

Guidance for Employing Young People and Inexperienced Workers

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Purpose of this guide

The construction industry will need to recruit and train 158,000 workers between 2018 – 2022 to meet future demand. This will require the contracting supply chain to work together to attract, train, and retain more young people in the industry, creating a more diverse workforce, with higher numbers of women, ethnic minorities and those with disability, and adopting more flexible working practices to facilitate this.

This guide has been published by the Construction Leadership Council, to provide clear and consistent advice for employers on how to manage the process for employing young people on site – whether as employees, apprentices or as part of work experience. This guide can also be used to support those employing inexperienced workers.

The future construction workforce

The industry needs new recruits from all sectors of society, to maintain a workforce capable of delivering the future construction needs of the UK. Whilst still requiring traditional and specialist construction skills, the sector is now offering an increasing number of opportunities for manufacturing, digital and energy efficiency skills. It is committed to providing a rewarding and successful career for a diverse range of hardworking young people in order to create the next generation of skilled construction workers, designers, proactive managers and dynamic leaders.

"Our Industry is extremely diverse and offers great opportunities for those committed to working hard and succeeding in their field. As a sports team needs a variety of players performing well as a unit, construction relies on people of all capabilities coming together and doing their bit to deliver successfully"

Kevin Louch
Managing Director,
[Stanford Industrial Concrete Flooring Ltd](#)

Young people on sites

A 'young person' is anyone under the age of 18. Inexperienced workers are those of any age, who have little or limited experience of working on a construction site. Under the Management of Health and Safety at Work regulations, employers have a responsibility to ensure that young people employed by them are not exposed to risks due to a lack of experience or maturity, as they are more likely to be unaware of hazards in the workplace.

By addressing the barriers and effectively promoting the careers available within construction, the industry can provide a wide range of fulfilling careers at all levels and increase the recruitment and retention of new entrants.

What should employers expect from young people and inexperienced workers?

Construction employers should expect the person to demonstrate a core set of 'employability' or 'work readiness' skills, to provide the confidence that they will be able to carry-out their role safely and effectively.

Everyone should be 'work ready'...

Work readiness means having a positive attitude, and a keenness to learn and contribute to the business. Whilst recognising that for many 16 or 17-year olds this may be their first job, any person applying for a position should:

- Have an understanding of the company and role they are applying for
- Be able to submit a CV showing relevant or transferrable skills
- Be punctual, well-mannered and appropriately dressed at all times
- Be able to communicate effectively
- Follow the instructions of their employer and supervisor
- Respect their colleagues and work as part of a team
- Understand the behaviours expected of them and act accordingly
- Apply the knowledge gained from the training and information provided
- Demonstrate punctuality, reliability and dedication to carry out their role

...and have functional literacy, numeracy and ICT skills

Functional skills are the practical English, Maths, and Information and Communications Technology (ICT) skills young people need to work effectively and follow safe working practices on site.

English, Maths and ICT GCSE's and apprenticeship frameworks incorporate the required standard of Functional Skills in England, Core Skills in Scotland and Essential Skills in Wales. However, these skills can also be gained as stand-alone qualifications if required.

Functional Skills

To be **functionally literate** the person must be able to:

- Read and understand basic texts – drawing out relevant information
- Construct properly spelt, grammatically correct writing that is suitable for the audience
- Understand oral communications and react appropriately
- Communicate clearly and make themselves properly understood

To be **functionally numerate**; the person must have confidence to:

- Resolve day to day problems and make decisions using numbers
- Use mental arithmetic
- Spot errors and rogue figures
- Understand percentages and ratios

Functional skills in **ICT** ensure individuals are confident and capable when using ICT systems and tools.

Managing on site

An employer taking on a young person or inexperienced worker will need to have proper supervisory arrangements in place, and ensure that they comply with health and safety, insurance and other regulations to ensure the well-being of the person.

Supervising young people and inexperienced workers

"Workers will require closer supervision if they are young, inexperienced, or starting a new work activity. Other factors that should be considered when assessing the level of supervision needed include the level of individuals' safety awareness, education, physical agility, literacy and attitude."

