

Business guide to LifeSkills



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Welcome to LifeSkills

“Too many young people in the UK don’t have access to the skills or opportunities they need to realise their potential when they leave school. Businesses, schools and families need to work together so that the next generation have the support they need to get ahead.”

“That is why we have launched LifeSkills to provide free resources and connect young people with work experience opportunities that will transform their outlook and confidence for the future. Through this exciting programme thousands of young people will be offered training and work experience that could change their lives.”

Ashok Vaswani, Chief Executive, Barclays Retail and Business Banking

LifeSkills, created with Barclays

Young people are the workforce of the future and bring with them new skills and a fresh perspective that can spark surprising and valuable insights into your business.

Businesses require young people to be quick learners and integrate smoothly into the workplace, but this in turn requires a broad range of skills and a real understanding of the working environment. With just under one million young people unemployed, the challenge of moving between school and employment has never been greater.

LifeSkills, created with Barclays, is an education programme that equips young people with the skills, information and opportunities they need for work while at the same time connecting businesses like yours with great young talent.

About LifeSkills

LifeSkills is a new programme designed to give young people in the UK access to the skills, information and opportunities they need to make the transition into work. It aims to improve employment prospects and provide access to online content, school workshops, events, work placements and apprenticeships.

The programme focuses on three critical areas – people skills, work skills and money skills – that give students the confidence they need to take their first steps in the working world. This ensures that the young people who come to you through LifeSkills are engaged and prepared for the workplace.

A central part of the programme is genuine, worthwhile work experience placements for 14 to 17 year olds. Students will have worked through some practical sessions either at school or through online modules on everything from CV writing and interview techniques to communication and time management.

It will be teachers, rather than students or parents, who use the LifeSkills site to match the young person’s ambitions with the available placements.

Work experience is vitally important in helping young people successfully make the transition between education and employment. This guide will take you through the steps you need to take to offer a work experience placement as part of the LifeSkills programme.

6 reasons to offer work experience

1. You could be someone's lucky break

Young people are looking for a chance to shine in a very tough environment. By offering a work placement you'll give a student an experience that could dramatically improve their career prospects.

2. There are lots of things students can do

The LifeSkills programme suggests tasks to fill a student's time productively so that they acquire skills they'll return to for years to come. This could be critiquing a team meeting, conducting a customer survey or getting stuck into a mini-project.

3. It's an opportunity to learn...

Make the most of having a young person with you. What can you learn from them? You might find that a student can help your business with an insight into young people's buying habits, or social networking, or helping your staff get more out of the technology available to them.

4... and pass on your experience

You have a collection of valuable first-hand experiences, about work, business, life... Who better to tutor the next generation than you? This form of mentoring can be immensely satisfying.

5. You might spot a potential star

There aren't many better ways to find your latest recruit or a future apprentice than to have a good look at them in the workplace for a few days.

6. Building a positive profile for your business

Developing relationships with schools and becoming active in the community helps build a positive image for your business and can raise its profile in the local area.

Before you offer a placement

7 traits of successful placements

A brilliant work placement – one that works for you and the student – is easier to put together than you might think. Just keep it simple with a series of tasks that are within the student's abilities. You want them to leave with a sense of achievement and a few useful insights into the world of work. This is what you're aiming for:

Work experience opportunities can vary in length, but for 14 – 17 year olds typically take place over a taster day, a week or a fortnight. It may be more suitable for a busy business to offer a taster day to a student rather than a full week, and similarly some students may find a taster day an easier introduction to the workplace.

1. **More than admin.** Tea making and administration are both important – and we've all done them – but they're not enough to fill a meaningful work placement. The student needs to be involved with the day-to-day tasks performed in your business.
2. **Variety.** A placement that allows the student to meet people across the business or see a range of tasks performed will be a lot more interesting than one that doesn't.
3. **Teamwork.** Whatever you can do to make the student feel part of the team will be time well spent.
4. **What it's like to be the boss.** Even the most democratic business structures have bosses. Help the student understand how to behave around them by allowing them to sit in with someone senior for a period of time.
5. **Customers.** As learning exercises go, there's nothing quite like meeting customers and seeing first-hand what they expect when they hand over their cash.
6. **The bigger picture.** Help the student understand that your business is just one element of a network that includes suppliers, the local community and the national economy.
7. **Careers advice.** Once you've had a chance to size up the student and their skills, help them achieve their ambitions by sharing your experience and advice.

