College, UTC Warrington, Warrington & Vale Royal College, Macclesfield College and Priestley College).

Work with organisations who support those in under-represented groups

There are a number of projects available that provide a structured way for a business to provide work experience for those young people most in need. At the end of this booklet is a link to a video which shows the mutual benefits of a work experience programme connecting The Ice Cream Farm with Petty Pool College.

A mixed approach

There are so many other options that a business could explore. Bank of America in Chester have been running a mentoring programme with local schools for a while. The students from Blacon High School asked if they could continue their learning by completing work experience at the bank's offices. As a result the bank developed a week long programme for a group of students, with many departments getting involved. This deepened the experience for the students, whilst also enabling the bank to share the workload around a number staff and also benefit from a group of students working with them, not just one individual. At the end of this guide is a link to a video which explains how this worked.



"The construction industry is very hands on. Spending 315 hours working with young people really gives us a chance to get to know the students. Over the last three years we have employed three apprentices in Cheshire and Warrington who have proved themselves through T-Level placements."

Andy Maddock, Site Agent for Balfour Beatty

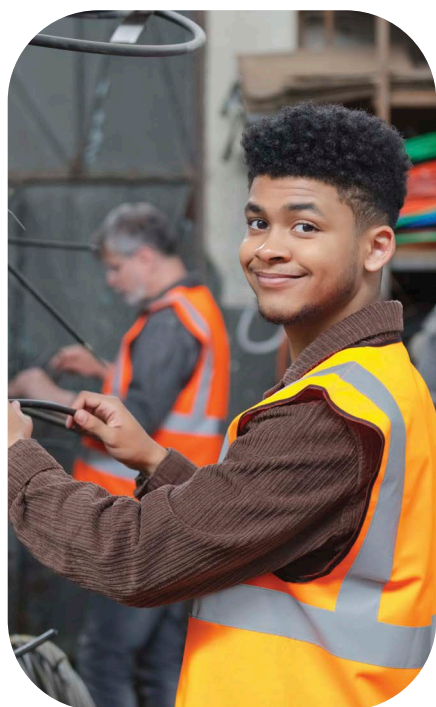
"We recently provided a work experience placement for a young person from The King's Trust*. We quickly recognised that they demonstrated the core values of our company: Caring, Sharing, and Daring. Ordinarily, our traditional recruitment practices would not have shortlisted this individual for any vacancies due to lack of relevant skills. To address this, we initiated our own programme: 'Reintegration to Employment'. This gives participants the opportunity to complete up to 12 weeks of paid work experience (two days per week), allowing them to gain insight into our sector and valuable workplace skills. We were so impressed with this individual that, halfway through their placement, they were offered full time employment and will be completing an apprenticeship."

Gill Carr, Social Value Coordinator for Colas Ltd

*The King's Trust supports 16-25 year olds not in education, employment or training. www.kingstrust.org.uk



The previous examples, and there are many more, provide different experiences and benefits for businesses. These are some common tips on how to make the experience effective.



1. Decide what you want to get out of the experience
2. Agree with the young person/ people what they want to get out of it
3. Plan as much as possible – you can always get help from others or seek examples online
4. Check with the school around insurance, risk assessments and other requirements
5. Ensure the young people meet as many people within the business as possible
6. Give them meaningful tasks that relate to the business
7. Provide the young people with clear feedback on how they are doing, both during the programme and at the end
8. Wherever possible, involve the teachers - this is called a Teacher Encounter. Upskilling the teacher will mean they can go back to the school/ college and share your key messages with many young people, acting as an ambassador on your behalf

A business might want to embed the 8 essential skills identified in the recognised Skills Builder framework (www.skillsbuilder.uk) to help young people to understand the skills that employers are looking for, and to identify when they are developing them during a placement (see more in the schools section).

The Careers and Enterprise Company provides a useful tool, called the Employer Standards. This free-to-use resource (found at www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/employers/employer-standards/) enables a business to answer a series of questions and then receive a report outlining the strengths and areas for development regarding early talent outreach. This also benchmarks you against similar organisations and signposts you to resources to consider how to make your work experience even more effective.

