

Local London Gatsby Benchmark 6 Toolkit



GB6 – Experiences of Workplaces:

Work experience is a key part of any high-quality careers programme, helping to ensure that young people develop relevant skills for work and supporting transitions from education and training into skilled employment.

Young people want more opportunities to experience a wider range of workplaces to help them to make more informed decisions about their future.

From September 2025, all institutions should adopt the strengthened benchmark.

The benchmark places a much stronger emphasis on ensuring that all learners have multiple, meaningful and varied workplace experiences. The increased flexibility in this model is also intended to reduce barriers for both young people and employers.

The approach will support schools with strategic planning working towards the government's guarantee of work experience (see further details below under Statutory Guidance).

For schools

“Every pupil should have first-hand experiences of workplaces to help their exploration of career opportunities and expand their networks.”

The minimum expectation of schools is as follows:

- By the age of 16, every pupil should have had meaningful experiences of workplaces.
- By the age of 18, every pupil should have had at least one further meaningful experience.

Summary of key changes for schools:

- Pre-16 experiences of workplaces have been pluralised, rather than specifying a minimum requirement of at least one, highlighting the value of progressive experiences throughout a young person's time in education.
- A definition of 'meaningful' has been added to ensure experiences have, for example, a clear agreed purpose, extensive two-way interaction, and suitable preparation and reflection time.
- Experiences can take many forms, including through visits to workplaces, work shadowing and/or work experience. Virtual experiences can complement but not wholly replace in-person experiences for any young person.
- The definition of 'meaningful' clarifies that meaningful part time work can be considered as part of a young person's careers programme.

For colleges and ITP's

“Every learner should have first-hand experiences of workplaces to help their exploration of career opportunities and expand their networks.”

The minimum expectation of colleges and ITPs is as follows:

- By the end of their programme of study, every learner should have had at least one meaningful experience of a workplace, in addition to any part-time jobs they may have.

Summary of key changes for colleges and ITPs:

- Similarly to Benchmark 5, we have added a definition of 'meaningful' for this benchmark to ensure experiences have, for example, a clear agreed purpose, extensive two-way interaction, and suitable preparation and reflection time, similar to encounters under Benchmark 5.
- Experiences can take many forms, including through visits to workplaces, work shadowing and/or work experience. We clarify that virtual experiences can complement but not wholly replace in-person experiences for any young person.

Defining 'meaningful' in BM6

A meaningful experience gives the young person the opportunity to explore what it is like to work in that environment, what skills are valued in the workplace, their recruitment processes and what it takes to be successful. This could be achieved through visits to workplaces, work shadowing and/or work experience. Throughout the careers programme these experiences could be in person or a combination of in person and virtual, where appropriate. Both the young person and employers should be supported to prepare for the experience. Additional or different support may be needed for vulnerable and disadvantaged young people and for young people with SEND.

A meaningful experience will:

- have a clear purpose, which is shared with the employer and the young person
- be underpinned by learning outcomes that are appropriate to the needs of the young person
- involve extensive two-way interactions between the young person and employees
- include opportunities for young people to meet a range of different employees from the workplace
- include opportunities for young people to perform a task set by the employer or to produce a piece of work relevant to that workplace
- include the employer providing feedback to the young person about their work
- be followed by opportunities for the young person to reflect on the insights, knowledge or skills gained through their experience

Schools, colleges and independent training providers (ITPs) can take into account any part-time work a young person may have, if it genuinely offers them a meaningful experience.

Statutory Guidance:

In addition to the strengthened Gatsby Benchmark, the government is reforming work experience to break down barriers to opportunity so that every pupil will have the opportunity to take part in 2 weeks' worth of work experience during key stages 3 and 4.

[Statutory Guidance](#) is issued to provide direction on 'how' to meet the Statutory Duty (the law), because it can be difficult to demonstrate compliance with the law otherwise.

The Gatsby Benchmark updates have been included in the latest Statutory Guidance for schools and guidance for further education colleges, sixth form colleges and independent training providers (updated May 2025).

