



What's the scope?

The first step towards creating a successful experience of your workplace



As with any other project you plan within your organisation, the delivery of a virtual or blended work experience programme needs a firm foundation. The research stage of planning what you want and are able to deliver is fundamentally important, and will directly inform the rest of your planning. So, at this first stage, it's vital to identify your particular set of answers to the obvious questions:



You'll need to understand your organisation's capacity, and what you see as the specific benefits - staff development opportunities, future recruitment, and resource generation are just a few. Understanding what the schools and colleges you will be working with want and need as part of their COVID-19 recovery plans and beyond is essential too.

Internal Research

A good way to start is by looking at your organisation's internal resources - and the most important resource you have are your people.

What skills do they have which you may not know about? Do you have any who are particularly good at communicating online? Are there any who would directly benefit from leading a work experience activity?

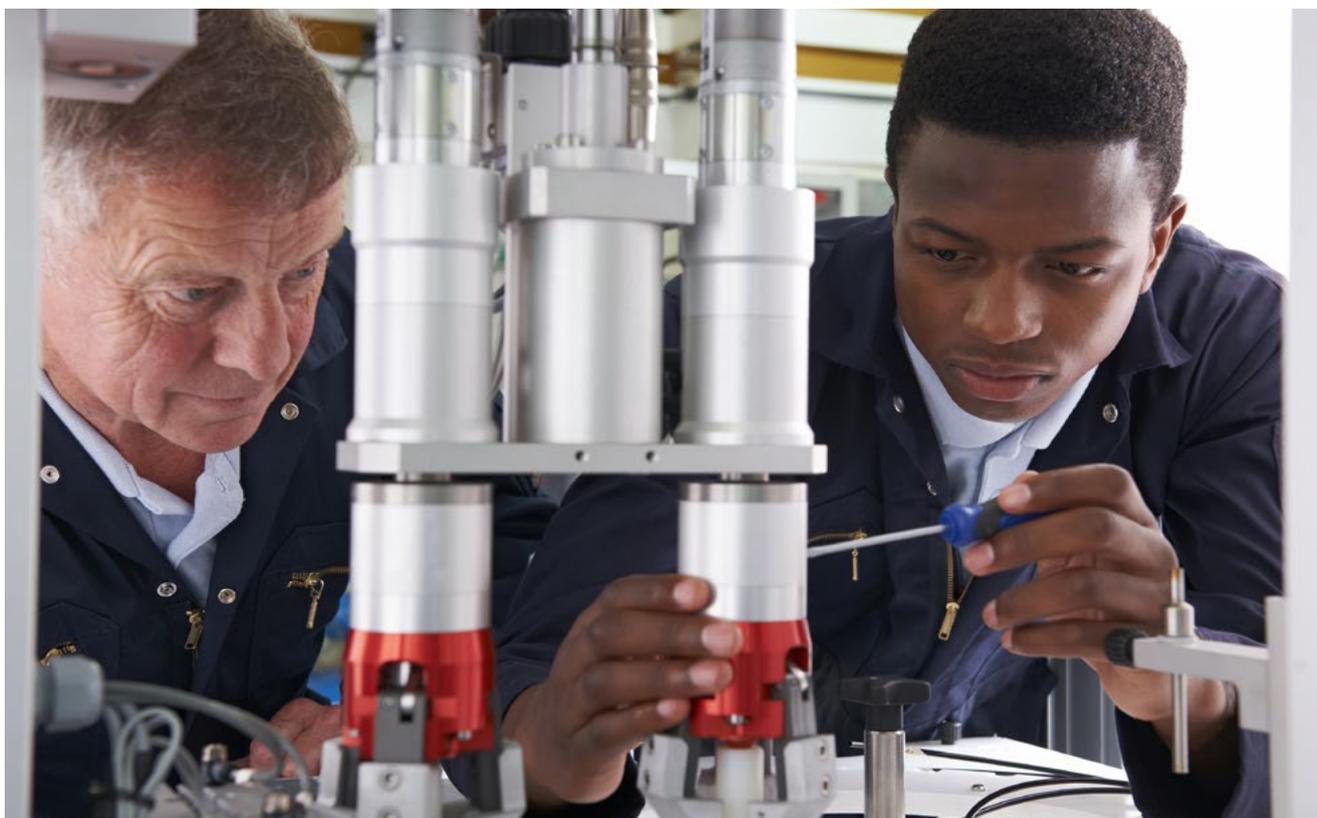
Asking employees to volunteer to be part of the delivery of a work experience programme will be a great way of discovering and tapping into skills they already have, or may like to develop more. You may already have a volunteering programme, and time spent delivering virtual or blended work experience can be included in that. Getting your staff involved makes a long lasting impression. It is motivating and gives a real sense of being invested in by you.

Do you have people within your organisation who have never worked on a project together before? Many organisations have departments which work together but know very little about what each other do. This may be the ideal opportunity to tie them together, and demystify people's roles (this was identified as a key benefit of offering virtual and

blended work experience opportunities by the West Midlands Cornerstone Employer Forum in January 2021).

You will obviously be wondering, and possibly have concerns about, the impact of offering work experience opportunities, especially if your business is an SME. Traditional work experience placements were once time consuming and complicated to deliver, taking people away from their normal duties and adding to their workload, but things have changed. A real plus of offering a virtual or blended programme, and of the need for schools to meet the requirements of the Gatsby Benchmarks, is that this no longer has to be the case. Schools have a duty to ensure their pupils have experiences of the workplace (BM6), so may have the resources to make it happen. They want and need you, so it is in their interest to make it as easy as possible for you to work with them.

