



We're here
for young
wheelchair
users



Work Placements

For young wheelchair users

Young wheelchair users face a number of barriers when transitioning from education to employment, including physical accessibility of both workplaces and public transport networks, stereotyped attitudes of employers and colleagues, and a lack of information about their rights as a disabled person in the workplace.

Young wheelchair users consistently report to us that they are not encouraged or supported to undertake work placements by their school. Whilst it is often the pupil's responsibility to source their own work placement, young wheelchair users may need additional support from school colleagues to enable this to happen. We hear stories from young wheelchair users losing out on the vital skills and life experiences work placements can provide, we also know that some school colleagues can be unsure where to start or how to support young wheelchair users in organising work placements.

We want to make sure young wheelchair users have the same opportunities to develop their skills through work placements as their non-disabled counterparts. We have produced some child centred resources, approved by our Youth Board, to support schools, young wheelchair users and employers. They can be used by schools to support the organisation of work placements or shared with young wheelchair users and their families. They include:

- **Planning essentials for schools:** a document outlining key steps to consider based on the needs of the young wheelchair user.
- **Things to think about:** a document for young wheelchair users that outlines questions to think about to inform the ***Planning essentials for schools document***.
- **Briefing for employers:** a document to share with employers providing details of the placement including pupil details and any agreed adjustments.

There is also a **Helpful Links and Resource** section.



Planning essentials for schools

Please use this document as a guide to plan and support inclusive, accessible and meaningful work placements for young wheelchair users. This tool is designed to support planning, build pupil confidence and promote partnerships with inclusive employers. Involving the pupil at every stage is essential. The earlier work placements are arranged the more likely they are to be successful.

Quick Summary

10 planning essentials checklist

Use this checklist to ensure your placement planning is inclusive and effective.

- | | | |
|-----|--|--------------------------|
| 1. | Have early conversations with the young wheelchair user about interests, career goals and support needs. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. | Support the young wheelchair user to identify inclusive, accessible placement options. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. | Encourage early contact with employers to discuss physical and role accessibility. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. | Ensure a workplace visit and or virtual pre-meeting is arranged for the pupil. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. | Identify access and travel logistics. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. | Agree a named workplace mentor and school contact. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. | Complete a risk assessment. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. | Adjustments are agreed with the employer. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9. | Include review points during placement with the pupil and the employer. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 10. | Have post-placement debriefs and feedback with the young wheelchair user and employer. | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Task / Question**Completed****Action / Notes****Early Planning**

Discussion with young wheelchair user to discuss career interests and work goals?

Have needs been identified by the young wheelchair user?

Have inclusive local employers or remote/virtual options been explored and discussed with the young wheelchair user?

Liaising with Employers

Has the school contacted employers to discuss access and adjustments?

Has the employer confirmed their willingness to make any reasonable adjustments?

Has the young wheelchair user been introduced to the employer and visited the site beforehand?

Has the employer briefing been shared with employer and young wheelchair user?

Access & Travel Planning

Is the workplace accessible (entrances, toilets, layout)? Has this been confirmed by the young wheelchair user?

Have travel plans been tested for safety, timing and accessibility?

Is school support needed and /or available?

Workplace Support & Safety

Is there a named staff contact at the placement that has been shared with the young wheelchair user?

Has a workplace risk assessment and PEEP been completed?

Are there plans for medication, personal care, rest breaks or working patterns (e.g earlier finish times, working from home etc.) completed?

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| Is the young wheelchair user confident in who to speak to if something goes wrong? | | |
| During the Placement | | |
| Has the school checked in at least once during the placement? | | |
| Are adjustments being implemented as agreed? | | |
| Has the pupil felt included and valued in the placement team? | | |
| Post-Placement Review | | |
| Has a debrief been held with the young wheelchair user to reflect on experience? | | |
| Has the employer given feedback on the young wheelchair user's contributions? | | |
| Have next steps or development goals been agreed with the young wheelchair user? | | |
| Other considerations | | |
| Please complete this section with any additional considerations raised by the young wheelchair user. | | |

Things to think about

A work experience placement can be really exciting, but it can also feel daunting and overwhelming. We have put this information together to help think about what you will need to complete a work placement. The idea is to use these points to think through what you will need and get your thoughts together when talking through your career goals and your needs at school.

