FUTURES FOR ALL

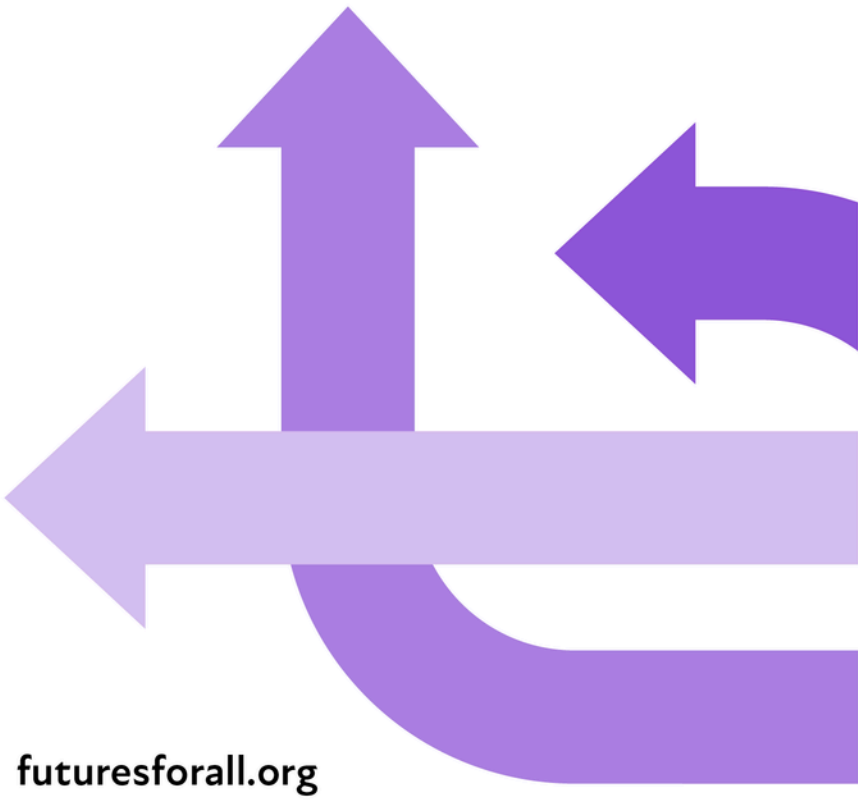






WEX In A Box Guidebook

A comprehensive guide to delivering high-quality work experience placements



futuresforall.org

Version 1.1

Photography: Vantage Media Productions & Ben Shakespeare

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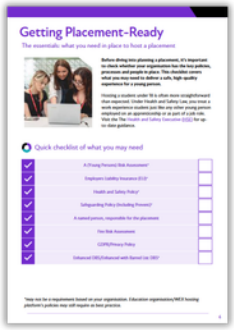
Introduction

This guide is designed to support you in planning and delivering a high-quality work experience placement (WEX).

It brings together our research and expertise into one clear, step-by-step process. Inside, you'll find everything you need to get started: the essential components of a placement, the core principles of quality, and our indicators of excellence designed to help you deliver meaningful and impactful experiences for young people

1

Use our "Essentials" pages to understand the key requirements for delivering your work experience placements. Detach and keep our handy checklists to help you stay organised throughout the process.







2

Use our tips, examples and additional guidance to help design your placement, all drawn from our extensive experience of working with employers and young people.

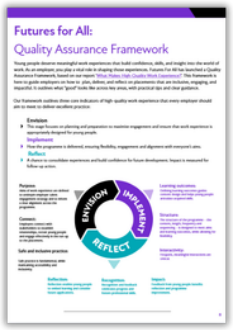






3

Use our Quality Assurance Framework to evaluate your work experience offer and benchmark it against our research. You can also use it to demonstrate and share your impact with others.







Work Experience: The Benefits

What are the benefits to your organisation, young people and schools?

Tap into a pool of young talent and boost social mobility.

We understand the pressures that employers of all sizes are under to adapt to a rapidly changing labour market and help close skills gaps. We also understand that it can be very difficult to locate the best early talent when the playing field is far from level and your resources are often stretched.

As a social mobility charity, we are committed to supporting employers like you to uncover new and diverse sources of talent and develop the right skillsets in your future workforce.



Benefits to your organisation

- Strengthen your early talent pipeline; establish new, more inclusive ways to attract a more diverse mix of young people.
- Maximise your social impact; create impact-focused activities that meet specific CSR objectives.
- Future proof the UK workforce; play a role in building a more sustainable and productive workforce for the future.
- Reinforce your brand and promote new and existing job opportunities and pathways.
- Enable your employees to be your ambassadors for local, regional and national outreach and generate positive employee morale.
- Build greater staff engagement with more opportunities to develop leadership and management skills.
- Develop your workforce digital, mentoring and training skills.
- Evidence how you meet benchmarks for external assessments such as Matrix Standard and CEC Employer Standards for Work Experience.
- Helpful resources:
  - Inspiring Success?
  - Work Experience for All
  - Matrix Standard

Benefits to young people

- Boost their CV or personal statement, providing tangible evidence of an interest in a career, discipline, employer or industry.
- Gain useful insights, and experience practical learning opportunities to develop a deeper understanding of the world of work and what type of career is most suited to them.
- Make informed decisions around subject choices.
- Broaden their horizons and build networks and confidence, gaining the essential skills that employers will value.
- Increased chances of securing a place at a chosen college or university, or getting onto a training course or apprenticeship, or even landing a first job.
- Multiple work experience opportunities undertaken in education has a proven link to an increase in annual salary once in full-time employment.
- **Futures For All's research evidencing the value of work experience:**
  - Double Disadvantage
  - Work Experience For All
  - Proving the Value of Remote Work Experience

Benefits to schools and colleges

- Build a network with employers invested in nurturing early talent development.
- Opportunities to link careers and skills to the classroom and curriculum, bringing the world of work to life.
- Opportunities for CPD and educator upskilling through industry links.
- Access credible information about jobs and careers which have a positive effect on a young person's understanding of the workplace.
- Helpful resources:
  - **Work experience resources guide**
  - **Programme Prospectus for Educators**
  - **Impact Reports**

Getting Placement-Ready

The essentials: what you need in place to host a placement



Before diving into planning a placement, it's important to check whether your organisation has the key policies, processes and people in place. This checklist covers what you may need to deliver a safe, high-quality experience for a young person.

Hosting a student under the age of 18 is often more straightforward than expected. Under Health and Safety Law, you treat a work experience student just like any other young person employed on an apprenticeship or as part of a job role. Visit the The **Health and Safety Executive (HSE)** for up-to-date guidance.

Quick checklist of what you may need

✓	A (Young Persons) Risk Assessment*	
✓	Employers Liability Insurance (ELI)*	
✓	Health and Safety Policy*	
✓	Safeguarding Policy (Including Prevent)*	
✓	A named person, responsible for the placement	
✓	Fire Risk Assessment	
✓	GDPR/Privacy Policy	
✓	AccessNI/ DBS/ Disclosure Scotland*	
✓	Education Authority: **Work Experience Forms 1-5 (Northern Ireland only)**	

**may not be a requirement based on your organisation. Education organisation/WEX hosting platform's policies may still require as best practice.*

Futures For All:
Quality Assurance Framework

Our framework recommends three core indicators of high-quality work experience an employer should meet to deliver excellent practice. These three stages are broken down further into nine key themes.

Envision (Before the placement)

- This stage focuses on planning and preparation to maximise engagement and ensure that work experience is appropriately designed for young people.

Implement (During the placement)

- How the programme is delivered, ensuring flexibility, engagement and alignment with everyone's aims.

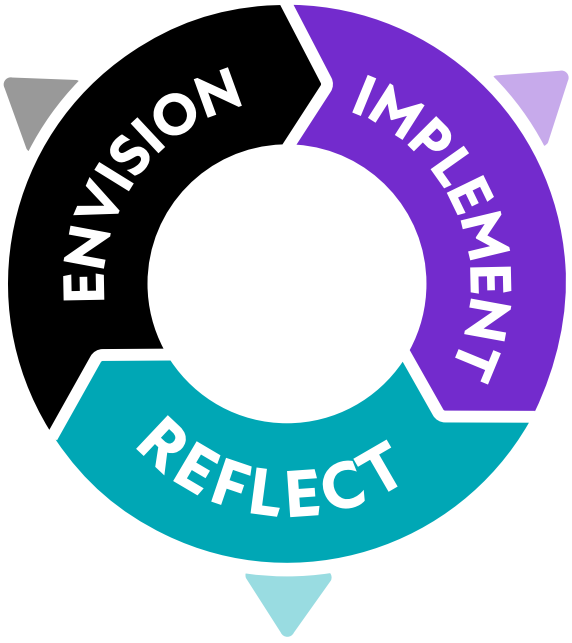
Reflect (After the placement)

- A chance to consolidate experiences and build confidence for future development. Impact is measured for follow-up action.