Guidance for Young People

How can a young person gain experiences of the workplace?

Modern work experience suggests that young people will benefit from multiple experiences with employers. Young people should look to gain as many experiences of connecting with employers as they can, even though this may feel daunting at times.

The main benefits of doing work experience for you as a young person are:

- Learning what it is like to work
- Developing the skills that employers look for. Skills Builder has captured these skills as Listening, Speaking, Problem Solving, Creativity, Adapting, Planning, Leadership and Teamwork (www.skillsbuilder.uk)
- Learning about the different types of careers that are available
- Visiting employers to see what it is like to work in different businesses



The main benefits of doing work experience for you as a young person are:

Gaining experience of the routine of working

There are many benefits to you of undertaking work experience. One is to understand what it feels like to work for an organisation. The experience of travelling to work regularly and arriving on time, having a manager, carrying out tasks and getting them done are key experiences that everyone benefits from. This could be achieved by a one week or longer experience or a placement over a longer time, including an internship. However, another way that you could gain this experience is to get a part-time job - this will also get you used to earning and managing money.

Meeting people at work to understand what they do

Meeting people from a variety of job backgrounds is great for helping you to explore potential jobs. This can be done through a traditional work experience week. However, there are so many other ways that you can gain experience of meeting people:

- Talk to friends and family – what do they do? Do they enjoy it? What is a typical week like? How did they get into the job?
- Make the most of visits or trips, or visitors coming into school – even a visit to the zoo or a theatre can provide a chance to meet someone working in the industry. Again, ask them about their role and learn as much as you can.

Traditional Work Experience

Many of you will have the chance to complete a week of work experience during Year 10 or 11

and then again in Year 12. This is the traditional way for young people to explore the workplace. Finding the best placement for you can be tricky - think about who you know, and your friends and family. We encourage you to start early and not leave it until the last minute. Also consider ringing up businesses, contacting them through their websites/email or visiting in-person to see what opportunities they have locally as this shows great initiative. Be prepared for this by having a CV on hand or offer to follow up at a mutually convenient time. Employers which already employ young people on a seasonal or casual basis already may be a good option for success.

Consider Doing Summer Holiday work experience placements

You don't have to wait for a school to allocate time to you to undertake work experience. There are businesses now that offer work experience during school holidays, for example Sellafield offer a one week immersive learning experience in Warrington. The work experience programme is varied and reflects the career opportunities at Sellafield Ltd and is aimed at students in Year 10 – 13. The programmes have been designed to provide you with a taste of what it would be like to work at Sellafield and to give you the chance to meet their employees (including those just starting their careers with them) and to learn about the opportunities available.

Virtual or Hybrid Work Experience

A relatively new way to gain work experience is to complete a virtual or hybrid work experience. Virtual work experience enables you to complete a programme from home or school. Businesses have set up detailed programmes where you dial in and work through tasks,

with connections with employers scheduled in, and feedback at the end. Sometimes these can be hybrid, where you also get to visit an employer, or they come to visit you in school or college. Some organisations offer a variety of virtual opportunities with employers, for example Futures for All www.futuresforall.org.

One business that offers their own virtual work experience is AstraZeneca. Their week-long experience showcases the development of a medicine at AstraZeneca. The experience enables students to meet with team members at AstraZeneca, to understand how they help develop medicines and gain more information about joining AstraZeneca through their early careers programmes.

To find out more go to: www.astrazenecaworkexperience.com

Volunteer

Many of the Skills Builder essential skills can be gained from volunteering. You may already play a sport, be involved in a band or a drama group, or be a member of Scouts, Cadets or Guides. These could give you the opportunity to volunteer as a young leader or coach. Search for local charities that take on volunteers, for example many hospitals have great volunteering opportunities. Alternatively, Local Community and Voluntary Service (CVS) organisations advertise volunteering opportunities. The names of these will vary depending on location e.g. Cheshire West Voluntary Action and CVS Cheshire East. You might want to use the hours from volunteering to help gain the Duke of Edinburgh Award (www.dofe.org), which is highly regarded by employers. Once enrolled, you complete four sections, volunteering being one, with the others being physical, skills and expedition.