Identifying potential gaps in your organisation's current team and future workforce can help shape your programme. Your long term strategic plan may involve developing and increasing the variety of services you offer for example. What skills will you need from your team and what type of people will



you be looking to recruit in the future to provide them? What will you want and need from your workforce?

Are you seeking a more diverse and inclusive workforce? You can tailor your offer to attract young people from a broader demographic. 45% of employers say that having work experience is critical when recruiting young people (UK Commission for Employment & Skills). So you'll be strengthening the general employment prospects for the whole pool, and it's a pool which you may need to dip into in new ways as your business grows and develops.

You may have technical resources at your disposal which would enable you to deliver a vibrant and immersive virtual experience for hundreds of young people at once, or physical and educational resources which you have already created.

Do you already have a great social media presence, or is it something you need to develop? Students would be great at setting up and working on your Instagram or Twitter feed. Or do you need a research project into the environmental impact of your sector to form part of your longer

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term strategic planning? Remember - the work experience students are also a resource and given the right tasks will contribute meaningfully to your organisation - great for their skills development and a fresh insight for your business!

External Research

Look outwards to your local and regional and national community, as well as the sector in which you work.

Exploring potential partnerships with local schools is the logical first step. They're on your doorstep, may have connections with your business already and can be easy to access. The possibility of building a meaningful and long lasting relationship with them is real and valuable - to them, you and your





community as a whole. Schools are looking for ways of working with businesses which will allow for cross curricular activity and help them meet more of the Gatsby Benchmarks - if your programme touches on more than one subject, so much the better. You may have a school nearby with a particular specialism which relates to your business.

It's worth reaching out to them, via their Careers Leader, to build a connection and look at ways in which you can co-create a programme which will integrate seamlessly with the whole school curriculum. [Get in touch with us](#) to find out how we can help you connect with your Local Enterprise Partnership and Careers Hub.

The upside of virtual work experience is that geography is less important than it was. You may feel that you'd like to work with a school in a completely different type of geographical environment to you - after all, there will be students there who would not normally engage with businesses outside their immediate location but who might relish the thought of moving from the urban to the rural, or vice versa. Work with your LEP and local Careers Hub to create just that.

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Case study 1



'My Week of Work' was developed by the CEC in partnership with Oak National Academy and LearnLive in June 2020. It provided a week of online lessons to replace Year 10 work experience and hosted more than 50 live broadcasts from employers including Microsoft, NHS, BAE Systems, Rolls Royce, Balfour Beatty and the Royal Air Force. More than 750 schools and nearly 120,000 young people took part. You can read more about this in The CEC's [Careers in Context Employers Guide](#) on the Further Reading page.

Be mindful of digital inclusion. Recent research by the Sutton Trust and Teacher Tapp found that 7% of UK state school teachers report that more than a third of their pupils do not have adequate access to technology for participating in online learning.

There are many regional business organisations who you can work with to maximise the impact of your work experience programme. Your Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) will be invaluable for finding out what local schools and colleges need most now. Employers can link to their LEP via the CEC. Go to our [Contributors](#) page to find out more how employers can work with The CEC.

The Careers and Enterprise Company document '[Careers in Context 2020 - Employer's Guide](#)' will also help you identify ways in which you can deliver a programme which helps schools and colleges to meet the requirements of the Gatsby Benchmarks.

Investigate how other businesses in your sector have delivered virtual or blended work experience

programmes. Virtual tours, online presentations, guest speakers, interviews and online team activities - all are effective and interactive experiences. There are some great examples which will inspire you.

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So, you now have a picture of where you are, what is needed and some ideas about what is possible, both logistically and technically. To find out more about scope and planning, get inspired by other employers and their experiences, go to [Step 1: Scope](#) of The Careers & Enterprise's Step By Step Guide.

Case study 2

Lendlease Sustainability Work Placement Programme

Lendlease developed and designed a five-day Virtual Work Experience to raise awareness of the impact of Single Use Plastics (SUP) on the environment, people and wildlife. The programme was designed to enable young people to become Single Use Plastic Ambassadors and identify ways in which they can promote best practice and new ideas for reducing and/or eliminating the use of SUP in their school, business and community environments. The programme has been developed in partnership with the Careers and Enterprise Company Cornerstone Employer group in Birmingham and has been accredited by the Engineering Design Trust for the Industrial Cadet Silver Level award for all students who complete the five-day programme.

The five-day work placement was delivered using



the MS Teams platform, which is operated by school staff so that there was a clear moderation system in place, ensuring that clear safeguarding measures were in place. Six students from Eden Boys School participated in the programme.

The programme included guest speakers from supply chain partners, virtual tours, and interviews with team members to find out more about their roles and personal branding advice. They finally prepared and delivered presentations to a panel of employer representatives from Lendlease and their supply chain partners, outlining their ideas for raising awareness of and reducing the use of SUPs.





Give Young People Experience of Your Workplace

The digital guide

Need support to create a great experience of your workplace programme?
Visit <http://wex.careersandenterprise.co.uk> for a practical Step By Step guide,
downloadable resources and further information, plus further supporting research
reports and white papers. All in one place!

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