Clear Aims
Aims of work experience are defined to underpin employer talent engagement strategy and to inform a clear alignment across the programme.

Engagement & Outreach
Employers connect with stakeholders to establish relationships, recruit young people and engage effectively in the run-up to the placement.

Safe, Accessible & Inclusive Practice
Safe practice is fundamental, while maintaining accessibility and inclusivity.



Learning & Developmental Outcomes
Defining learning outcomes guides content design and helps young people articulate acquired skills.

Programme Structure
The structure of the programme – the content, length, frequency and sequencing – is designed to meet aims and learning outcomes, while allowing for flexibility.

Meaningful Interactions
Frequent, meaningful interactions are critical.

Opportunities for Reflection
Reflection enables young people to embed learning and consider future applications.

Recognition & Supporting Next Steps
Recognition and feedback celebrates progress and fosters professional skills.

Evaluation & Continuous Improvement
Feedback from young people benefits reflection and programme improvement.

Futures For All:
Quality Assurance Framework

Why use this framework?

Young people deserve meaningful work experiences that build confidence, skills, and insight into the world of work. As an employer, you play a vital role in shaping those experiences.

This framework, based on our report What Makes High-Quality Work Experience?, is here to help you plan, deliver, and reflect on placements that are inclusive, engaging, and impactful.

It outlines what "good" looks like across key areas, with practical tips and clear guidance to support you, whether it's your first time offering work experience or you're refining an established programme.



Using this framework effectively

You can use this framework to:

- **Plan and improve your offer**: Whether you're designing a new placement or refining an existing one, the framework acts as a guide for each element of a high-quality experience.
- **Reflect on what's working well**: Use the *Core* and *Excellence* descriptors to identify strengths in your current offer and areas to celebrate.
- **Identify areas for further development**: The framework helps you spot where improvements could be made to better support young people or align more closely with best practice.
- **Refer back during delivery**: It's not just a planning tool - the framework can be used throughout the placement to guide delivery, check progress, and ensure alignment with your original goals.

Futures For All:
Quality Assurance Framework

Need help to deliver Excellence?

Flexible support is available for your placement

While this framework can be used independently or with light-touch support, Futures For All offer a range of services to help employers deliver high-quality, inclusive placements. These services include content creation, hosting services, technical assistance, and event coordination. These enhanced services can help you work towards excellence standards.

If you are already partnered with us and would like to know more, please speak to your Account Manager. If you are not currently working with us but would like to find out more, please contact **employers@futuresforall.org**.



Understanding our *Core* and *Excellence* standards

Our Quality Assurance Framework outlines two levels of practice: *Core* and *Excellence*.

Core standards represent the minimum expected to ensure a safe, structured and purposeful work experience. They reflect what every placement should include as a baseline for quality.

Excellence standards go further, showcasing best practice where placements are inclusive, thoughtfully designed and aligned with progression and impact.

By understanding both levels, you can benchmark your current offer and identify opportunities to enhance the experience for young people.

Reflect, Score, Improve

At Futures For All, we use a scoring matrix to assess placements across the three stages and nine key theme. Each theme is rated on a 5-point scale, across the *Core* and *Excellence* standards from Not Met to Outstanding, helping us recognise best practice and support improvement when working with our partners.

If you're an employer using this framework independently, you can also use the scoring system to reflect on your own delivery. Where would your placement currently land? This quick self-check can help you identify strengths and spot areas to improve, whether or not you're working with us directly.

Framework Overview

The table below provides a simplified version of the framework to support quick reference. A more detailed breakdown for each theme, including examples and expanded descriptors, follows in the full framework.

	Standard	Core	Excellence
Envision	**Clear Aims**	Define the purpose of the placement; ensure activities reflect real work environments; set clear goals for what young people will gain.	Showcase a range of careers or entry pathways; support community or outreach goals; target underrepresented groups.
	Engagement & Outreach	Use clear, accessible language in recruitment materials; share key information (e.g. schedule, expectations) in advance.	Target outreach to underrepresented groups; offer virtual tours, school visits, or parent sessions; provide alternative application routes to support inclusion.
	Safe, Accessible & Inclusive Practice	Complete safeguarding and risk assessments; share basic safety info and practical details; consider costs, travel, and basic access needs.	Tailor support to individual needs (e.g. flexible hours, assistive tech); involve families or educators where helpful; co-design adjustments where possible.
Implement	**Learning & Developmental Outcomes**	Share clear learning outcomes from the start; align tasks and activities with those outcomes.	Link outcomes to real sector pathways or curriculum; use discussion, or debriefs to reinforce learning.
	Programme Structure	Provide a clear timetable and code of conduct; include induction, learning activities, and closure.	Build in time for feedback and reflection; use real-world challenges and flexible formats; support diverse needs through differentiated content.
	Meaningful Interaction	Facilitate contact between young people and professionals (e.g. Q&A, talks); support peer interaction through group tasks.	Include staff from different roles/levels; use buddy systems or structured group activities; provide a named contact for support.

Reflect	**Opportunities For Reflection**	Build in time for reflection (written, verbal, or group); encourage young people to identify skills gained.	Link reflections to career goals or personal development; help young people record reflections they can use (e.g. in CVs).
	Recognition & Supporting Next Steps	Give all participants a certificate of completion; provide feedback on what they achieved.	Offer personalised feedback linked to their strengths; employers meaningfully support a young person's next steps.
	Evaluation & Continuous Improvement	Use surveys to gather feedback from participants; reflect on what worked and what could improve.	Gather feedback from mentors, educators, and other stakeholders; use feedback to refine your offer and track impact over time.



Connect your placement to wider careers frameworks

Aligning the design of your placement to established benchmarks and frameworks will support schools, colleges and independent training providers with their CEIAG (Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance) offer and meeting the Government's 'Youth Guarantee'.

Alongside our own Quality Assurance Framework, depending on where you are hosting placements, you may want to consider:

- Gatsby Benchmarks
- Career Development Institute
- The Careers and Enterprise Company
- DYW Scotland
- Careers Wales

Certification for High-Quality Work Experience



In the 2026/27 academic year, we're launching a certification programme so employers can have great work experience formally recognised. It's built on the same Quality Assurance Framework in this guide, so everything you've been working towards here already puts you in a strong position. Certification is awarded placement by placement, so you can build up recognition as you go rather than needing your whole offer signed off at once. Want to be one of the first to know when this opens? **Get in touch at national.standard@futuresforall.org**.



Stage One: **Envision**

This stage focuses on planning and preparation to maximise engagement and ensure that work experience is appropriately designed for young people.

Need help setting up your placement?

We can support you with content design, writing accessible adverts, the full application process, and ensuring your programme meets quality standards from the start. Talk to us about flexible support (**employers@futuresforall.org**)

Placement Design

Choosing a delivery method

There are two main formats for delivering work experience (WEX): remote (online) and in-person. Where possible, a hybrid placement can offer the best of both. When planning your placement, consider which format is best suited to your topic, audience and available resources. Make effective use of internal support, as your HR and finance teams can provide valuable advice and assistance with recruitment and application processes.

Whichever format you choose, the success of your placement will come down to thoughtful planning and a clear understanding of what young people need to thrive. Use the rest of this guide to shape a placement that not only meets core requirements but also delivers a rewarding and memorable experience.

Features	Remote	In-person/Hybrid
Collaboration and immersive learning experience	Carefully planned activities, including the use of breakout rooms and mentors, can help replicate many of the benefits of in-person placements.	Fluid interactions between employees and young people can help build relationships more quickly and enhance learning.
Flexibility and accessibility	Removing geographical restrictions can widen the potential talent pool and improve accessibility for those who face barriers to in-person opportunities, such as transport limitations or social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs. However, it's important to consider that access to technology may itself be a barrier for some applicants.	In-person placements may have limited reach, depending on location and the available pool of applicants. It's important to consider the cost and ease of transport for young people. That said, commuting can offer valuable experience in managing a work/life balance and developing personal responsibility.

Choosing a delivery method cont.

Features	Remote	In-person/Hybrid
Time and cost	Remote delivery can allow for more efficient use of resources, enabling staff from multiple locations to contribute to short sessions and provide a broader perspective on the industry or organisation. However, it may also require additional training and incur extra costs related to safeguarding and remote delivery.	In-person placements may require additional administrative time, such as completing risk assessments and exchanging documents. Students might also need PPE, ID cards, IT accounts, and support with travel, appropriate attire, and meals.
Skill development	Recently, digital and remote collaboration skills have become essential in most workplaces. Innovative use of digital platforms during placements can enhance a young person's CV and build their confidence.	Hands-on experience is especially relevant for practical roles and those within the service sector.
Culture and feedback	Opportunities to observe workplace culture may be limited in online settings. Consider how to embed this aspect into your programme through structured activities, and provide space for feedback and networking.	An immersive, in-person experience offers more opportunities for organic networking and observing workplace behaviours. Feedback is delivered in real-time and often includes both task reviews and informal observation.