Undertake a vocational course with a large component of work experience

If you want to get lots of experience of the workplace whilst studying, then there are two great routes for this:

a) T-levels

From age 16 you can study a T-Level. These are technical qualifications that prepare students for skilled employment, apprenticeships or higher education. They focus on specific careers, giving you a technical qualification. In terms of work experience, students undertake 315 hours with an employer as a core part of the course, so this is a great way to study whilst really getting lots of work experience. Contact your local Further Education College to find out whether they run T-Levels. Cheshire and Warrington courses are offered at Cheshire College South and West, Crewe Engineering and Design UTC, Reaseheath College, UTC Warrington, Warrington & Vale Royal College, Macclesfield College and Priestley College.

“T-Levels are high-quality A-Level alternative technical qualifications that match employer needs in key growth sectors. Students gain practical experience that prepares them for direct progression into skilled employment or higher education and they’re ideal for learners who thrive by putting knowledge into practice.”

Adam Bird, Head of Marketing and Communications at Priestley College

b) Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships can be started from the age of 16. An apprenticeship is a paid job that combines work with study. You’ll spend most of your time gaining hands-on experience in a real role (around 30 hours a week), and the rest working towards a formal qualification. An apprenticeship can take between 1-5 years to complete depending on the level you study at. You can do an apprenticeship at any level between Level 2 (equivalent to GCSEs) right up to Levels 6 and 7 (equivalent to a full bachelor’s or master’s degree).

Unlike full-time study, you earn a salary and are part of a team, but you also get regular, dedicated time for learning each week. Unlike with T-Levels, you will spend the majority of your time in the business and then roughly one day a week studying. You can complete an apprenticeship in a whole range of job roles, for example marketing and engineering. Many employers promote their own apprenticeship opportunities so if you have an employer in mind you can check their website to see what they have available. Another way to find an apprenticeship is to search at www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship

“I chose to study a T-Level because it’s equivalent to three A-Levels but with a practical focus. I like the concept of being able to gain valuable work experience while studying – it’s something unlike any other course. Perfect for someone like me who learns better by doing rather than just theory.”

Student, Priestley College

There are over 20 different T-Level programmes covering areas such as engineering, craft and design, digital, business and health and science. You will still be studying primarily at college and doing roughly one day a week on placement.



How can you prepare for work experience?

Before you undertake your experience, here are some tips and hints to help you. Preparation is key to making the most of your work experience. Think of it as a short journey into the world of work, the more you plan, the more confident you'll feel.

- **Research the organisation:** Visit their website, look at what they do and think about questions you might ask.
- **Set goals:** What do you want to learn – about careers, about yourself, about specific skills?
- **Practical arrangements:** Plan your travel route, check your timetable, check lunch arrangements and make sure you know what to bring.
- **First impressions:** Ask about a dress code and prepare your outfits in advance.

How can you get the most out of your placement?

- **Be punctual:** Arrive on time every day.
- **Ask questions:** Curiosity shows interest and helps you learn.
- **Be polite and respectful:** Treat it like a real job.
- **Take notes:** Keep a diary or logbook to help you remember what you've done.
- **Stay positive:** Every task is a chance to learn something new.

The most important thing to remember is that the next person you meet might change your life - the more people you speak to, the more you'll realise that it is often a chance meeting or conversation that leads to many people getting a job. Be ready for that to happen, and if it does, be proactive and seize the opportunity.

Guidance for Secondary Schools & Special Schools

Modern work experience is so important for young people, and schools and colleges have a key role to play in ensuring that young people get every opportunity to connect with employers.



It is a government ambition for every young person to have access to at least 10 days (50 hours) of work experience. It is not yet policy, as it is currently under development, and the Department for Education (DfE) will share future timelines and expectations in the future.