What should happen before the placement?

- Someone at school will ask you about what kind of job or experience you would like.
- You will help choose the type of placement or workplace.
- The school will talk to you, and your family if that would help, about your access needs and support.
- You will visit the workplace and / or meet someone from there before starting (this can be online or face to face).
- You will agree any adjustments or changes you will need.
- Travel plans will be discussed with you (how you will get there and back safely).
- You will be told who your main contacts are at school and at the placement, so you know who to speak to if needed.

Do you need any changes or adjustments?

- This will be completely unique to you, and whatever your needs are make sure you tell your school as they will help you when talking through these with the employer. Changes or adaptations could be:
- Working in an accessible part of the building.
- Flexible hours, part-time hours, part-time or fully remote working.
- A space to rest or take medication.
- 1-1 support to go along with you, or someone to attend to help with taking medication etc. at certain points in the day.
- Extra support with travel – you may need to speak with your Local Authority about this.

What should happen during and after?

- Someone from your school will check in with you during the placement to make sure you are ok.
- You will be told who to speak to if something doesn't feel right.
- You will get a chance to reflect on what went well and what didn't.
- You will get feedback from the employer about your placement.



Questions to think about

Before you discuss your work placement with someone at your school it will help if you think about these questions first so your school can support you, and the employer beforehand.

Hopefully these questions will also help you identify what changes or adjustments would suit you. There is also space to add other questions that are important to you, add them in so you remember to ask.



Question

Your answer

| | |
|--|--|
| What type of job or area of work do you want to learn more about? | |
| What do I want to try or find out about what work at this placement? | |
| Is there anything that worries me about the placement? | |
| What will help me feel confident, safe, and included? | |
| Who can I talk to if I need help during the day? | |
| How will I know if the employer thinks I am good on my placement? (Something about asking for feedback /hearing what they've achieved?) | |
| | |
| | |

Briefing for employers

Thank you for supporting a young person's career journey. This briefing includes essential information and outlines how you can create a welcoming, accessible placement that supports both confidence and contribution.

| | |
|---|--|
| Name of Pupil | |
| Placement dates and times | |
| Key school contact (Name and phone number) | |
| Key workplace contact (Name and phone number) | |
| Adjustments agreed | |
| Risk Assessment and Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) completed and shared with those who need it | |
| Outline of roles that young person will undertake that have been agreed | |
| Emergency contact information | |

Good Practice Reminders

- Assign a clear point of contact who can welcome the pupil, answer questions and check in regularly.
- Be clear about expectations and workplace routines.
- Offer regular constructive feedback and create space for the pupil to reflect.

What to Do If...

If you have any urgent concerns during the placement, please contact the school immediately. We will also ask for feedback after the placement about what went well or anything we could improve. Thank you.

Helpful Links and Resources

| Link | What it covers |
|---|--|
| Examples of reasonable adjustments in practice EHRC | Examples of reasonable adjustments provided by the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC). |
| Access to Work funding for support in placements (16+) | Details of the Access to Work fund for disabled people to find and stay in employment. A key information source to share with young wheelchair users transitioning to employment. |
| The Whizz Kidz A-Z of going to university Whizz Kidz | A guide full of tips and things to think about when going to university. Written by young wheelchair users for young wheelchair users. |
| Council for Disabled Children: Factsheet #2: Work Experience | In this resource young people identify themes relating to the barriers they often face and offers some advice on supporting a successful work experience placement. |
| National Development Team for Inclusion: Preparing for Adulthood | A variety of resources for supporting young people into employment. |
| Careers Fairs and Events Youth Employment UK | Youth Employment UK's careers event finding tool. Additional resources are also available on the website including Free Careers Lesson Plans for Educators. |
| What history tells us about getting a job as a young wheelchair user today Whizz Kidz | The past, present and future of disability and employment with writer Celestine Fraser plus tips for today's workplace from our Youth Board. |
| Space is for Everyone News Whizz Kidz Whizz Kidz | A news tory outlining the European Space Agency announcing they are training the first-ever parastronaut in a big step towards allowing people with physical disabilities go into space. |



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