Clear Aims

Setting clear aims for your placement

Aims of work experience should guide the programme from the outset, shaping its design, delivery, and intended outcomes. Clear, purposeful aims define the value of the placement for both the employer and young people. They inform the structure of the programme and connect directly to learning outcomes, ensuring a coherent, meaningful experience that supports progression and real-world readiness.

Theme	Core	Excellence
Setting aims	Establish clear aims for the work experience, ensuring it provides meaningful and impactful opportunities; define the programme's purpose by clearly outlining its role within your organisation and the benefits it provides for young people. As a minimum, the core aims of a work experience should include the following: • **Replicate aspects of the real working world** – The experience includes workplace-based tasks, professional interactions, and expectations that reflect real working environments, ensuring participants complete at least one project or work-based challenge. There should be clear evidence of planning and activity that demonstrates progress towards meeting the aims of the work experience programme.	At Excellence level, a work experience should go beyond the Core aim by meeting at least one of the additional aims listed below. • **Demystify the diversity of careers in an industry/sector** – Provide insight into a range of roles, ensuring participants engage with at least three different career paths or job functions. • **Illustrate pathways into careers** – Help participants understand at least two entry routes into the sector (e.g. apprenticeships, graduate schemes, vocational training), with clear next steps. • **Support the local community** – Contribute to community initiatives or partnerships (e.g. schools, charities, local businesses) offering tangible impact. • **Connect with young people who may not otherwise access the industry/sector** – Use targeted outreach to engage those less likely to access the sector (e.g. via social mobility organisations, bursaries, or mentoring). • **Raise brand awareness and build pipeline of future workforce** – Increase awareness of your organisation and sector, helping participants understand culture and career options, with at least one activity to engage them as potential future employees (e.g. talent spotting or alumni networks). The strongest employers also check in on whether these aims are actually being met, for example by asking young people for feedback or reviewing evaluation data, and use this to keep refining why they offer work experience over time.

Envision Implement Reflect

Clear Aims

To measure the impact of your placement, start by clearly defining its purpose. At the heart of every high-quality experience is a commitment to replicating or meaningfully exposing young people to the real working world. This could include authentic tasks, workplace behaviours or insights into roles and pathways.

On the following pages, you'll find examples of how employers have successfully translated these aims into tangible impact.



	Aim of work experience	In-person	Remote	Real examples of how aims translated into impact
Core	**Replicate aspects of the real working world**	Gives young people the opportunity to get a sense of the real workplace culture	Simulates remote working tasks and navigating information-sharing on an online platform	**Tech industry:** Students completed and presented briefs to industry standards with direct portfolio use in mind. **Finance industry:** Students worked directly on a live leading global hedge fund.
Excellence	**Demystify the diversity of careers in an industry/sector**	Young people can experience different areas of a workplace and see how they fit together	Allows different employers in diverse roles to participate in the work experience remotely	**Public sector:** Students heard from a broad range of professionals – from probation officers to senior strategists – and explored career paths including apprenticeships and graduate routes.

Envision Implement Reflect

Excellence

Aim of work experience	In-person	Remote	Real examples of how aims translated into impact
Illustrate pathways into careers	Opportunities for young people to meet employees and have informal conversations about their career paths	Provides a platform to host informative sessions to large groups	**Media industry:** Explored how to take an initial idea "from a spark to the screen;" heard about the pathways of Creative Directors, Video Directors, Animators, etc. who have worked across TV, advertising, film and content.
Connect with young people who may not otherwise access the industry/sector	Employers can target young people who may experience disadvantage and provide experiences they would not otherwise access	Allows young people to access workplaces without geographical barriers	**Transport industry:** Attracted students interested in fashion, sustainability and ethics to explore how this fits into the world of transport and logistics.
Support the local community	Invite the local community into workplaces to build supportive relationships	A way to engage with the local community when workplaces might be challenging for young people to attend	**Construction industry:** an emphasis on how we can transform historic buildings into spaces full of life that can benefit the local community.
Raise brand awareness and build pipeline of future workforce	Gives young people the opportunity to get a sense of the real workplace culture and informs decisions around future career paths	Allows young people to access workplaces without geographical barriers, raising brand awareness beyond local areas	**Manufacturing industry:** A household name showcasing how products are designed from ideation to production.

Engagement & Outreach

Reaching and preparing young people

Effective placements start with thoughtful engagement. Employers should prioritise inclusive outreach, clear communications, and early relationship-building with participants, schools, and families. This helps ensure young people feel confident, prepared, and informed before the placement begins.

Theme	Core	Excellence
Exploring and applying	Adverts are clear, accessible, and written in non-technical language. They are designed to encourage applications and help participants gain experience of real-world recruitment processes. Adverts also highlight development opportunities, such as key skills that will be developed.	The employer has a targeted and strategic plan for who they are trying to reach, with the explicit aim of ensuring opportunities are equitable and reach young people who might not otherwise access them. This might include running engagement sessions with specific schools or communities, using a structured application process designed to be open and fair, or working with partners to actively recruit from underrepresented groups. The employer regularly reviews the approach with partners to ensure it remains effective and fair.
Introductory sessions, pre-placements and stakeholder engagement	Participants receive comprehensive joining instructions and a clear programme overview at least two weeks in advance. This includes preparation tips, expectations, time commitments, and available support to ensure they feel confident and informed.	Participants are further supported through at least one form of pre-placement engagement. This might include a venue pre-visit, pre-recorded virtual tour, online introductory session, drop-in, school visit, pre-placement activity, or another form of pre-placement interaction. These touchpoints help build clarity, confidence, and preparedness ahead of the placement. The format will vary depending on the nature of the placement and what is viable for both the employer and participants.

Exploring and applying

To attract the right talent to your placement, consider three key questions:

- How will you write your advert to appeal to your target audience?
- Where and how will you advertise your placement?
- What will the content of your placement be, and what learning outcomes do you want to achieve?

If your organisation has a marketing, communications, or learning and development team, involve them early to help shape your messaging and reach.

Consider the following:

- Does your advert use accessible, jargon-free language that appeals to young people?
- Are application routes clearly stated, including location, eligibility, deadlines and how to apply?
- Does your advert highlight the skills or development opportunities the placement offers?
- Are the benefits of participation and your organisation's values clearly communicated?
- Would a young person understand what the placement involves, what they'll gain from it, and how to ask for help?

Helpful resources:

- Opportunities Writing Guide
- Hosting Work Experience Guide







A high-quality placement will:

- Ensure the application process is inclusive by design and does not unfairly exclude anyone
- Use advert language that highlights active skill development (e.g. "You will collaborate, analyse, present..." rather than "You will observe...")
- Support equity and social mobility by reaching underrepresented groups and clearly communicating the placement's value and impact
- Offer alternative application routes or formats where needed to reduce barriers for young people

Envision Implement Reflect

From application to approval: what to prepare

- How will young people register their interest/apply? Is your process GDPR compliant with an easy to understand young person's policy?
- How will you make selections? Will there be set questions for example? How will you ensure the selection process is fair and equal?
- The dates and time of your placement.
- Your expenses policy: How much will you cover? What will it cover? e.g. lunches/travel. Are there any restrictions? e.g. only public transport.
- If you require students to have ID, certain clothing (uniform) or PPE consider including this in your advert. Also, consider how you will cover expenses or support these additional costs.
- For in-person placements confirm how expenses will be distributed. Some examples could be: School pays for expenses and employer reimburses school; employer buys transport tickets in advance and student collects from station; students pay themselves and employer reimburse from petty cash on arrival
- For remote placements: what digital platform will you use? How will you safely manage the functions e.g. breakout rooms, cameras, online chat and restricting access. How will you share the link to your remote placement safely? How will you manage behaviour, attendance and data sharing?
- Identify any schools/region you would like to target and the age of the students the placement is for. Identify your selection criteria.
- Use our handy checklist to ensure you have everything you might need ready for the educator to approve the students application.

What does high-quality look like?

- Placements consider how to "close the gap" and "engage the dis-engaged".
- A considered, fair and rigorous recruitment process is applied to how places are offered, promoted and selected.
- Young person's safety and well-being is considered and prioritised in every decision.
- Helpful resources:
  - Equality Act 2010
  - ICO Children and the UK GDPR
  - Learning from experience
  - International work experience practices

Need Score

If you're partnered with Futures For All, you'll see a Need Score against each application in the portal, a measure of disadvantage based on factors like Pupil Premium, SEND/ASN and Young Carer status. It can help you target opportunities to young people who need them most.