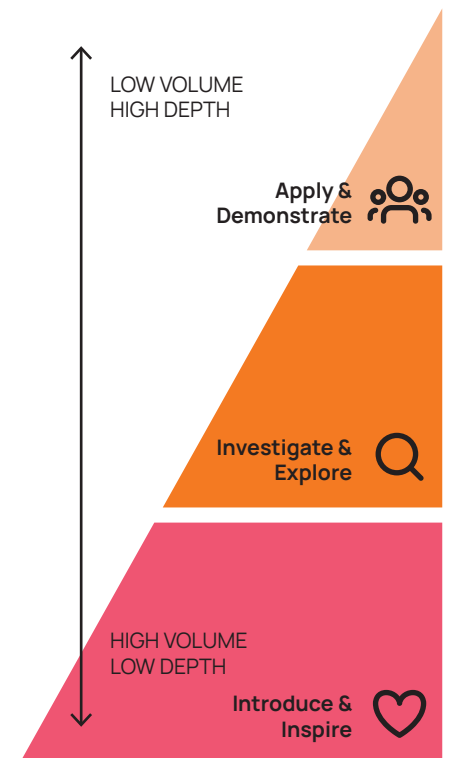
Based on extensive evidence, a set of eight Gatsby Benchmarks have been established and recently updated. These are agreed as the best practice for world-class careers guidance and are central to government statutory guidance for secondary and special schools and colleges. More details can be found at www.gatsbybenchmarks.org.uk. Gatsby Benchmarks 5 (Encounters with Employers and Employees), and 6 (Experiences of Workplaces) are the main ones that focus on work experience.

The Careers and Enterprise Company (www.careersandenterprise.co.uk) work with secondary and special schools, colleges and employers to improve careers education and secure better outcomes for young people. Each area of England has its own local Careers Hub which are there to support schools

and colleges. It is likely that your school already has a connection with their local Careers Hub; if not, a school should go to the website and connect as they offer a lot of support.

This work experience does not have to be traditional work placements over extended periods of time. As outlined in the employer section of this guide, it could include various opportunities for young people to engage with employers in other ways.

Ideally a secondary school should aim to develop a progressive approach to work experience. This involves all students in Key Stage 3 meeting with employers to introduce and inspire them about their careers, then as students start to identify their interests, a school should start to tailor the experience by connecting those young people with an interest in a sector to employers within that chosen field, so that they can further investigate and explore the sector. The aim in Years 10 and 11 is for young people to work more closely with people in chosen sectors to apply and demonstrate their skills.



So, for example a school may undertake the following programme:

YEAR	AIM	APPROACH
7-8	Introduce & Inspire	Two one-day programmes where employers from a business visit a school, set an employer brief for the students to work on and provide feedback. Two half-day visits as part of the wider school project (e.g. to a museum and a marketing agency). At both visits they are shown around the business, meet staff who talk about their job and routes into the business. They are then given a small task to complete and present in groups.
9	Investigate & Explore	Two days of employers visiting the school. Students select the businesses that they are interested in. They meet the staff, are set an employer brief, deliver presentation to the employer and receive feedback.
10-11	Apply & Demonstrate	Students complete a week of working with an employer in a sector that they are interested in. This could be one-to-one traditional work shadowing, an employer-set task, hybrid or virtual work placement etc (see employer section above).

For the students to get the most out of each of the experiences, it is critical that the projects are meaningful; for this to occur, clear and progressive learning outcomes need to be set on each project, and the young people need to meet with employers, to work on a project and receive clear feedback from the employer.

Schools need to clearly map what they are delivering with the students to ensure that all young people engage in the programme and ensure that it is tailored to their specific needs.

Finding employers who are willing to work with the young people in a school can be demanding. Long term relationships are most effective if the school considers why a business would want to get involved, makes sure they achieve their objectives and shares the successes.