Equalex – Modern Work Experience

The government's long -term commitment is that every young person is guaranteed two weeks' worth of modern work experience while at school. Read the [Modern Work Experience](#) section of the Careers & Enterprise Company (CEC) website to find out more about modern work experience.

Access the resource and checklist [Understanding how to embed progressive work experiences](#) for school and ITPs. Watch the [CEC's webinar](#) where you will hear about the government's commitment to the 10 days' worth of modern work experience for every young person. The webinar also covered the equalx learning outcomes and objectives and how to make provision more meaningful, in line with Gatsby Benchmark 6.

Implementing 2 weeks' worth of work experience

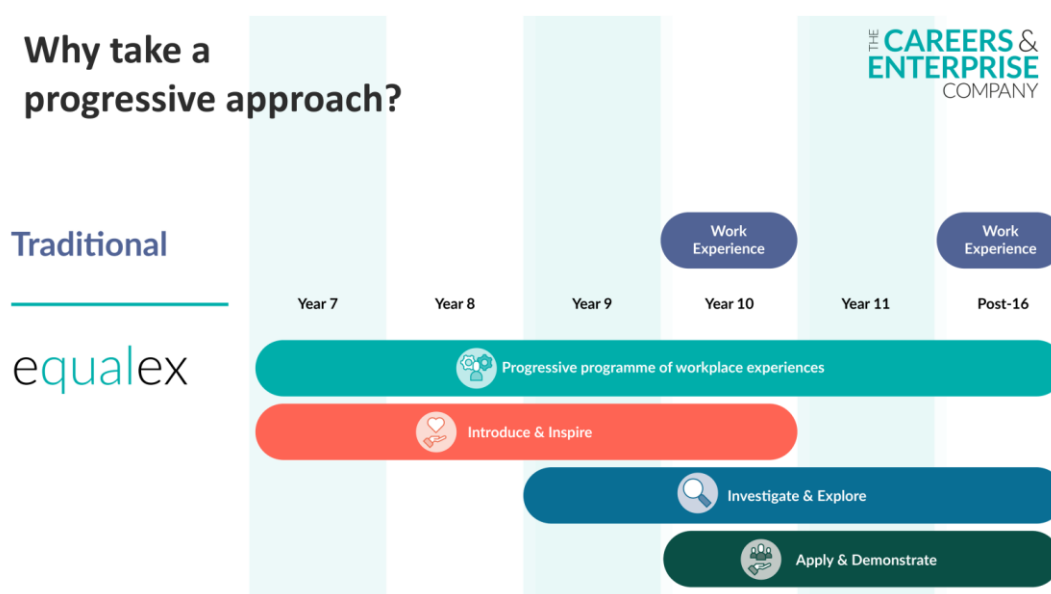
The government vision is that 2 weeks' worth of work experience will be based on the following set of principles, building on the benchmark 6 definition of meaningful.

Two weeks' worth of work experience should be broken down into:

- one weeks' worth of work experience activities in years 7 to 9
- one weeks' worth of work experience placement(s) in years 10 to 11

Experiences should be aspirational and inspirational, giving young people the opportunity to access a wide range of career opportunities, aligned to their interests and talents, local skills needs and national growth sectors. Opportunity should go beyond the horizons of their immediate friends and family.

They should be co-designed and delivered in partnership with schools and involve two-way employer-pupil interaction.



Work experience activities in years 7 to 9

Work experience activities in years 7 to 9 should consist of multiple, varied and meaningful employer-led activities to explore different industries and careers and involve active engagement with a diverse range of employers, including small and medium sized enterprises. Activities could include:

- multi-day work visits involving employer-set tasks or projects
- work shadowing
- in-person or virtual employer talks in the workplace, including technical demonstrations or tours of working premises.

These could be undertaken individually or as part of a group or class-based activity. Some or all of the activities can be in person, with virtual activities contributing but not replacing in person.