Futures For All: Work Experience Finder

Our online discovery feed is designed for employers to showcase placements and for young people to explore the latest opportunities.

Students can search, sort and shuffle, view what's new and trending, and browse by career clusters and industries. Plus, signing in grants access to saving and viewing their favourites, as well as tailored searching based on their location.

Get in touch with us to find out more.

Work Experience Finder

Introductory sessions, pre-placements and stakeholder engagement

Consider the following:

- Have you shared full joining instructions and a programme overview at least two weeks before the placement?
- Do young people know what they'll be doing, where to go, what to prepare and how to get support?
- Have you provided details about expectations, timings, break times, safeguarding and emergency procedures?
- Is your pre-placement information tailored to boost participants' confidence and clarity?

A high-quality placement will:

- Cover placement 'housekeeping' at the start, including what to do in case of technical issues or emergencies.
- Provide young people with a clear code of conduct and a full timetable before the placement begins.
- Invite participants and their support networks to a pre-placement engagement activity, such as a virtual tour, welcome session or school visit.

- Helpful resources:
  - Opportunities Writing Guide
  - Hosting Work Experience Guide

Safe, Accessible & Inclusive Practice

Creating a supportive and accessible environment

Placements must prioritise safeguarding, access, and inclusion. Meeting the core legal and practical requirements is essential - but going further means tailoring support to individual needs and removing barriers so all participants can engage fully, safely, and with confidence.

Theme	Core	Excellence
Safety	Safeguarding and health & safety policies are in place before the placement. Risk assessments are completed using sector guidance (e.g. NSPCC), and inductions cover key safety information relevant to young people. Data protection and media permissions are also considered and handled in line with organisational policies.	Employers take a proactive approach to safety and data protection by working with educators and parents/carers to gather individual needs in advance where needed. Risk assessments and permissions (including GDPR and media) are tailored, clearly explained to young people, and revisited if needed.
Inclusivity and accessibility	Barriers to participation - such as cost or additional needs - are considered early. Employers clearly communicate what support is available (e.g. lunch, travel, or accessibility adjustments), and basic adjustments are made where needed. Practical details, including accessibility and travel information, are shared in a timely manner once places are confirmed, helping to reassure applicants and support inclusive participation.	Employers provide tailored, proactive support to meet a wide range of needs. This may include funding (e.g. travel, lunch, uniform), flexible placement formats (remote, hybrid, shorter days), and support for specific needs (e.g. ramps, assistive tech). Where relevant, programmes are co-designed with input from educators to ensure accessibility is fully embedded from the outset. Employers regularly reviews what is working, using feedback from young people and partners to improve accessibility over time.

Safeguarding: the Essentials

- Responsibility for safeguarding young people on a work experience placement is between the employer and the educator.
- You do not automatically need a DBS Check to run a work experience placement, as it depends entirely on the student's age and the type of tasks they or your staff will be doing
- Staff members supervising students aged 16 or 17 generally do not need a DBS check unless looking after under-16s is a core part of that employee's specific job description.
- Barred List checks from the DBS may be required for individuals who supervise a child under the age of 16 on a work experience placement. The specific circumstances of the work experience, in particular the nature of the supervision and the frequency of the activity being supervised, determine what, if any checks are necessary.
- These considerations would include whether the person providing the teaching, training, instruction or supervision to the child will be:
  - unsupervised
  - providing the teaching/training/instruction frequently (more than three days in a 30-day period, or overnight).
- Please ensure that you check your responsibilities as an employer and eligibility to ask questions that you are legally allowed to ask, such as about a person's full criminal history or spent convictions that would otherwise be prohibited by privacy laws. Failure to do so could be a breach of GDPR and other legislation.
- Logistics; ahead of the day ensure that you are aware of who you are expecting to attend and their named/emergency contact details.
- Supervision; someone within your organisation will need to take responsibility for the placement and be the point of contact for the student and teacher. Remember to have alternative plans in place in the event of business disruption or sickness and ensure that other staff are briefed on the placement and processes involved.
- Ensure that all staff are aware that 1:1 working with a young person should be avoided and prepare and/or review your safeguarding policy and training.
- As part of your safeguarding responsibilities, you should be aware of the Prevent Duty. It involves being alert to signs of radicalisation and knowing how to raise a concern. While many employers will not need additional measures, it's good practice to ensure staff know who to talk to and where to find your organisation's safeguarding or Prevent guidance.
- Do young people on my placement require a DBS? It depends on the age of the young person and the activity they are doing.
  - Students under the age of 16 are not eligible for DBS checks.
  - Examples where a DBS might be required are when the young person could be unsupervised or carrying out specific roles with vulnerable groups, such as healthcare settings, early years childcare, or schools, meeting the frequency rules for regulated activity which includes 3+ days in a 30-day period
  - Please ensure that if a DBS may be required this is discussed early in the process and mentioned on your advert.

Helpful things to know: Safeguarding

Keeping Children Safe in Education provides guidance on responsibilities and actions for work experience. Paragraphs 406 - 410 are especially relevant, we have extracted them for ease below. Please note that it is your responsibility to check this guidance is still applicable at the time of your placement

- Schools and colleges organising work experience placements should ensure that the placement provider has policies and procedures in place to protect children from harm. Health and safety expectations for employers hosting young people on work experience can be found here: Health and Safety Executive - work experience

- If the person providing the teaching, training, instruction or care or supervision to the child on a work experience placement or activity will be doing so frequently or for more than three days in a 30-day period, or overnight, this is a regulated activity. You must not allow someone on the barred list to take part in regulated activity.

- Other individuals in the workplace who are not involved in teaching, training, instructing or caring for or supervising the child on a work experience placement or activity are not in regulated activity.



- Schools and colleges are not able to request that a work experience provider obtains an enhanced DBS check with children's barred list information for staff supervising children aged 16 to 17 on work experience.

- Activity undertaken by a person aged 16 plus on work experience which takes place in a 'specified place', such as a school or sixth form college, and gives the opportunity for contact with children, may itself be considered to be regulated activity relating to children. In these cases, the work experience provider e.g. school or sixth form college should consider whether a DBS enhanced check should be requested for the child in question. DBS checks cannot be requested for children under the age of 16

- Helpful resources:
  - DBS Checks: Guidance for Employers (England and Wales)
  - Access NI for employers (Northern Ireland)
  - Disclosure Scotland (Scotland)
  - NSPCC writing a Safeguarding Policy
  - Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)
  - Health and Safety Executive - work experience
  - Prevent duty guidance: England and Wales

Extracted from "Keeping children safe in education 2026"

Risk Assessments: the Essentials

- You should review your risk assessment if:
  - You do not currently, or have not employed a young person in the last couple of years.
  - You are offering work experience for the first time.
  - The young person has particular needs - e.g. health conditions or learning difficulties.

- Explain clearly any identified significant risks and what control measures are in place. It is a legal requirement that these risks are communicated to parents/carers of young people participating in the placement.

- Plan how you will provide young people with a health and safety induction, taking into account any particular needs they may have. Check that they understand and give them an opportunity to ask questions and confirm information.

- Organisations with fewer than 5 employees do not need to have a written risk assessment and this does not preclude you from offering a placement, although it's important to note that education and WEX hosting organisations may still request one, and have policies to only work with employers who can provide one.

- If your WEX placement will contain elements of remote delivery, consider the hazards within this environment, and if you haven't already completed a risk assessment for remote platforms and online work you'll need to do one before your placement begins.

- Helpful resources:
  - **Managing risks and risk assessment at work**
  - **Risk Assessment Template and Examples**
  - **Risks to Young People at Work**



Insurance: the Essentials

- The HSE website states that policies from insurers who are members of the Association of British Insurers (ABI) or Lloyds will cover work experience placements.

- Most insurers will define an 'employee' as 'any person employed under a contract of service or apprenticeship' or 'people on work experience schemes, for example students'.

- If you are in any doubt as to the cover that your policy will offer, please contact your insurer prior to offering a placement.

- As an employer, the responsibility for the young person's health and safety, by law, is yours.

- Not all employers are required to have employers liability insurance (ELI), if this applies to your organisation you should discuss your intent to offer work experience with your existing insurer to check that your current insurance is adequate.
  - Some education and WEX hosting organisations may have policies in place to only work with employers who have an ELI.

- Helpful resources:
  - HSE guidance for Work Experience
  - Advice for Work Experience Organisers
  - Advice for Schools and Colleges



Additional Paperwork: Northern Ireland

If you're hosting a work experience placement with an in-person element at your premises for young people in Northern Ireland, there may be some additional paperwork that needs to be completed before the placement can take place.