When the experience is one where staff are involved, it is a good idea to try and include a teacher encounter. This means the teacher spends time with the employer, learning their key messages and the skills/attributes they are looking for, then being empowered

to share the messages with other students during normal teaching. This really increases the impact back in the school.

Schools might want to consider using Skills Builder (www.skillsbuilder.uk) as a tool to help students to better understand the essential skills that employers are looking for. Extensive research has identified 8 essential skills; listening, speaking, problem solving, creativity, adapting, planning, leadership and teamwork.

“We set a live project which the students completed during a school trip and then presented back to the organisation’s CEO. This shows the ambition and not missing an opportunity to turn activity into work experience opportunities.”

Andrea Watts, Queens Park High School, Chester

Guidance for Parents & Carers

Helping a young person to gain experience of the workplace can be daunting. Receiving a letter home asking a student to find a placement for a week of work experience is a challenge. The first step should always be to have a conversation about what your young person is interested in, what they enjoy at school and what careers they are curious about.

Students can be asked to find a placement for themselves, so be mindful that some employers have a formal processes for this (such STFC Daresbury Lab <https://stfc-workexperience.co.uk/applydl/>), while others rely on more personal approaches. If your young person has an employer or sector in mind then support them to research what the next steps should be. A parent/ carer may want to help them to put together a CV (there are many templates available online) highlighting school achievements, hobbies, any volunteering or additional responsibilities (for example, sports captain or caring roles that demonstrate skills and commitment). Parents can help provide guidance on tone, structure and give it a proof read (you might want to ask their form tutor to look over the CV too).

Encourage them and give them the confidence to go into businesses to enquire about any vacancies. Also start thinking about this early on and always consider speaking to local businesses near your home who may want to support their local community or the school itself. They may have even attended

the school! This will also make the commute easier for your child.

Parents can help by thinking broadly about any connections they may know, within the family, the neighbourhood or wider community. Smaller, local businesses can provide valuable experiences so it's good to think beyond the well-known, larger employers. You may also want to consider thinking beyond what a company does as a business, and think about the likely variety of roles within. For example, many larger employers have marketing teams so if a young person is interested in a career in marketing, think beyond marketing agencies, perhaps linking in with other passions such as sport or music.

Throughout this booklet there are a number of different options that you could help a young person explore. Schools may well suggest hybrid or virtual placements, or suggest visits. Parents/ carers can encourage their young person to consider taking these opportunities up, explaining the benefits of them. You should also consider promoting these benefits to any employers you are approaching, for example

highlighting that if staff resources are tight, perhaps they would consider a virtual work experience opportunity instead.

Encourage follow ups as getting no reply can be common. Also check emails regularly before following up to save time and embarrassment! Rejection is also common but it's important to see it as a learning opportunity in resilience.

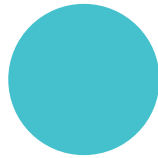
Modern work experience means that the options are wider than ever before. Helping a young person to consider a part time job is worth considering. Looking on local job pages, social media etc is a good start for finding a job. Thinking creatively, it might be possible for them to volunteer, doing something they already do in their spare time so think about any existing links with charities, museums, libraries or sports clubs as a service user that you can leverage.

Parents and carers play a crucial role in helping young people get the most out of their work experience. The right support before, during and after the placement can make all the difference.



How to support and encourage

- **Talk it through:** Discuss what your child hopes to get out of the experience.
- **Encourage independence:** Support them in planning travel, preparing questions, and getting organised.
- **Be a sounding board:** Listen if they feel nervous or uncertain, and reassure them that this is normal.
- **Say thank you:** A short email or card leaves a good impression.
- **Reflect afterwards:** Ask about what they learned, enjoyed, and found challenging.



Resources & Contacts

Supporting Videos

To accompany this guide, we have produced a series of videos showing real-life examples of excellent practice. Thank you to all who gave their time generously to the creation of the videos.