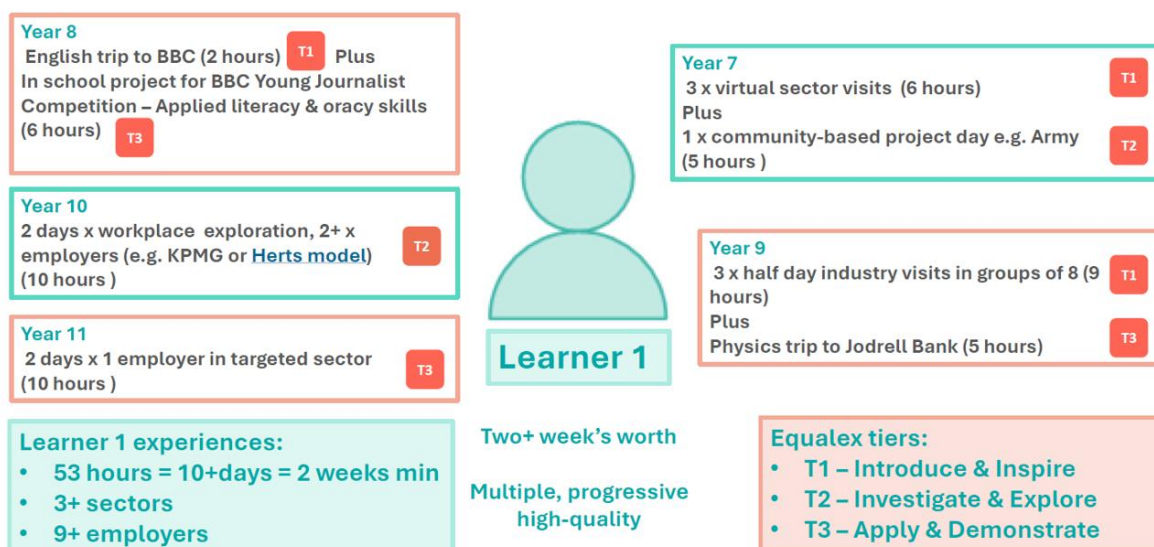
Work experience placement(s) in years 10 to 11

Work experience placement(s) in years 10 to 11 should allow pupils to experience a real working environment and begin to develop work-based skills and behaviours.

Pupils should be free to undertake their 5 days' worth of work experience placement(s) in years 10 to 11 with more than one employer, irrespective of sector, and be able to spread their placement time across a number of days or weeks at any point during the year 10 to 11 curriculum. This might be advantageous to young people who are undecided on their careers interests, by offering scope to try more employers and sectors.

The government expect that the work experience placement(s) in years 10 to 11 be in-person, but acknowledge that in exceptional circumstances meaningful hybrid or virtual approaches may be impactful in removing barriers to access. In those circumstances, they would expect best endeavours to use remote engagement alongside, but not instead of, in-person activity.

What could this look like for Sam – mainstream?



Specialist setting example

Term 1

Project based activity around specific sector – NHS and roles within (relevant to YP future plans) exposure to the sector through videos and virtual activity
(5 hours)

T1

Term 3

1 x community-based project day e.g. Care Home, community project linked to NHS roles and through prep for adulthood curriculum model
(12 hours)

T2



Learner 2

Term 2

6 x employer encounters through in school exposure
(12 hours)

T1

Term 4

5 x half day supported industry visits in small groups or 121 (20 hours)

T2

Term 5

10 x half days supported visit x 1 employer in targeted sector
(40 hours)

T3

Equalex tiers:

- T1 – Introduce & Inspire
- T2 – Investigate & Explore
- T3 – Apply & Demonstrate

Two+ week's worth

Multiple, progressive
high-quality

Learner 2 experiences:

- 89 hours - 10+days min
- 2+ sector
- 9+ employers

Planning work experience programmes

From September 2025, schools should be planning and, where able, reforming their work experience programmes according to these principles so that all pupils can benefit from the opportunities, development and learning that work experience provides.

Schools should consider how to build meaningful experiences of workplaces, delivered under benchmark 6, into a structured work experience programme. The CEC has [information on modern work experience](#), including a framework of structured learning outcomes to help schools implement a modern, progressive approach to work experience. To support this strategic planning, aligning progress towards the work experience guarantee to the school's priorities, school leaders and careers leaders should refer to theme 5 of the [internal leadership review](#).

