



BRIEFING

RACE AT WORK: COMMITMENT ONE

10 impactful ways for
employers to design
and evaluate work
experience



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Race at Work Commitment One

10 impactful ways for employers to design and evaluate work experience

Leaders and employers support young people's pathways into good work and enterprise.

Supporting young people to access and progress in good work includes supporting marginalised young people who are Black, Asian, mixed race or from other ethnically diverse backgrounds and from lower socio-economic backgrounds who are not in education, employment or training (NEET). This may include offering structured work experience, apprenticeship opportunities, skills development opportunities, mentoring and coaching support.

Trends and insights

This briefing includes ideas on how to support apprentices in your organisation. In Business in the Community's Race at Work survey 2025 we asked questions about work experience and apprenticeships and found that:

- In 2025, only 35% of employees said their organisation provide formal work experience for young people.
- Wales was the least likely to provide formal work experience for young people (22%), whereas London was the most likely to (39%). Wales were also the least likely to have apprentices in their organisation with 53% saying they do not have any.
- Both professional services and financial services were the most likely to provide formal or informal work experience for young people (68%) and the service sector was the least (56%).
- When looking at business size, the largest difference between SMEs and large businesses was the proportion providing formal work experience (28% of SMEs vs. 41% of large businesses). Additionally, employees from large organisations were more than twice as likely than those in SMEs to say that they do not know if their organisations provide any work experience opportunities (22% of large organisations vs. 10% of SMEs).

Actions employers can take to make work experience for young people impactful

This is a framework listing the planning and key content that should be included in 1 week or 2-week work experience visit for a young person to make every day as impactful as possible.

We have also provided example schedules for both a one-week (5 days) and two-week (10 days) placement, that can be adopted for use by a large or small employers willing to create structured, high-quality work experience opportunities for a young person. Employers should note that forthcoming changes in legislation are expected to make 10 days the minimum standard for work experience.

1. **Create a warm welcome:** Give a tour of the workplace and introduce key team members. Share the company's mission, values, and culture to help them feel part of something bigger.
2. **Set clear expectations:** Provide a simple outline of tasks, dress code, and workplace etiquette. Clarify what they'll be doing and who they'll report to.
3. **Design a structured schedule:** Plan a mix of shadowing, hands-on tasks, and reflection time. Rotate them through departments to give a broader view of the business.
4. **Assign a buddy or mentor:** Pair them with a friendly team member who can answer questions and offer informal support. This helps build confidence and eases nerves.
5. **Offer real tasks:** Let them contribute to meaningful work, not just observe. Even small projects can give a sense of achievement and purpose.
6. **Encourage questions and curiosity:** Create space for them to ask about roles, career paths, and industry trends. Consider a Q&A session with different staff members.
7. **Provide feedback and reflection time:** Give constructive feedback throughout the week. End with a short review session to discuss what they learned and enjoyed.
8. **Teach employability skills:** Highlight teamwork, communication, time management, and problem-solving. These are transferable skills they'll carry forward.

9. **Provide life skills training:** Offer activities that develop communication, teamwork, self-organisation, and problem-solving. Resources such as Youth Futures Foundation's [Life skills training](#) can support employers in shaping activities that help the young person build confidence, emotional intelligence, and the skills needed for personal and workplace success.
10. **Celebrate their contribution:** A certificate, reference letter, or even a shout-out in a team meeting can go a long way. It boosts their confidence and gives them something tangible to take away.

Sector and industry guidelines

If your industry has rules and guidelines that are critical to working in the industry it would be good to share some of these insights with the young people on work experience. It is also useful for them to be told about organisations like yours to give them context and a wider perspective. Tailoring the experience is key.

Here are some examples of how a focus on sectors can enhance work experience for young people:

Tech & IT

- **Hands-On Projects:** Assign simple coding, design, or troubleshooting tasks.
- **Innovation Culture:** Encourage them to pitch ideas or explore emerging tech like AI or cybersecurity.

Construction & Engineering

- **Safety First:** Provide thorough inductions and PPE training.
- **Site Visits:** Let them see real projects in action — it's inspiring!

Creative Industries (Media, Design, Fashion)

- **Portfolio Building:** Help them create or contribute to a real piece of work.
- **Creative Briefs:** Give them a challenge to solve with guidance. Encourage critique sessions to build resilience and growth.

Retail & Hospitality

- **Customer Interaction:** Let them shadow front-of-house roles to build confidence.

11. **Behind-the-Scenes Insight:** Show stock management, ordering systems, or event planning. Emphasise teamwork, timekeeping, and adaptability.

Legal & Finance

- **Professionalism:** Teach formal communication and confidentiality.
- **Case Studies:** Use anonymised examples to explain real-world scenarios. Introduce roles beyond the obvious e.g. HR, accounting.

Each industry should also consider:

- **Including age-appropriate tasks** that challenge but don't overwhelm.
- **Exposure to diverse roles** within the organisation to broaden horizons.
- **Building in reflection time** to help them process what they've learned.

Suggested work experience framework

Work experience placements should be delivered primarily in-person and site-based, giving young people the opportunity to experience workplace culture, build networks, and develop confidence. While it can be valuable for participants to hear from colleagues who work remotely or in hybrid roles, if possible, the placement itself should not be delivered in a fully remote format.

Work experience week schedule (general office/site environment) - Week one

This is a suggested work experience framework that you could tailor to suit your organisation.

