

Youth  
Careers  
Collective

**FINDING YOUR OWN  
WORK EXPERIENCE  
PLACEMENT**

**YOUTHCAREERS.ORG.UK**

# Introduction

**Work experience is your first step into the workplace. It's your chance to explore a potential future career and develop vital work skills.**

At Youth Careers Collective, we find and manage hundreds of placements every year, and we think work experience is fantastic! Why do we think this?

- 85% of employers prefer to hire people who already have some sort of work experience.
- You may find a career path you want to pursue, or even figure out what you don't want to do, which is equally important!
- You can find out what a place of work is really like, develop vital new employability skills, and make some great contacts.
- It can be your first taste of independence, and can be fun too!

## What you will find in this pack:

### How to find your own placement

- Asking your own contacts
- Carrying out research
- Reaching out to employers
- Our top tips for success
- Frequently asked questions

## Step 1: Asking your own contacts

**Your first step should be to speak to your family, friends and other contacts. This is the most common way that students find their own work experience placement**

- Think about everyone in your extended family, as well as other contacts, such as friends of your family, and the families of your friends.
- Speak to as many different people as you can, to research the different types of sectors and the jobs they do.
- Stay open-minded to new opportunities that you may not have considered before.

### TASK:

**List the names of the people you know in jobs that interest you the most. What's their job role and what type of organisation do they work at?**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

- Ask each of them whether it's possible for them to host you for work experience. Some businesses may not be suitable and others may need to ask.
- If it's not possible, ask if they could introduce you to people they know who may be able to help.