DfE will set out more details of the work experience guarantee in due course, including:

- who is responsible and accountable for delivery;
- support available nationally and locally;
- delivery plans;
- implementation timelines.

Guidance for all institutions

Schools, colleges and ITPs have the flexibility to plan progressive and well-sequenced experiences of workplaces in a way that suits their context and the needs of their learners. This means each workplace experience should build on the last one and look to the next one, building a coherent set of experiences into a progressive careers programme. Experiences of workplaces should be designed to meet the needs of learners and the local context, while bearing in mind the demands of delivering the full curriculum.

Workplace experiences for learners with SEND

For learners with SEND, workplace experiences can support raising aspirations and encourage learners to understand the options available to them around future career and progression pathways. A progressive approach to experiences through the programme of study will support the learner to gain confidence and develop skills and knowledge needed.

It might be useful to consider using vocational profiling to help learners to understand what they're interested in and why. Schools and colleges should carefully match the opportunities to the abilities, needs and aspirations of the learner.

Schools and colleges may need to work with the employer to put in place additional support in the work placement for some learners with SEND. Additional support might be needed to help ensure the learner is fully prepared for the workplace so that the experience is valuable.

Resources

The CEC has made available a range of resources that help schools, colleges and employers to plan and implement meaningful experiences of the workplace aligned to school and college priorities. These include guidance on understanding how to embed progressive employer encounters and work experiences. There are also resources to support employers working with young people with SEND and a guide for employers to support the development of meaningful experiences, which is available to employers on completion of the Employer Standards self-assessment tool.

Schools and colleges must decide whether adults working with pre-16 work experience learners need to obtain a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate by consulting the regulated activity section in part three of the statutory guidance, Keeping children safe in education.

DfE encourages schools and colleges to reduce barriers so employers can offer a wide range of experiences of workplaces and placements by following the Work Experience Guidance. This includes advice on whether risk assessments are necessary and makes clear that the placement provider (employer) has primary responsibility for the health and safety of the learner and should be managing any significant risks. Schools and colleges, or others organising placements, need to check the employer has risk management arrangements in place, along with appropriate policies and procedures to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Industry placements

Industry placements are a mandatory and critical part of every T Level and consist of a substantial period of time in the workplace of at least 45 days. This helps young people to put their technical and employability skills into practice and learn what a real career option is like. It also allows employers to get early sight of new talent in their industry. DfE has provided a package of support for industry placements, which includes:

- [industry placements delivery guidance](#)
- [student guide](#)
- [employer support package](#)

All placements must:

- replicate real working conditions
- develop skills to support future progression
- provide a structured and supportive learning environment

Top Tips	Guidance/Resource
Virtual and Hybrid Work Experiences	<p>Many employers have VWEX or Hybrid programmes on offer through different platforms that young careers students can reference on a budding CV. Most sectors are now included and see the benefits of VWEX and Hybrid programmes to increasing their talent pool. Construction is at the forefront of this trajectory and usually offers a project driven experiences allowing students to participate in diverse structured work problems and drive them through group work to a conclusion, usually a group presentation to a panel of employer participants.</p> <p>Virtual and Hybrid work experiences are suitable for many diverse groups of students and can become an excellent resource for progressive and diverse work experience strategies for schools and colleges.</p>
Parental Engagement	<p>Parents/Carers play a vital role in their child's education and future career prospects. One significant way they can support them is by helping them secure meaningful work experience placements. And by meaningful it does not have to be at a prestigious or exciting work environment, it simply needs to give their child an opportunity to understand the importance of employability skills and helps build their confidence working with adults.</p>
Disadvantaged Young People	<p>Students from disadvantaged backgrounds often encounter more significant barriers in accessing traditional work experience opportunities. By providing targeted guidance and resources with the support of the pastoral team, you can help level the playing field for these students.</p> <p>If your school organises traditional off-site work experience, then for those that may not have a placement, they should be offered valuable on-site options at school – see links below for potential options.</p>
Professional Conduct in the Workplace	<p>Understanding professional conduct in the workplace is important for young people as they transition from school to their careers. It equips them with the skills needed to navigate complex workplace dynamics, solve problems diplomatically, adapt to different corporate culture, and excel in their chosen professions.</p> <p>You may want to consider getting the guidance and support of your EA's to create activities for young people to better understand the importance of professional conduct or ask them to speak to young people about their own personal experience.</p>