Education Authority (EA) paperwork
For students attending an Education Authority (EA) school, you will be asked to complete the relevant EA Work Experience paperwork (WE1-5 forms). This helps the school ensure the placement is suitable and that the appropriate health, safety and insurance arrangements are in place.

Depending on the placement, this may include providing information about:

- Your organisation and the placement
- Employer's Liability and Public Liability Insurance
- Health and safety arrangements
- Risk assessments
- The activities/tasks the young person will undertake
- Supervision arrangements

You won't need to complete a separate copy of the paperwork for every student taking part. We recommend completing and signing one copy of the relevant employer sections and uploading this to your opportunity advert. Educators can then access this directly, complete any remaining individual student information required and follow their school's own processes ahead of the placement.

Non-EA schools
Not all schools in Northern Ireland use the EA work experience process. Non-EA schools may have their own work experience forms, agreements or checks that they require employers to complete. Requirements can vary between schools, so you may receive additional paperwork requests either directly from the school or where possible, from Futures For All. Please complete and return this within the timeframe provided.

Helpful resources:

Education Authority: Work Experience Arrangements

Safeguarding Checklist

A handy checklist for your placement

For those organising the safeguarding and health and safety aspects of the placements, make sure you ensure the following is in place.

✓	Check your company's (employer liability) insurance covers WEX and under-18s
✓	Risk assessment agreed with teacher/school
✓	Check if you require DBS/AccessNI/Disclosure Scotland checks
✓	Usual Health and Safety induction for young person planned for first day
✓	Ensure you have emergency contact details for (i) the student and (ii) the teacher/guardian

You should also make sure the following are all prepared in advance and the student is fully briefed on their first day:

✓	Named supervisor
✓	IT accounts, security checks and passes (building access), confidentiality guidance
✓	Equipment e.g. computers, PPE
✓	Absence/Late procedure - defined contact for student to call
✓	General Housekeeping: Fire and First Aid Procedures, Working Hours and Meal Breaks
✓	Consider providing a glossary on industry/organisation specific jargon or acronyms



Stage Two: **Implement**

How the programme is delivered, ensuring flexibility, engagement and alignment with everyone's aims.

Need help with activity planning or hosting?

We can support content creation, timetable structuring, interactive session design, and live delivery through hosting or compering. Whether your placement is virtual, hybrid or in-person, we can help you create engaging, inclusive experiences for young people. Talk to us about flexible support (employers@futuresforall.org)

Learning & Developmental Outcomes

Focusing on skills and progression

Learning outcomes define what young people should gain from their experience and should be clearly communicated. They translate programme aims into goals, helping structure sessions and enabling participants to track their own progress and skill development.

Theme	Core	Excellence
Clarity and communication of learning outcomes	Learning outcomes are clearly defined and communicated to participants at the start of the placement. They are focused on skills or knowledge young people will develop. Whilst learning outcomes are distinct from programme aims, there is a clear thread between them, ensuring alignment from planning through to delivery.	There is evidence that the intended learning and developmental outcomes are actually being achieved. For example, young people being able to articulate what they have gained, or impact data showing skills or confidence have developed. The employer actively reviews this evidence and uses it to refine the outcomes over time, ensuring they stay relevant and meaningful as the programme evolves.
Structure and alignment to outcomes	Activities are planned to support the delivery of learning outcomes. Outcomes are revisited during the placement through check-ins, reflective activities, or discussions to track progress.	The programme is intentionally structured around achieving learning outcomes. Tasks and sessions are sequenced to build skills progressively. Participants engage in structured reflection (e.g. journals, guided reviews) to articulate progress towards learning outcomes.
Career relevance and progression	Learning outcomes are linked to transferable skills and future career paths. Participants understand how their experience supports their employability.	Employers explicitly link learning outcomes to sector-specific pathways, future employment/training options or school curriculum. Debriefs, discussions, or mentoring are used to connect learning to real-world roles and opportunities.

Clarity and communication of learning outcomes; Structure and alignment to outcomes; Career relevance and progression



Ask yourself:

- Are your outcomes focused on the skills young people will develop and linked to future career paths?
- Have you communicated key outcomes to participants at the start of the placement?
- Do your outcomes differ from your overarching programme aims, yet follow a clear thread from planning through to delivery?
- Will young people be able to answer “Why are we learning this?” and “Where will it be useful?”
- Have you built in regular check-ins or reflective moments so outcomes can be revisited throughout the placement?
- Does your chosen delivery method (in-person, hybrid or remote) support active engagement with each learning outcome?

A high-quality placement will:

- Design every activity so its objectives are explicit and clearly explained to participants in advance.
- Enable young people to articulate when asked what they are doing, why it matters, and how it applies to their future career goals.
- Embed learning outcomes consistently across all sessions, using debriefs, discussions or mentoring to reinforce connections to real-world roles.
- Link outcomes to recognised frameworks or tools (for example Skills Builder, CDI or Future Skills Questionnaire).
- Sequence tasks and sessions intentionally around the progression of skills, sequencing them so participants build on prior learning.
- Where possible, link learning outcomes to curriculum subjects or enrichment pathways.
- Ensure activities are inclusive and consider varied learning needs or starting points.

- Helpful resources:
  - Skills Builder Universal Framework
  - Career Development Framework
  - Gatsby benchmarks

Envision Implement Reflect

Skills Builder Universal Framework

The Skills Builder Framework identifies eight essential skills that help young people succeed in education, work and wider life.

Linking work experience activities to these skills gives young people the chance to practise them in a real workplace, recognise what they're developing and reflect on their progress.

Below are some examples of how you can build these skills into your programme.



Skill	Explanation	Example activities
LISTENING	**Skills Builder Definition:** "Receiving, retaining and processing information." Young people on work experience are often navigating an unfamiliar professional environment for the first time. Employers can actively support their progression in Listening by structuring communications and providing real-time opportunities to practice active listening.	Listen to different stakeholder viewpoints in a meeting Follow safety instructions from a briefing Listen to user feedback and identify improvements Listen to a customer request and recommend the most suitable product
SPEAKING	**Skills Builder Definition:** "Transmitting information or ideas." Young people on work experience may feel nervous or lack confidence when communicating with adult professionals or their peers. Employers can actively support their progression in Speaking by creating a supportive environment, giving clear prompts, and providing varied oppotunities for verbal expression.	Pitch a creative concept in 60 seconds Debate whether a new policy is fair and justify your reasoning Summarise a situation/advice clearly Explain the purpose behind a creative decision
PROBLEM SOLVING	**Skills Builder Definition:** "Finding solutions to challenges." When faced with a challenge in an unfamiliar situaion, young people may hesitate or immediately ask for the answer. Employers can support their progression by coaching them through step-by-step and providing activities/tasks that require young people to solve a particular issue related to the organisation/sector.	Rework a campaign for a different audience Solve a transport or environmental challenge for the local area Solve a coding logic challenge Adjust plans due to environmental restrictions

Envision Implement Reflect

Skills Builder Universal Framework

Skill	Explanation	Example activities
CREATIVITY	**Skills Builder Definition:** "Using imagination and generating new ideas." Young people often assume creativity only applies to artistic roles. Employers can broaden this mindset by encouraging fresh perspectives and idea generation through tasks.	Design a prototype for a new app or game Design an inclusive public space or youth initiative Develop a social media campaign for a company/event
ADAPTING	**Skills Builder Definition:** "Overcoming challenges and setbacks to achieve goals." The professional environment introduces unfamiliar pressures, changing priorities, and constructive feedback. Employers can build adaptability by promoting a growth mindset, normalising workplace changes, and supporting emotional resilience.	Adjust plans based on client feedback Respond to changing deadlines during a sprint Respond to new circumstances e.g. a change in attendee numbers
PLANNING	**Skills Builder Definition:** "Setting goals and designing routes to achieve them." Young people on work experience may lack confidence with goal-setting, project planning, or time prioritisation. Employers can foster strong planning capabilities by guiding them through objective setting, milestone tracking, and daily organisation.	Plan an event within a specified budget Build a content schedule/timeline Organise a list of tasks by order of priority Log daily progress against targets/goals
LEADERSHIP	**Skills Builder Definition:** "Supporting, encouraging and motivating others to achieve a shared goal." Young people often assume leadership is reserved for management. Employers can demonstrate that leadership starts with taking responsibility, supporting peers, and driving collaborative outcomes.	Lead a safety briefing /creative pitch meeting/community briefing Allocate/assign roles for a task Present a project plan Design an induction plan for new members of staff
TEAMWORK	**Skills Builder Definition:** "Working cooperatively with others to achieve a shared goal." Workplace teamwork requires navigating diverse working styles and shared accountability. Employers can nurture teamwork by integrating young people directly into everyday collaborative tasks.	Collaborate on a pitch Solve a problem/puzzle Co-ordinate roles within a workplace Role play a real-world team work scenario

Programme Structure

Designing a clear and engaging placement

A well-structured placement builds engagement and supports progression. Programmes should follow a clear schedule and incorporate induction, learning, reflection, and closure. Flexibility is key to meeting diverse needs while maintaining purpose and momentum.

