

## **Work experience – getting rid of the red tape**

Red tape has been slashed around work experience. As the [DfE's guidance](#) points out, much of the health and safety practice that grew up around work experience reflected custom and practice rather than legal requirements.

Employers who already employ under-18s have to carry out a risk assessment so they don't need to carry out an additional assessment for work experience placements. And [a deal brokered with the insurance industry](#) means that it won't affect their employer's liability premiums either.

Schools naturally feel a "duty of care" for their students but if an employer already employs young people all that is usually needed to meet that duty is a short telephone conversation and an exchange of emails. Since 2012 [there has also been no requirement for providers to carry out a Disclosure and Barring \(formerly CRB\) check](#) on employers/ staff offering work experience.

As chair of the [HSE Judith Hackitt made clear](#) "work placement arrangements are too often seen as over-bureaucratic and burdensome... We must tackle this and stop over-interpretation of the law.

"Schools and colleges... should not be second-guessing employers' risk assessments or requiring additional paperwork. "

[Ofsted underlined this in its most recent guidance](#) that said although inspectors had a duty to be mindful of health and safety, they were not health and safety inspectors. It added: "Inspectors will have regard to new guidance from the Health and Safety Executive about the relative responsibilities of the training provider and the employer which emphasises the following:

- The employer has primary responsibility for the health and safety of the learner and should be managing any risks
- The training provider should take reasonable steps to satisfy itself that the employer is managing the risks

- The training provider should keep checks in proportion to the level of risk, which will vary in relation to the type of working environment involved.
- The provider should avoid seeking paperwork for assurance purposes, using an exchange of emails or correspondence to provide an audit trail if this is needed.
- The provider shouldn't try to 'second guess' the employer's risk assessment by undertaking their own"

Find out more from the HSE:

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/youngpeople/workexperience/cutting-bureaucracy.htm>

The Department for Education:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/268624/document.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/268624/document.pdf)