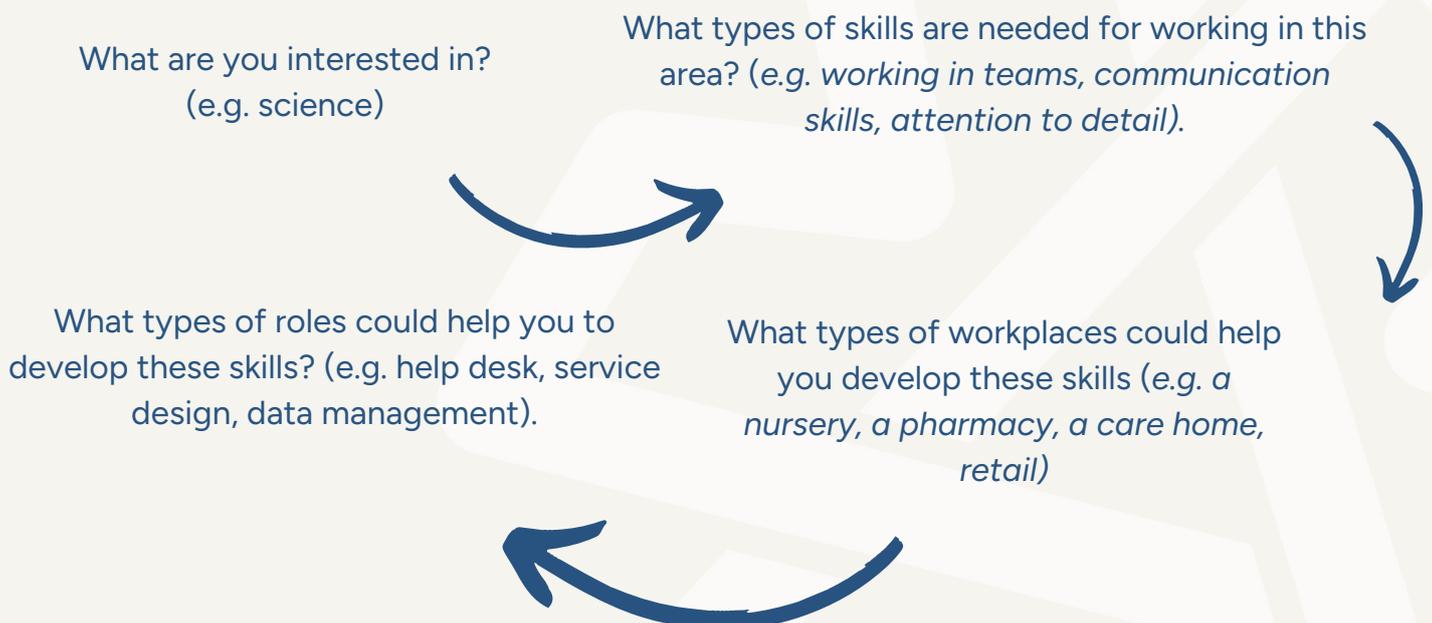
## Step 2: Carrying out research

**Whether someone you know is offering a placement or not, it's a good idea to also contact other companies yourself.**

- You may have to contact many companies before someone agrees.
- Employers agree that any work experience is better than none, so you should be open to looking at any sector for your work experience, even if you have an idea of what you'd like to do already.
- Some jobs aren't possible or are difficult to do as work experience, such as medicine, so you could look at jobs where you could build essential skills, such as communication and problem solving, and gain related experience, for example at pharmacies or care homes.

### TASK:

**Brainstorm as many workplaces and jobs related to what you want to do as possible.**



**Use this page to brainstorm ideas for jobs and workplaces that you might like**



## Step 2: Carrying out research

Once you've got some ideas, research organisations in all the sectors you've thought of. Make a list of all the companies you plan to ask, and their contact details, then tick them off when you've contacted them.

- Look at West London Careers Hub information about sectors in your local area (<https://wlcareershup.com/category/resources/labour-market-information>) to help you get an idea of what sectors and which employers are available nearby.
- Google famous companies you know. Do they have offices nearby? Find the careers section on their website as they may have a work experience scheme. A great example is [Cisco](#).
- Use the below websites to find employers related to what you want.
  - Use [Google Maps](#) and hover around an area to find business names, and find their websites online.
  - Job websites such as [Indeed](#) or [TotalJobs](#) allow you to search jobs available in sectors and particular locations. This will give you ideas for local employers to approach.
  - You can also search the [Government apprenticeship website](#) by area. Some of these companies may be more likely to host placements as they will want to attract younger people for their apprenticeships.

### TASK:

Write down names of companies that interest you, including small local employers, such as shops, hotels, restaurants, nurseries, etc.

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## Step 3: Reaching out to employers

Now you've got a list of companies to contact, you can begin getting in touch with them.  
E-mail is often the best way to start your contact.

Find their e-mail address online, or call them to ask for it.

### TASK:

Copy and paste the email template below, edit it with your own details to send to each employer. Make sure you put the subject in the subject line.

*Subject: Work experience 6<sup>th</sup> - 10<sup>th</sup> July 2026*

Good morning/afternoon,

My name is [your name] and I am in Year 10 at [name of your school]. I am contacting you today to ask whether you would consider hosting me for my work experience placement, which is due to take place during the [date of work experience].

I would really appreciate the chance to learn more about your industry and your company.

Please let me know, I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Kind regards,

Your name

It's also a good idea to add some personal details, e.g. something that interests you about the company, what job you'd like when you're older, or what related subjects you enjoy. BUT KEEP IT SHORT!

## Step 3: Reaching out to employers

- Find their phone number and address on their website or Google.
- Have a pen and paper ready to write down information.
- Be ready to answer questions about the dates of your work experience, why you want to work with them, and what types of work experience you are looking for.
- If visiting in-person, be sure to dress smartly.
- Use the script below and make sure to speak clearly.

YOU: Good morning/afternoon, I am a student from [name of school]. I am interested in work experience at your organisation. Would there be someone I could speak to or email to find out whether this would be possible?

THEY MAY SAY: I'm afraid we don't offer work experience.

YOU: Would it be something you would consider? I'm really keen to learn about your industry. (If it's still a 'no', say 'thank you' and leave or hang-up).

THEY MAY SAY: Yes, you can email xxxxxxxx@xxxxxxx.com or call 07xxxxxxx. Take down the e-mail address or phone number and contact them as soon as possible.

THEY MAY SAY: Let me get my colleague who knows more about work experience.

THEY MAY ASK: How old are you?

Are you looking for any particular type of work experience?

When do you want to do work experience and for how long?

Why do you want to do work experience here?