Website Addresses for VWEX & Hybrid Resources	
https://www.springpod.com/	https://www.speakersforschools.org/work-experience-opportunities/
https://www.theforage.com/	https://www.thewowshow.org/
https://barclayslifeskills.com/	https://www.icanbea.org.uk/virtual-tours/
https://www.rcgp.org.uk/observegp	https://bsmsoutreach.thinkific.com/courses/VWE
https://the-industry.co.uk/Not-Just-A-Hairdresser	https://opendoors.construction/
https://www.princes-trust.org.uk/	https://brightknowledge.org/
U-Explore Looking for a local LMI platform?	https://wwwFOUNDERS4SCHOOLS.org.uk/
https://uptree.co/	Thrive Careers Support for Unique Journeys
https://careerprofessor.works/	https://youngjournalistacademy.com/
https://www.pagodaprojects.com/	https://www.theinterngroup.com/destination/virtual-internships/
https://www.brightnetwork.co.uk/internship-experience-uk/	https://www.virtualinternships.com/
https://www.ratemyplacement.co.uk/virtual-internships	https://talentview.org/vacancy?registration_source=construction&opportunity_type=work_experience&interest=construction
Virtual work experience - Get Career Confident	https://ukyoungartists.squarespace.com/resources
Website Addresses for WEX	
https://www.accenture.com/no-en/careers/local/virtual-experience-program	https://www.ratemyplacement.co.uk/search-jobs
https://careers.jpmorgan.com/us/en/students	https://www.kpmgcareers.co.uk/undergraduate/insight-programmes/
https://www.pinsentmasons.com/careers/graduate/work-experience/virtual	https://www.open.edu/openlearn/subject-information
https://idea.org.uk/about/learner	https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/basic-first-aid
https://medicmentor.co.uk/veterinary-virtual-live-work-experience/	https://alison.com/
https://careers.vodafone.com/uk/routes-into-vodafone/work-experience/	https://find-activity-provider.careersandenterprise.co.uk/search
Careerbay – Find Year 10-13 Work Experience and Apprenticeships near you	Amazon work experience: Introducing the Step-Up programme
Further Resources for Careers Leads	
The Equalex Framework	Understanding how to embed progressive employer encounters and experiences

Maturity Model Themes, Theme 5 for BM5 & BM6	The Internal Leadership Review
Compass Evaluation Support – Key Questions	Future Skills Questionnaire Toolkit
How to create your own Virtual Work Experience	
Gatsby Benchmarks – Benchmark 6 – The Gatsby Foundation	Statutory Guidance – Benchmark 6 – Government Statutory Guidance
Gatsby Benchmarks 6 & 7 Under the New Statutory Guidance	
Articles for Parents about modern experiences of the workplace	
Why it's important your child learns about the working world - An overview for parents	National Careers Service – Ways to get work experience
How Parents Can Help Their Children Secure Work Experience and Build Essential Skills	Advice for parents and carers of young people on work experience – HSE Executive
How to help your teen find work experience	Guides – How to
Further Resources for Careers Leads – Tik Tok / short form suggestions	
Useful Hashtags: For a work experience day in the life on TikTok, search for videos tagged with #WorkPlacement, #DayInTheLife, and #TikTokIntern. Look for accounts like @studyuk_britishcouncil who share student placement experiences. You can also find videos showcasing the daily routines of interns at TikTok itself, often tagged with #LifeAtTikTok.	"Discover Work Placements" video from @studyuk_britishcouncil: This video features a Brand Management student on placement at Anglia Ruskin University.
Videos from @howtogetanapprenticeship: This account shares tips on how to get apprenticeships and work experience opportunities, including TikTok.	

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