Construction Design and Management (CDM) L-Series Guidance (paragraph 170)

Workplace Supervisors play a central role in managing young people and inexperienced workers on site, and particularly in ensuring the success of an apprenticeship or traineeship programme. Their key role in supporting the person is to:

- Ensure they hold an appropriate card carrying the CSCS logo, if undertaking a construction occupation on a construction site; and that a suitable risk assessment has been carried out.
- Meet them on their first working day and show them around the site, ensuring they are fully inducted and equipped with the correct Personal Protective Equipment where relevant.
- Provide a clear explanation of what is expected in terms of conduct and performance in relation to the role they are undertaking.
- Outline the correct procedures for reporting workplace issues such as absence, health and safety concerns, grievances etc.
- Act as a role model to the person and ensure they lead by example at all times.
- Give guidance and support, as well as clear and concise instructions on work tasks.
- Be fully aware of the content of the apprenticeship or training the young person is undertaking, recognising opportunities for them to gain relevant experience.
- Monitor and keep records of progress liaising with the training provider and other relevant parties where required.

Health and Safety

Under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, an employer has a responsibility to ensure that young and inexperienced people employed by them are not exposed to risk due to a lack of experience, being unaware of existing or potential risks and/or lack of maturity.

In particular, employers need to consider whether the work the young and inexperienced person will do:

- Is beyond their physical or psychological capacity.
- Involves harmful exposure to toxic substances – with consideration given to exposure levels and ensuring legal limits are met.
- Involves harmful exposure to radiation.
- Involves risk of accidents that cannot reasonably be recognised or avoided by young people or inexperienced workers due to their insufficient attention to safety or lack of experience or training
- Has a risk to health from extreme cold, heat, noise or vibration.

Tasks involving these risks can be carried out by young people or inexperienced workers provided they are properly supervised, and risks are reduced to the lowest level. In addition, employers are advised to adequately control any significant risks by:

- Explaining the risks during induction, checking that the person understands what they have been told and knows how to raise health and safety concerns.
- Ensuring checks are appropriate for the environment the person will be working in and that reasonable adjustments have been made which reflect their ability, age and maturity.
- Continually reinforcing the risks and safe working methods.

While there is no requirement to carry out a separate risk assessment specifically for a young person, employers that haven't previously employed young people and inexperienced workers should review their risk assessments and take into account the specific factors that may be particularly relevant. A sample risk assessment form is at [Appendix 1](#).

For example, young people have a greater entitlement to rest breaks than adult workers including:

- Daily rest period of 12 consecutive hours per day
- A weekly rest period of 48 hours per week
- A rest break of 30 minutes where daily working time is more than 4.5 hours

The HSE guidance makes clear that, *"An employer will already be familiar with the risks associated with their workplace and should be in a position to consider what is or is not appropriate"*.

Insurance

Employers are required to have Employers' Liability Insurance or Contractors' All Risk Insurance for people they employ under a contract of service (including work experience) or apprenticeship. Separate insurance policies are not required for young people.

However, employers are advised to inform their insurer if a young or inexperienced person is working on site and provide them with a copy of any specific risk assessment in relation to their role.

Provided the insurer is a member of the Association of British Insurers or Lloyd's of London, employers can treat work experience students as employees, covered by their Employers' Liability policy. Placements of less than two weeks will not adversely affect premiums; for longer placements some additional information may have to be submitted to the insurance company which could lead to a small adjustment to premiums.

Safeguarding – DBS checks

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks are not required for staff working with employees or work experience students aged 16 years and over. A DBS check may be required for staff supervising work experience placements for students aged under 16, if they do so unsupervised and on a regular basis. In these circumstances, the members of staff would need an enhanced DBS check with barred list information.

National Minimum Wage

Employees are entitled to the National Minimum Wage (NMW) if they are aged 16 or over. There is a specific NMW band for under 18-year olds and for apprentices, employers should [check the current NMW rates](#).

