

# Work Experience

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## Introduction

Work Experience provides claimants who have little or no work-related skills with the opportunity to gain valuable and meaningful experience within a workplace.

Work Experience promotes the work habit in unemployed people, particularly young people. It develops the skills required for work whilst boosting the claimant's confidence and supporting them into employment, apprenticeships, or training.

Work Experience gives claimants the opportunity to show they have both job specific, and core employability skills, for example:

- time management
- organisational skills
- communication skills
- team working skills

## Eligibility

Although particularly useful for young claimants, Work Experience opportunities are open to all **suitable** Universal Credit, New Style Jobseekers Allowance and New Style Employment and Support Allowance claimants aged 16 or over. There are additional considerations for 16 and 17 year olds taking part in Work Experience.

Claimants on contracted provision such as the Work and Health Programme and Pioneer should be supported by their Employment Provider and are **not** eligible for Work Experience arranged by jobcentres.

## **Suitability**

Suitable claimants will:

- not have significant needs relating to numeracy, literacy, or general employability skills
- have little or no relevant work history or a low skills base
- be motivated and demonstrate a willingness to work

Only claimants that are both eligible **and** suitable should be referred to a Work Experience opportunity.

Check the Work Experience opportunity on the District Provision Tool (DPT) to see if there are any extra criteria added by the employer.

## **Work Experience overview**

Work Experience opportunities:

- are voluntary for claimants
- are primarily aimed at younger claimants, but are available to all ages
- are flexible
- last between 2 to 8 weeks (or 12 weeks if linked to an apprenticeship or awaiting a Disclosure and Barring Service/Protecting Vulnerable Groups (DBS/PVG) check

The host employer may request that acceptance on a Work Experience opportunity involves an application and interview process.

## **16 and 17 year olds**

Claimants aged 16 or 17 can take part where the employer has signed up to the additional employment rules for this age group, this will be shown in the submission arrangements on the DPT.

It must be made clear to the 16 and 17 year old participant, in discussion with their local authority adviser and work coach, that they need to consider the education they need alongside the Work Experience until they are at least 18 years old

Any suitable Work Experience must be suitable for someone of their age, and which allows the young person to continue in part-time education or training leading to relevant regulated qualifications.

## **Taking part on Work Experience**

Claimants should normally complete one Work Experience opportunity. However, in exceptional circumstances claimants can complete another Work Experience opportunity if this will help the claimant move closer to work.

The claimant should not repeat the Work Experience opportunity with the same employer.

Participation on Work Experience is voluntary. A sanction cannot be applied if the claimant fails to attend or participate, or if they are asked to leave because of misconduct.

During a Work Experience opportunity, the employer may decide to offer the claimant an Apprenticeship. Where it is accepted, the Work Experience opportunity can be extended for up to a further 4 weeks while arrangements are made by the employer.

Claimants are subject to all existing requirements for their Labour Market regime while on Work Experience, and must be actively looking for work and be available for work.

### **Claimant finds their own Work Experience opportunity**

Claimants can find their own Work Experience opportunity. In such cases, Employer Advisers (depending on local arrangements) must contact the employer to:

- discuss the details of the Work Experience opportunity
- check suitability
- explain to the potential host employer how the Work Experience opportunity works (for example duration, hours, DWP Employer Agreement)

Once employers have signed the DWP Employer Agreement the claimant will be able to participate.

### **Travel, childcare, replacement care and Reasonable Adjustments costs**

The Flexible Support Fund (FSF) is available to cover a participant's travel, childcare, replacement care and Reasonable Adjustments costs (where these cannot be met by Access to Work) arising from attending Work Experience.

Access to Work (AtW) funding may be available to pay for the support needs of disabled claimants wishing to undertake Work Experience.

For those claimants who may be eligible for support from AtW, work coaches should email the appropriate Access to Work Operational Support Unit immediately to start the claim process putting "Work Experience Opportunity" in the subject line. The main body of the email must include:

- claimant's name
- National Insurance number
- a named contact for the company/organisation where the claimant is about to start the Work Experience
- the work coach/employer and partnership team contact details

Full details of the process that must be followed can be found on the Access to Work guidance home page.

## Initial conversations

Work coaches should explain the benefits of taking part in Work Experience, for example it enables participants to:

- improve their job prospects
- see the skills and behaviours employers want
- see how the skills they have can be adapted to the workplace
- gain real life work experience
- build their confidence
- add to their CV, including a work-related reference / referee
- give an employer the chance to see how well they can work
- to gain up to date relevant work experience

The claimant must be given full information about the Work Experience opportunity to ensure they can make an informed decision about taking part.

Work coaches should advise that:

- travel, childcare and reasonable adjustment costs will be met
- the claimant's benefit will not be affected whilst participating
- participation in the Work Experience opportunity is entirely voluntary
- the claimant is required to maintain the same standards of behaviour of anyone working for that employer
- there are requirements for the Work Experience opportunity, these include:
  - attendance
  - time keeping
  - behaviour
  - appearance
  - hygiene
  - adherence to health and safety requirements
- the claimant is subject to all existing requirements for their Labour Market regime while on Work Experience
- support is available for any special needs and reasonable adjustment issues the claimant may have
- the claimant may be expected to attend an interview with the employer, or provide a CV, depending upon the employer's selection criteria
- claimants being referred to a Work Experience opportunity in the care sector **must** be informed that it is a requirement to have an enhanced DBS check/PVG check before they can be considered for Work Experience by a registered care provider

As part of the referral:

- ensure any additional employer requirements are completed (as per the submission arrangements on the District Provision Tool)
- consider whether DBS/PVG checks are applicable. Details should be available on the submission arrangements on the District Provision Tool
- consider support with any travel or childcare costs

- consider any reasonable adjustment needs - see Access to Work and Reasonable Adjustments
- ensure all details of the Work Experience are recorded
- confirm the claimant commitment is updated to ensure any time spent on Work Experience is taken into account for the claimant's requirements. For more information see Expected hours of work-related activity

For more information about referrals to Work Experience and recording details see:

- Programmes and job schemes video, and
- Skills and Provision: Empower your claimant to improve their skills to increase employability: Bitesize learning

### **At the end of the work experience**

Work coaches should have a follow up meeting with the claimant to discuss next steps and consider further support to build on the outcomes of the Work Experience.

### **Where to find Work Experience opportunities**

Work Experience opportunities arranged by DWP (these may include local Work Experience arranged by your district within DWP which are not Movement to Work) with employers available locally can be found on the District Provision Tool.

Other opportunities for Work Experience within DWP may be offered through the Movement to Work Scheme. For more information on Movement to Work opportunities within DWP see Movement to Work.

Other organisations such as the Prince's Trust and Barclays also offer employment support programmes that incorporate Work Experience.

### **Signposting to external Work Experience opportunities**

A number of organisations and websites also advertise internships and Work Experience opportunities, for example:

- job courses at [Success at School](#)
- opportunities at [Go Think Big](#)
- Work Experience at [Student Ladder](#)
- Work Experience at [Indeed](#)
- Work Experience and Internships at [Target Jobs](#)
- opportunities with external employers at [Movement to Work](#)