YOU: Be prepared to answer these questions clearly, enthusiastically and politely.

If they say 'yes' or 'maybe', ask for their e-mail address. E-mail them as soon as possible to thank them, give them more details and to ask them to confirm.

## Our top tips for success

- 1). **Stay flexible!** Be open to anything, you will learn from any work experience opportunity.
- 2). **Be persistent!** Keep contacting people, as some companies might need 2-3 reminders before they get back to you.
- 3). **Don't give up!** Lots of people will say 'no', but all you need is one 'yes'. It's normal to have to contact a lot of employers.
- 4). **Start early!** Do your research as soon as possible, so that you'll have time to contact lots of people before your school's deadline.
- 5). **Ask for help!** If you're not sure about anything, speak to your teachers, they may have some good advice or even some contacts for you.
- 6). **Speak to lots of people!** Talk to everyone you can about it, not just family and friends. You never know who may be able to introduce you to a host or who may have some good ideas for you.
- 7). **Put in the effort!** Just like finding a job, finding a work experience placement may come easily or it may take time. The harder you try the more likely you are to succeed
- 8). **Act quickly!** As soon as you get a 'yes', be sure to let your teacher know, and e-mail the employer straight away to confirm and to thank them.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### What if I can't find a placement?

It may be hard to find a placement. Go back to the steps above and make sure you've tried your best by contacting lots of companies. If you're struggling, speak to your teachers throughout the process and tell them as soon as possible all of the things you've done, they may have ideas or contacts for you.

### Will I get paid on placement?

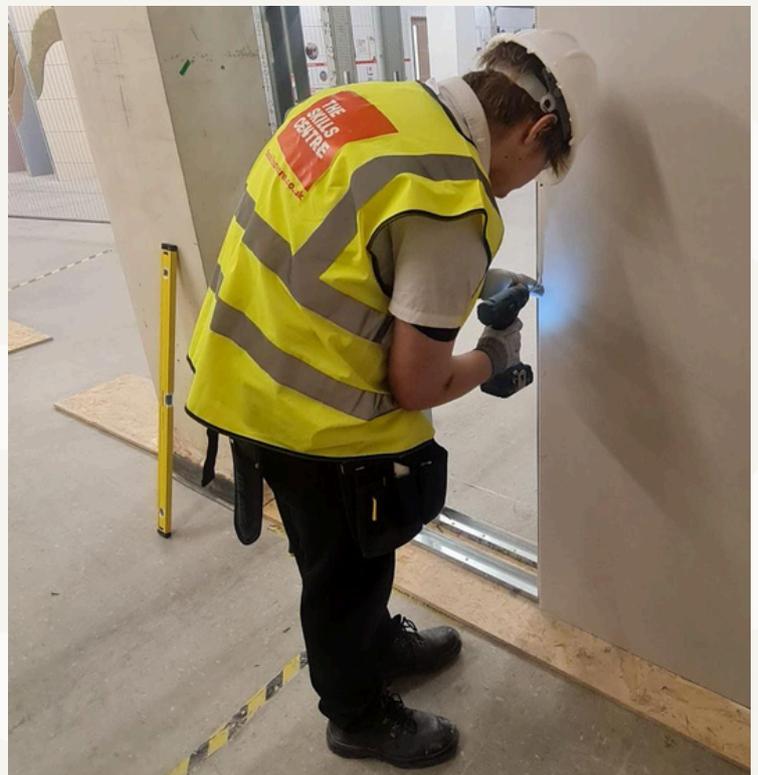
Typically, short placements don't pay you. This is a learning experience that will lead you to greater success later. Sometimes, we all have to do things for free that will add to our experience and CV, such as volunteering.

### What if I don't like my placement, or find it boring?

Your placement is a learning experience and the work exposure and skills you are developing whilst being there are a huge bonus in itself! We encourage you to make the most of it and step out of your comfort zone. You could also speak to a teacher or family member about how your placement is going.

### What if I'm ill or can't attend?

You should tell your employer and school as soon as possible so they know you won't be at the placement. Only cancel if absolutely necessary!



**Use this page to make notes related to looking  
for your ideal work experience placement**





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