<https://youthfed.org.uk/wex/>



Useful Websites

<https://youthfed.org.uk/programmes/the-pledge/>

Apprenticeships information and searching
www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship

Careers & Enterprise Company – guidance and employer engagement support
www.careersandenterprise.co.uk

Careers & Enterprise Company – Employer Standards tool
www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/employers/employer-standards/

Gatsby Benchmarks – framework and standards for careers guidance for young people in England
www.gatsbybenchmarks.org.uk

National Careers Service – careers advice for young people and adults
<https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/>

Skills Builder – resources for building essential skills
www.skillsbuilder.uk

Youth Employment UK – support for young people aged 14–24
www.youthemployment.org.uk

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award – personal development programme for young people aged 14–24
www.dofe.org

Unifrog - Helping students find their future
<https://www.unifrog.org/>

Futures for All – providing virtual work experience programmes
www.futuresforall.org

<https://westminsterfoundation.org.uk/>

Work experience is not just about preparing for a job – it is about building confidence, sparking ambition, and helping young people see what is possible. When they are given the chance to connect with real workplaces, they begin to imagine futures they may never have considered, and they discover the skills and strengths they can carry with them wherever life takes them.

For employers, parents and schools, these moments of connection are just as powerful. Employers will see many benefits of engaging successfully with young people. Inspiring the next generation and shaping their future workforce is rewarding. More than that, it can increase the potential pool of applicants for future roles. It can also open the eyes to employers to see the benefits of employing young people, and those from under-represented groups.

Parents can watch their children grow in independence and belief.

Schools and colleges can bring learning to life in ways that no classroom alone can achieve. Together, we create experiences that are inclusive and meaningful, ensuring every young person has access to opportunities and genuine insights into the world of work.

The journey ahead is about making work experience flexible and future-focused – taking many forms, from in-person placements to virtual or project-based encounters - and always equipping young people with the skills they need to thrive in a changing world. By working together, we can open doors, nurture curiosity, and empower every young person to take confident steps into their future. The rewards are lasting: for the young people themselves; for the organisations that welcome them; and for the communities strengthened by their ambition.

The Pledge programme runs a variety of events and activities to support young people, schools and businesses. For more information on the Pledge visit <https://youthfed.org.uk/programmes/the-pledge/> or email pledge@youthfed.org.

This Work Experience Guide has been made possible thanks to generous funding from the Westminster Foundation.



**Westminster
Foundation**

Thank you to the entire Pledge network who have generously given their time, advice and resources to support excellent careers education for all young people. The network is a collaboration between employers, schools, colleges, universities, Local Authorities, Chambers of Commerce and of course the Careers & Enterprise Company, the Cheshire and Warrington Careers Hub and Enterprise Cheshire and Warrington. Special thanks to the amazing contributors to this guide and supporting video resources.

**THE
PLEDGE**





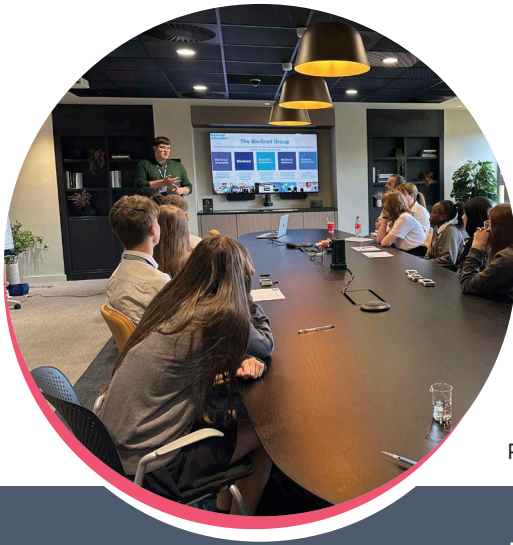
Youth Fed

20/21 Rossmore Business Village, Inward Way,
Ellesmere Port CH65 3EY

General enquiries 0151 3571 971

pledge@youthfed.org

www.youthfed.org.uk



Registered charity 1143231

Modern Work Experience Guide

THE
PLEDGE