Current minimum wage legislation makes clear there are certain types of work experience where NMW does not have to be paid; however other areas are more a matter of judgement as to whether the person should be classed as a worker and be entitled to NMW. In particular the term 'intern' has no legal status under NMW law. NMW does not have to be paid to young people if they are students undertaking placements for less than 1 year as part of a UK-based further or higher education course or work experience students of compulsory school age, i.e. under 16

Appendix 1

Sample risk assessment form

NOTE: If you have fewer than 5 employees, you are not required to have a written risk assessment

Name of young person	Age (Proof of age must be requested)	
<p>NOTE: Children below the minimum school leaving age (MSLA) must not be employed in industrial workplaces such as factories, construction sites etc, except when on work experience.</p>		
Person's home address		
Business / organisation address		
Name of workplace supervisor		
<p>NOTE: Adequate supervision must be provided and all colleagues must be made aware of the young person's/ inexperienced worker's presence on site and their responsibility to intervene if they feel their safety is being compromised.</p> <p>For many young people and inexperienced workers, the workplace will be a new environment and they will be unfamiliar with 'obvious' risks and the behaviour expected of them in response. Young people might need additional support to allow them to carry out their work without putting themselves and others at risk, and this might mean more tailored training and/or closer supervision. Regularly checking the person's progress will help identify where any additional adjustments may be needed.</p>		
Details of insurance held by employer/site (Employers' Liability Insurance/Contractors' All Risk Insurance) including name of insurer and policy date		
<p>NOTE: Before any young person or inexperienced worker is taken into employment the following risk assessment must be performed for the work that they will be undertaking.</p>		
Has the person been issued with a copy of their job role?	YES	NO
<p>NOTE: Young persons have a greater entitlement to rest breaks than adult workers including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily rest period of 12 consecutive hours per day • A weekly rest period of 48 hours per week • A rest break of 30 minutes where daily working time is more than 4.5 hours 		
Is the work the person is being asked to undertake within their physical or psychological capability? <i>This doesn't have to be complicated, it could be as simple as checking the person is capable of safely lifting weights and of remembering and following instructions.</i>	YES	NO

Physical needs of the young person/ inexperienced worker that have been / will be taken into account (Please list)		
Have you made the person aware of what to do in an emergency e.g. fire procedures, first aid, accident reporting?	YES	NO
Has the person received the relevant health and safety induction?	YES	NO
Does the work involve harmful exposure to substances that are toxic, can cause cancer, can damage or harm an unborn child, or can chronically affect human health in any other way? <i>Be aware of substances the person might come into contact with in their work, consider exposure levels and ensure legal limits are met.</i>	YES	NO
Has exposure to hazardous substances been reduced or eliminated?	YES	NO
Does the work involve harmful exposure to radiation?	YES	NO
Have you ensured the person's exposure to radiation is restricted and does not exceed the allowed dose limit?	YES	NO
Does the work involve risk of accidents that cannot reasonably be recognised or avoided by young people and inexperienced workers due to their insufficient attention to safety or lack of experience or training? <i>A young person or inexperienced worker might be unfamiliar with 'obvious' risks. An employer should consider the need for tailored training/closer supervision.</i>	YES	NO
Does the work expose the person to a risk to health from extreme cold, heat, noise or vibration? <i>In most cases, young people will not be at any greater risk than adults and for workplaces that include these hazards it is likely there will already be control measures in place. However, to avoid risks to young people, employers need to comply with relevant legislation.</i>	YES	NO
NOTE: <i>Where specific risk factors exist in your workplace you should already have control measures in place. This will also apply to legally required age limits on the use of some equipment and machinery (e.g. forklift trucks and some woodworking machinery).</i>		

What significant hazards could the young person/ inexperienced worker be exposed to undertaking this work (please list)?	Action(s) undertaken to minimise that risk
Additional comments	
Risk assessment undertaken by:	Signature:
Name (block capitals)	Date:

Useful links

Health and safety:

[HSE young people at work pages](#)

[HSE guidance on young people and work experience](#)

[Managing Health and Safety in Construction](#) - Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015

Insurance:

[HSE guide on Employers' Liability Insurance](#)

[ABI statement on insurance and work experience](#)

Safeguarding:

[DBS eligibility guidance](#)

National Minimum Wage:

[Low Pay Commission](#)

[BEIS guidance on National Minimum Wage, work experience and internships](#)

Work experience guides:

[Future building, Build UK](#)

[Working with job seekers, Department for Work and Pensions](#)

[Workplace Guidance - Internships, TUC](#)

[Not just making tea, UKCES](#)

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