Day	Theme	Activities	Learning Focus
Monday	Welcome & orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Office/Site tour ▪ Meet the team ▪ Health & safety briefing ▪ Icebreaker activity 	Workplace culture, communication, confidence

Tuesday	Shadowing & observation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shadow different departments Attend a team meeting Note-taking exercise 	Understanding roles, active listening, professional etiquette
Wednesday	Hands-on tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assist with admin or project work Use basic software tools Time management challenge e.g. Prioritise a list of small tasks with competing deadlines, plan how to complete them within a set timeframe, and reflect on approach 	Ask ownership, digital literacy, problem-solving
Thursday	Career insights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Q&A with staff from varied roles Mini career mapping workshop Industry trends discussion 	Career awareness, goal setting, curiosity
Friday	Reflection and presentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare short presentation on learnings Feedback session with mentor Certificate or reference letter 	Self-reflection, public speaking, confidence boost

Week two

If you chose to expand your work experience into two weeks you could enhance it with the following opportunities.

Day	Theme	Activities	Learning Focus
Monday	Deep dive into team/department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spend full day in one department (choice guided by the young person's interests and strengths, established through Week 1 reflections) Assist with real tasks Interview a team member - role-specific skills, teamwork, initiative 	Role-specific skills, teamwork, initiative, applied learning

Tuesday	Mini project kick-off	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce a small project (e.g., marketing idea, research task) tailored to the young person's interests where possible Set goals and timeline - project planning, creativity, ownership 	Project planning, creativity, ownership, time management
Wednesday	Skills workshop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workshop of CV writing, interview prep, or communication (delivered by HR, a line manager, or colleague best placed to share their expertise) Role-play scenarios – employability skills, self-presentation 	Employability skills, communication, self-presentation, confidence
Thursday	Project completion and review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalise mini project Present findings to small group Peer feedback presentation 	Critical thinking, presentation, collaboration, reflective learning
Friday	Celebration, next steps and closure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Team lunch or informal gathering Final feedback session (led by line manager, mentor or HR as appropriate) Discuss future pathways, confidence, closure, inspiration 	Confidence, reflection, career inspiration

If you run a 2-week work experience programme for young people, or an existing one-week encounter is extended for another week, here are some additional enhancements that you can introduce to help the young person get as much as they can out of their time with your organisation.

Extra Enhancements for maximum impact

Here are some examples of additional actions you can include to deepen the learning experience for the young person and maximise the impact of the young person's encounter with the workplace.

- **Introduce a daily reflection journal:** Encourage the student to jot down what they learned, what surprised them, and questions they still have. This will help them to share the learning from the experience when they return to school or the education environment and continue to reflect on what they have learned long after the work encounter has ended.
- **Mini project:** Assign a small project they can work on throughout the week (e.g. designing a flyer, researching a topic, or creating a presentation). This would be a useful task for a 2-week or longer work experience.
- **Mentor check-ins:** Short daily chats with their assigned buddy to answer questions and offer encouragement.
- **Celebration moment:** End the week with a team lunch or informal gathering to celebrate their contribution.
- **Skills Tracker:** A simple checklist to help them identify and develop key skills throughout the placement.

Measuring impact

Building reflection into a work experience programme gives young people the chance to share what they have learned and suggest ways to make the experience even more engaging and inspiring.

Here are some ideas for a structured approach to help you evaluate the success of a work experience programme.

Key metrics and indicators to track

Metric indicator	What it reveals	How to measure it
Student satisfaction	Engagement and perceived value	Surveys, interviews, testimonials
Skill development	Growth in employability and confidence	Pre/post self-assessments, mentor feedback

Employer feedback – <i>This is about asking the young person what it was like to work in the organisation</i>	Relevance and preparedness	Structured feedback forms or debriefs
Task completion & participation	Level of involvement and initiative	Daily logs, mentor observations
Career awareness - <i>This is intended to help the employer evaluate the effectiveness of their work experience programme, not to assess the student's performance.</i>	Understanding of roles and pathways	Reflection journals, career mapping exercises or feedback conversations that indicate whether the young person has gained greater clarity about roles and pathways.
Progression outcomes	Influence on future choices	Follow-up surveys, destination tracking
Inclusivity & accessibility	Equity of experience	Demographic analysis, feedback from diverse participants

Additional ideas

Some additional ideas to capture the stories from your work experience and work encounters that you can use for your website, marketing materials, ESG reports and so on.

Qualitative insights to gather

- **Stories of growth:** Ask students to describe a moment they felt proud or challenged.
- **Mentor reflections:** Capture anecdotes about how the student engaged or evolved.
- **Peer interactions:** Observe how they collaborate or communicate with others.

Feedback loops

- **Daily check-ins:** Quick reflections or mood ratings.
- **End-of-week review:** A session to discuss learnings and suggestions.

12. Post-placement follow-up: A survey or call 1–3 months later to assess long-term impact. Building this into the design of your programme is a great way for your organisation to hear the longer lasting impact of a young person's work encounter with you. It also enables the young person to reflect more deeply on their work encounter, build on the learning that they experienced during their time with you, and make plans for how they can take that learning to improve and develop their skills.

Other key resources available in the [Work Experience Employer Guide by Youth Employment UK](#).

The Careers & Enterprise Company resources

The Careers & Enterprise Company (CEC) is the national body for careers education in England, supporting schools and colleges to deliver modern, 21st century careers education. They connect schools and colleges with employers to improve careers education. Their initiatives aim to reduce the number of young people not in education, employment, or training (NEET).

CEC have produced [The Employer Standards](#): A framework and tool to help businesses engage effectively with schools and colleges. The free tool has been used by over 1,350 employers so far and allows you to review, compare and improve your approach.

You can visit their [website](#) for more information and tools to support your Work Experience planning and delivery.

There are options for employers who want to explore flexible shorter work experience approaches in the free CEC [Employer Standards tool](#).



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Business in the Community

137 Shepherdess Walk
London
N1 7RQ

www.bitc.org.uk
020 7566 8650

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