Theme	Core	Excellence
Content	Participants engage in structured activities that introduce at least two entry routes into the sector. Participants also interact directly with professionals through Q&As, mentoring, or networking opportunities. They take part in practical tasks that mirror workplace activities, such as presentations, group projects, or job shadowing. Labour market information (LMI) is shared to help young people understand skills demand and future career options.	Participants contribute to meaningful, hands-on activities that offer a sense of purpose and impact, such as employer-set challenges or tasks aligned with real roles. These may not be 'live' projects, but should reflect the workplace and offer valuable experience. All activities are designed to be accessible, age-appropriate, and inclusive, with differentiation built in to support diverse needs. Employers have a contingency plan (e.g. alternative tasks or support options) and build in dedicated time for feedback and reflection.
Length, frequency and sequencing	Participants receive a clear timetable, code of conduct, and pre-placement information (e.g. surveys or expectations) to ensure clarity. Programmes are delivered at a suitable pace for young people, with clearly communicated schedules. Sessions are sequenced with an induction (e.g. health & safety, introductions), followed by learning activities, and concluding with reflection or celebration.	Programmes are designed flexibly to maintain momentum and engagement. Sessions are varied in length, with time built in for feedback, review, and personalised support. The strongest programmes explicitly design this structure around the learning and development outcomes, building skills and confidence progressively over time. They also use feedback from young people on specific content and activities to actively review and strengthen the programme between cohorts.

Content

Well-designed placement activities give young people a real sense of purpose and help them build confidence, skills, and insight into the world of work. Use this guidance to plan meaningful tasks that meet learners where they are and stretch them to take the next step.

Activities that offer a sense of purpose:

Plan content that feels valuable and engaging to young people while contributing to your organisation's day-to-day work.

- Involve participants in meetings, briefings or team activities to observe culture and collaboration
- Assign tasks that reflect real workplace operations or processes, even if not part of 'live' projects
- Include at least two different entry points into the sector (e.g. project delivery and back-office support)
- Use labour market information (LMI) to show future job demand and help link activities to real opportunities
- Consider where youth voice can add value, such as feedback on services or communications
- Make time for structured reflection and feedback to reinforce learning and purpose
- Helpful resources:
  - A guide to Gatsby Benchmark 6
  - Skills Builder Framework

Tailoring activities to each young person:

Design with accessibility and inclusion in mind, offering support and challenge for every learner.

- **Supporting tasks** break down complex steps and help build confidence
- **Extension tasks** challenge learners with more responsibility or independence
- **Scaffolded instructions** (e.g. written + verbal) support different communication preferences
- **Shadowing or buddy systems** build confidence and expose learners to more complex or higher-risk tasks
- **Workplace journals** or reflection sheets provide structure and can be used for feedback or unplanned time

Top tip: Build in contingency options, such as support tasks or discussion-based reflections, so all learners remain engaged even when plans change.

Meaningful tasks

Offer a variety of task formats to reflect workplace diversity and different learning needs:

- Research and evaluation
- Costing and budgeting
- Project planning or review
- Presentation or pitch creation
- Product or service design
- Operational admin or competitor analysis
- Quality assurance
- Continuous improvement recommendations

Content

Example activities for **remote & in-person placements**

Icebreaker / Pre-Placement Activity Ideas	Related Skills Builder Skills
Personal Moodboard: Learners curate a visual moodboard reflecting their personal identity, career interests, or a specific project task to explore self-awareness and showcase creative vision.	Problem Solving, Creativity, Planning
Personal Goal Sheet: Students construct a structured goal sheet outlining what they intend to achieve during the placement. Incorporates embedded milestones and gamified tracking mechanics to boost engagement and personal accountability.	Problem Solving, Creativity, Planning, Adapting
2 Truths, 1 Lie: Employer panels present two true statements and one false statement regarding their career, education, or training pathways. Students analyse the statements, ask probing questions, and deduce the correct answers to gain realistic insights into career journeys.	Listening, Problem Solving, Creativity, Planning, Adapting, Speaking

Individual / Group Activity Ideas	Related Skills Builder Skills
Project Planning: Given real-world or simulated data sets, participants map out an actionable project plan complete with clear objectives, realistic timelines, and critical milestones.	Problem Solving, Creativity, Adapting, Planning, Leadership, Teamwork
Presenting a Solution: Students investigate a given scenario and present a structured proposal designed to increase efficiency or capacity.	Speaking, Problem Solving, Creativity, Adapting, Planning, Leadership, Teamwork

Content

Example activities for **remote & in-person placements** cont.

Individual / Group Activity Ideas	Related Skills Builder Skills
Product Design: A hands-on design challenge where learners conceptualise, refine, and present an original product tailored to solve a target market problem.	Problem Solving, Creativity, Adapting, Planning, Leadership, Teamwork
Job Specification & Market Research: Participants research realistic salary bandings and industry expectations using labor market data to draft a detailed, professional job specification.	Problem Solving, Creativity, Adapting, Planning
Practical Numeracy Challenge: Applied workplace numeracy exercises covering essential practical skills such as measuring, estimations, time management, volume calculations, and spatial reasoning.	Adapting, Planning, Problem Solving, Creativity, Leadership, Teamwork
Meeting / Site Visit Attendance: Participating in live professional meetings or guided facility tours, practicing workplace etiquette, active observation, and professional interaction.	Listening, Speaking, Adapting, Planning, Problem Solving, Creativity, Leadership, Teamwork

Reflection / Post-Placement Activity Ideas	Related Skills Builder Skills
Professional Portfolio Entry: Students identify their single biggest achievement from the placement and assemble a polished portfolio entry to support future application forms, CVs, and personal statements.	Problem Solving, Creativity, Adapting, Planning
Vlog Recording: Learners record a reflective video blog articulating the core benefits of their work experience, sharing personal learnings, and recommending participation to peers.	Problem Solving, Creativity, Adapting, Planning, Leadership, Teamwork

Length, frequency and sequencing

Example timetable for **remote work experience**

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
09:30	Registration	Registration	Registration	Registration	Registration
09:45	Code of Conduct/Welcome/ Introductions	Ice breaker	Ice breaker	Ice breaker	Ice breaker
10:00	Ice breaker	Stand up/All hands/Daily briefing	Stand up/All hands/Daily briefing	Stand up/All hands/Daily briefing	Stand up/All hands/Daily briefing
10:20	Virtual Tour/ Induction	Activity Five	Activity Seven Extension	Activity Nine	Activity Twelve
11:00	BREAK				
11:15	Activity One	Activity Five Extension	Activity Seven Feedback	Activity Ten	Activity Twelve Extension
11:45	Activity One Feedback	Activity Five Feedback	Activity Eight	Activity Nine & Ten Feedback	
12:00	LUNCH				
12:45	Ice Breaker	Ice Breaker	Ice Breaker	Ice Breaker	Ice Breaker
13:00	Activity Two	Activity Six	Activity Eight Presentation	Activity Eleven	Activity Twelve Presentation
13:45	Activity Two Feedback	Activity Six feedback		Activity Eleven Extension	
14:00	Activity Three	Activity Seven		Activity Eleven Feedback	Feedback and close
14:30	Activity Three Feedback	Activity Seven Feedback	Feedback and Close	Activity Twelve	
14:45	Reflection Activity – set independent study task	Reflection Activity – set independent study task/ post-placement task	Reflection Activity – set independent study task/ post-placement task	Reflection Activity – set independent study task/ post-placement task	Reflection Activity – set post-placement task
15:00	FINISH				

Length, frequency and sequencing

Example timetable for **in-person work experience**

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
09:30	Welcome introductions to key staff members	Stand up/ Daily briefing	Stand up/ Daily briefing	Stand up/ Daily briefing	Stand up/ Daily briefing
10:00	Induction session - organisation onboarding	Practical Task	Practical Task	Practical Task	Practical Task
11:00	BREAK				
11:15	Health and Safety Induction	Practical Task	Practical Task	Practical Task	Practical Task
12:15	LUNCH				
13:15	Practical Task	Practical Task	Practical Task	Practical Task	Practical Task
14:30	Mentor feedback and reflection activity	Mentor feedback and reflection activity	Mentor feedback and reflection activity	Mentor feedback and reflection activity	Mentor feedback and reflection activity
15:00	Goal setting for day 2 – identify tasks and skills to work on. Set independent postplacement task	Goal setting for day 3 – identify tasks and skills to work on. Set independent postplacement task	Mock interview and feedback. Set independent postplacement task. Identify goals for day 4.	Goal setting for day 5 – identify tasks and skills to work on. Set independent postplacement task	Feedback/Exit Interview and post-placement task
15:30	FINISH				

Looking for more examples?

We offer a variety of timetables that are tailored to specific sectors, featuring different lengths and formats. Please reach out to your Account Manager to learn about the examples timetables we have available.

Meaningful Interactions

Creating meaningful interactions

High-quality placements create opportunities for meaningful interaction. Participants should connect regularly with professionals and peers, gaining insights into the workplace and practising communication and collaboration skills in real-world settings.

Theme	Core	Excellence
Employer–young person interactions	Young people have opportunities to interact with workplace staff throughout the placement, and activities are designed to facilitate conversation, questions, and participation so that young people take an active role and feel supported. This might include Q&A sessions with staff, opportunities to ask questions during tasks, or structured discussions built into the programme. Employers consider how to communicate effectively with young people, using accessible, age-appropriate language and providing clear guidance.	The employer creates a diverse range of meaningful interaction opportunities throughout the placement, giving young people the chance to engage with a mix of people, roles, or functions within the organisation, and/or to collaborate with each other. This might include group project work presented back to staff, tours led by apprentices or early careers employees, breakout sessions, or problem-solving tasks that require young people to work together and engage directly with the organisation.
Young person–young person interactions	Participants work collaboratively through group tasks or team-based activities that encourage communication, collaboration, and informal conversation.	Peer interaction is intentionally structured - such as through buddy systems, rotating group work, or breakout teams - to encourage participants to connect with new peers and practise workplace-style teamwork. Programmes include activities to build a sense of community, helping young people feel confident engaging with others they may not already know.

Meaningful Interactions: best practice

Ask yourself:

- Have you planned opportunities for participants to meet a diverse range of employees in a safe and structured way?
- Will young people gain insight into different levels of the organisation, from apprentices to senior leaders?
- Do they know who to turn to for support or questions throughout the placement?
- Have you considered how young people will interact with professionals and peers using appropriate and inclusive digital tools?
- Are there opportunities for collaborative working on meaningful tasks and projects?
- Will participants be supported to build on initial introductions through guided or repeated interactions?
- Have you created an environment where young people feel confident engaging with those they don't know?
- Will the experience foster a sense of peer connection and community?



A high-quality placement will:

- Assign a dedicated point of contact to guide participants throughout the placement.
- Provide opportunities to meet staff at different levels of seniority and career stages.
- Intentionally structure peer interaction through rotating group work, buddy systems or breakout teams.
- Embed collaboration and communication into task design to mirror real-world working practices.
- Create a supportive environment where young people feel comfortable asking questions and learning from others.
- Clearly signpost acceptable and safe ways of continuing peer or mentor contact, where appropriate.

Tools to support interaction:

Use a mix of formats and platforms to ensure accessibility and meet a range of learning needs:

- Cameras and microphones (Remote)
- Chat, Q&A, polls, games and quizzes (Remote)
- Breakout rooms or groups
- Collaborative software and shared documents
- Team meetings/stand-ups/briefings
- Staff room or canteen mingling
- Reflection and discussion forms
- Career panels and webinars
- Mock interviews and presentations
- 1-2-1s and buddy/group mentoring
- Handy tip notes or glossaries



Stage Three:
Reflect

A chance to consolidate experiences and build confidence for future development. Impact is measured for follow-up action.

Need help evaluating impact or considering next steps?

We can survey participants, design meaningful reflection activities, send certificates, and support you in reviewing each phase of your placement. We also offer tailored impact reports to help you understand what worked well and where to improve. Talk to us about flexible support (**employers@futuresforall.org**)

Opportunities for Reflection

Helping young people learn from experience

Once a placement is underway, young people need time and support to make sense of what they are doing and why it matters. This theme focuses on how employers help young people reflect throughout the work experience, so they can recognise what they have learned, build confidence in their strengths, and understand how the experience links to future choices.

Theme	Core	Excellence
Opportunities for Reflection	Participants complete regular written or verbal reflections (e.g. journals, self-assessment forms, group discussions) to articulate skills gained and areas for improvement. Reflection is embedded at key points (e.g. after tasks, daily debriefs, at the end of the placement) to help young people consolidate meaningful experiences. Employers provide time and prompts for reflection throughout the placement.	Young people have an opportunity not just to reflect on their experience but to apply it, translating what they have learned into something tangible. This might include acting on employer feedback to improve a piece of work or re-work a presentation during the placement, updating a CV or personal statement to capture what they have gained, or identifying and articulating their next steps in education, training, or work. Young people are supported to record reflections in digital or paper formats, making them accessible for future use.

Reflection: best practice

Prompts to support deeper reflection:

Ask questions that help young people connect their experience to future goals and identity:

- What skill are you most proud of developing this week?
- When did you feel most challenged, and how did you overcome it?
- Can you describe a moment when you worked like a real employee?
- What surprised you about this workplace?
- What would you tell a friend considering this kind of placement?

These can be used during daily debriefs or a final journaling activity.

Tools for reflection:

Support young people to consolidate their learning by offering a variety of reflective formats to suit different needs and preferences:

- Video or audio diaries
- Visual mind maps – to link tasks completed with skills developed
- SWOT analysis
- Short written summaries – framed as CV bullet points to support future job applications
- Mood boards – to creatively represent their experience or future aspirations
- Slide decks – combining sector insights with personal takeaways
- Placement summary form – to capture what they did, what they learned, and what they would do differently next time
- Mini action plan – encourage them to set:
  - one personal goal
  - one career question to explore
  - one skill to continue building

Scaffold links to future planning

Make it easier for young people to use their reflections in practical next steps:

- Provide a templated paragraph for use in a personal statement or job application.
- Offer a list of relevant extra-curricular or online opportunities linked to their reflections (e.g. free coding courses, writing competitions).
- Encourage them to write an email to their future self outlining what they learned and their next steps.

- Helpful resources:
  - A guide to Gatsby Benchmark 6



Recognition & Supporting Next Steps

Celebrating young people's contributions

This theme focuses on employers recognising young people's efforts and helping them understand their progress, then supporting them to take their next steps. This means giving young people clear acknowledgement of their participation and contribution and then providing meaningful follow-up support to help young people build on what they've gained.

Theme	Core	Excellence
Recognition & Supporting Next Steps	All participants are awarded a certificate of completion to formally acknowledge their engagement and achievements. The end of the placement is used as a moment to reinforce learning and provide a sense of closure and accomplishment.	Feedback is meaningful, developmental, and linked to a young person's individual contribution. This may be delivered during the placement or in follow-up communications. End-of-programme events, such as presentations or networking sessions, allow young people to share their learning, celebrate successes, and engage with professionals. Following the placement, the strongest programmes provide meaningful follow-up support to help young people build on what they've gained. This might include signposting further opportunities within the organisation, directing young people to relevant external resources, events or networks, or sharing information about pathways into the industry or sector.

Recognition & Supporting Next Steps: best practice

Ask yourself:

- Have young people been been awarded a certificate, reference, or memento that acknowledges their participation?
- Can they confidently articulate their progress, using prompts such as:
  - During this placement I learned to...
  - I have improved in...
  - I have contributed by...
  - I can now...
  - I can't do XYZ yet, but my next steps are to...
- Have you offered any follow-up support to help young people build on what they've gained, such as signposting further opportunities, resources or industry pathways?

A high-quality placement will:

- Offer young people the opportunity to receive personalised feedback from employers that highlights their strengths, growth areas, and next steps.
- Include peer-to-peer celebration and shared reflection to build confidence and community.
- Provide written references or constructive notes they can use in future applications or CVs.
- Celebrate progress and achievements through closing events such as showcases, networking sessions, or presentations with professionals.
- Encourage continued growth by signposting to next opportunities and career pathways.
- Support participants in sharing their success professionally (e.g. LinkedIn) and equip them to explain what they've gained.
- Use recognition activities that simulate real-world workplace feedback, helping to build communication skills and confidence.
- Provide meaningful follow-up support after the placement, such as signposting opportunities within your organisation, external resources or events, or industry pathway information



Envision Implement **Reflect**

Evaluation & Continuous Improvement

Gathering feedback to improve

Once the placement has been designed and delivered, the final step is to understand what worked well and what could be strengthened for next time. This standard focuses on how employers gather and use feedback to improve the quality of their work experience over time

Theme	Core	Excellence
Evaluation & Continuous Improvement	The employer collects feedback from young people and reviews it after the placement, using it to inform future delivery. This might include a post-placement survey, a feedback form completed at the end of the experience, or a review conversation with a partner organisation. Both quantitative and qualitative data is collected from young people to capture rich, meaningful insight. Surveys are distributed at key points in the delivery cycle to ensure timely, relevant data collection.	There is clear evidence that the employer actively reviews feedback and makes changes where required, or — where feedback is consistently positive — can demonstrate that the programme has been reviewed and found to be working well. The employer gathers insight at multiple points and uses this to maintain and continuously improve the quality of the experience over time. This might include feedback gathered before, during, and after the placement, evidence of how the programme has evolved in response to what young people and staff have shared, or documentation showing how a stable and high-performing programme has been reviewed and validated over time.

Evaluation & Continuous Improvement: best practice

Ask yourself:

- Have you clearly signposted how and when young people can provide feedback?
- Are feedback methods inclusive, accessible, and easy for all participants to use?
- Do young people know how their feedback will be used, stored, and responded to?
- Can participants voice concerns, complaints, praise, and compliments with confidence?
- Do young people understand how their feedback contributes to improving future placements?

A high-quality placement will:

- Provide timely access to clearly signposted, accessible feedback options.
- Collect feedback with consideration for accessibility (e.g. varied formats, language support).
- Signpost GDPR and privacy policies, including a youth-friendly version.
- Ensure young people can see how their feedback influenced practice or decisions.
- Gather feedback from a range of stakeholders, including educators, mentors, and delivery staff.
- Use post-placement debriefs to reflect on experiences and routinely share insights for improvement.

How do we measure impact at Futures For All?

All participants in our **Work Experience programme** complete pre- and post-placement surveys. With high response rates, these surveys allow us to demonstrate impact at both an programme and placement level.

The surveys capture both quantitative and qualitative data and have been carefully crafted to provide a comprehensive understanding of participant experiences that help FFA and employers learn and grow.

Those who work directly with Futures For All can receive a one-page Summary Report, or full Impact Report following their placement(s). Click here to find out more.





Additional Information

Exploring post-placement activity, delivery tips and checklists.

Additional Information

Post-Work Experience

While our framework focuses on the core stages of planning (Envision), delivery (Implement) and reflection (Reflect), we also encourage employers to consider what happens after a placement ends.

While employers should always aim to support a young person's next steps (as explained under Recognition & Supporting Next Steps), there are some additional follow-up activities outside of our Quality Assurance Framework that can be done to maximise impact. This is not a required part of our Framework, but an optional area to explore if you have the capacity.

For employers with early careers teams or structured programmes, there may be opportunities to stay in touch safely and appropriately through alumni communications or mentoring. Any ongoing engagement must follow GDPR and safeguarding best practice.

Follow-up period	Example	Description
Short-term (0-3 months post-placement)	Personalised follow-ups Exclusive alumni sessions	Send a thank-you email with feedback and a reference; Host a remote Q&A or networking session with recent work experience participants
Medium-term (3-12 months post placement)	Mentorship opportunities Skill building resources Early career pathways	Offer a structured mentoring programme or informal check-ins with company ambassadors; Provide free access to industry-relevant courses, webinars or remote learning platforms; Share details of apprenticeships, internships, or graduate roles that alumni can apply for
Long-term (1 year +)	Alumni talent pool Workplace return invitations	Create a talent database to offer priority consideration for future roles; Encourage previous participants to apply for internships, apprenticeships or shadowing opportunities

Need support? If you'd like help designing or delivering post-placement engagement that is GDPR-compliant, we can provide this as part of our costed support offer. Speak to our team to find out more.

Additional Information

Placement Logistics: Checklist

Ready to host? Use our handy checklist to help you organise and run your placement with ease.

✓	Documents prepared and exchanged	
✓	Details communicated via placement advert and emails	
✓	Register of attendees and emergency/named contacts	
✓	All staff are aware of the placement and briefed on safeguarding and plans	
✓	“Plan B” prepared for sickness/absence and/or business interruptions	
✓	Code of conduct/expectations created and agreed with all parties	
✓	Advert lists requirements such as ID, PPE or uniform/clothing requirements	
✓	Company information and pre-placement task has been shared	
✓	Clear final details email with address, time, dress code, joining instructions has been sent	
✓	Colleagues from across the organisation are involved	
✓	Meaningful tasks focussing on skill development that is age and needs appropriate have been organised	
✓	HR and Health and Safety Induction is prepared	
✓	Workplace tour/Virtual tour is prepared	
✓	Time for reflection and questions is embedded into the placement	
✓	Debrief and feedback sessions are planned to signpost next steps	

When things don't go to plan

How to handle hiccups on your placement

Every hosting experience will be different and every so often things don't go quite as expected. There are some common issues that employers face. Here are some of our tips for handling them.

- Absence or punctuality issues: If a young person has shown up late or missed an activity, check in right away. Question and confirm irregularities with the named/emergency contact. Share developmental feedback with the young person and their educator/ named contact.
- Disruptive, dis-engaged or poor behaviour: Check that they are aware of the expectations/code of conduct. Challenge the behaviour and try to understand the root cause. For example, evaluate if the tasks being set are appropriate. Remind them that inappropriate language or behaviour is unacceptable and will have consequences. Provide feedback in a constructive way.
- Struggling to complete or understand tasks: Anxiety around mistakes may cause task paralysis. Remind them work experience is about trying new things, and making mistakes is part of the process. Demystify what will happen if they get something wrong by explaining the actions that will be taken to rectify the situation, and the levels of responsibility that individuals have. Ensure instructions have been given in a clear and appropriate way and trial other methods and tasks to build confidence.
- TOP TIP: For many students anxiety around change and expectations can cause stress and avoidance. Communicating as much as you can about the placement in advance can reduce this.
- TOP TIP: Supporting students to find their own solutions to problems will have long term impact on their confidence and skill set. Encourage them by providing positive feedback, highlighting accomplishments and actions which build a "growth mindset" - "I can't do it YET".
- TOP TIP: Behaviours which are atypical in a work environment such as disruption, lack of focus, interruptions, inability to sit still, emotional fluctuations and refusal/avoidance can be part of a student's neurodivergence. Approach any incident with an open mind to encourage a student to talk about any difficulties they may be having.
- TOP TIP: Students will have little awareness of day to day tasks. Manage their expectations around what a role entails and how skills, and trust, take time to develop. Have open discussions around expectations vs reality and highlight the transferable skills that they will develop, and the benefit to approaching the rest of the placement positively, even if they have decided that this career isn't best suited to them.
- Unresolvable issues: If there are serious issues that keep the placement from being worthwhile or effective, you may have to end the placement.
- Before requesting/removing a student from the premises and/or the placement you must inform their educator/emergency contact

What to expect

Some tips on what to expect when delivering a placement

- **New environment**: Most young people will be surprised at how different a professional environment is from school (more personal responsibility, new expectations).

- **Personalities vary:** Some young people will be confident and quick to ask questions, others will be shy as they get to grips with their new environment. Remember they aren't graduates or interns so they often require more support, encouragement and advice as they go along.

- **It's not common sense:** Professional etiquette, a good attitude and the every-day to you or colleagues – like being attentive in a meeting, or not using their phone–are things that may be new to students. Point out these differences in expectations as these transferable professional skills are invaluable in preparing to do well in their next steps.

- **(In-person only) Assign them a 'mentor' and/or 'junior buddy':** Appoint someone to welcome them at the beginning of the placement and set any expectations. A junior buddy is usually another staff member that can provide the student with moral support, relate to the student and help them understand the more social aspects of the workplace. **(Remote)** Consider including junior staff members to have a range of ages and experience on the call, use breakout rooms to provide feedback to groups.

- **Remember to keep the conversation going:** Whether this is about the business, skills or conduct, it helps to verbalise what they should be learning and explaining as you go. As this is a completely new experience your guidance will be crucial.

- **TOP TIP: Use clear language with young people!** Some employers have reported misinterpretation of schedules or tasks when using language such as 'we hope you can stay until 5 each day' making it sound optional. Young people may take instructions literally, so don't hesitate to be clear that these are requirements for their placement.

Bringing it all together

Applying what you've learned

You've now explored each part of the FFA Work Experience Framework – from designing a high-quality placement to delivering purposeful content and recognising the impact.

A high-quality placement is not built in one moment. It is shaped through clear intention, inclusive planning and ongoing reflection. Whether you are offering one placement or scaling your approach across a team, small, thoughtful decisions at each stage can make a lasting difference.

Next steps:

- Review our Quality Framework summary to identify your strengths and areas for development
- Use the checklists and tools in this guide to plan and assess your approach
- Share your impact and feedback with us to help shape future guidance
- Consider how your placements connect to wider talent, outreach or early careers strategy

Together, we can ensure work experience opens doors and unlocks potential for every young person.