When and how long?

Think of a work placement not as a marathon stint, more a lively sprint.

- How long should it be? Work experiences for 14 to 17-year-olds can last a day, a week or a fortnight. Some students find a taster day is enough, but very often schools prefer a week. (Remember you're free to set the length of your placement according to the needs of your business.)
- The best time of year. Many schools encourage their students to complete work placements in June or September although they could take place at any time of year, so if you are able to be flexible on the dates that always helps. If your business is a very small one, do take time to think about the moment in the year that suits your firm best.

Paperwork and legal requirements

Every business that offers a placement has to comply with a few rules and make sure they're properly insured. Here's a quick overview of what you need to be aware of (full details and sample forms for all these requirements are in the 'Paperwork' section at the end of this guide).

Is my workplace suitable? There are a number of workplaces where young people can't work and where placements cannot be offered to them. It's mostly common sense – for example, if the placement involved heading out to sea on a ship, driving cranes or working with hazardous chemicals.

- **What are the risks?** If you've never had a student on work placement or employed anyone under 18 you might need to update your risk assessment. A parent or teacher might also want to come and do their own assessment.
- **Do I need extra insurance?** If you've already employed someone under 18 you should have the relevant employer's liability insurance. It is worth getting in touch with your insurance provider to check as the teacher might want to ask about that part of the policy. (It's highly unlikely your business would be responsible for the student as they travel to or from work as this is done in their personal time. However, you may be liable if the student was travelling in work time on your behalf. As ever, if you're not sure, do check with your insurer).
- **Do I need to carry out criminal record checks?** The guidelines state that only in about 1% of cases will you and your staff need to be checked by the Disclosure and Barring Service before working with students aged 14 to 17 on a work placement. If you want more information on this please discuss this with the teacher or refer to the 'Criminal Records Check' section later in this guide.

Someone to supervise

Someone has to take responsibility for the placement and to be the point of contact for the teacher and student. It could be you, a manager or supervisor. Whoever it is, they should be the point of contact for teacher and student on your placement listing.

You might also need to assign a buddy – someone in addition to the supervisor who can relate to the student, provide moral support and help them understand some of the softer, more social aspects of the workplace.

During the placement

Ahh, so that's what they could do...

Here are some ideas to help you fill a student's day with a few tasks that'll open their eyes to the realities of the workplace. And remember, a little planning, especially for the first day, will go a long way towards ensuring the placement is successful for you and the student.

Five every-day events.

You know those normal parts of the working day? Like team meetings, or dealing with customers, or placing an order with suppliers? They'll all be completely new territory for a student. Get them to sit in on five tasks, asking them to pay attention to what happens and how people behave. In the case of the team meeting, for example, how does the leader speak to other members of the team? Do they give everyone a chance to speak? How do they convey confidence and authority? Ask the student to jot their thoughts down in their work experience log (reminding them that if you're the team leader, this is a good chance for them to exercise a bit of workplace diplomacy!)

Great for: 'More than admin', 'Variety', 'Teamwork'

A mini-project.

Young people love to get stuck into a project, and this one will help your student understand how your business fits into the bigger picture. Ask them to think about the product attributes that customers are prepared to pay money for; how you advertise; the suppliers you work with; the competitors you're up against; how do you contribute to the local and national economies?

Great for: 'The bigger picture'

A customer survey.

There's nothing quite like understanding customers to get a feel for the world of work. Give the student a manageable research project. Ask them to speak to a few real customers with your standard customer survey as a template (if this would play well with customers) or staff (if there's a chance customers might not appreciate being contacted).

Great for: 'More than admin', 'Customers'

Staff consultations.

Ask your student to prepare a list of questions they can put to three members of your team about their career choices. Tell the student that to do this task well, they'll need to build a rapport with their interviewee, be flexible enough to allow the conversation to stray from the script if the information is useful, but assertive enough to bring the interviewee back to the point if necessary.

Great for: 'More than admin', 'Variety', 'Teamwork', 'What it's like to be the boss', 'Career advice'

A CV.

Have the student write their CV (although as this placement could be your student's first experience of work, creative license might be needed here). To add an extra layer of realism, ask the student to create the CV with a fake job in mind, then give them a mock interview for that job. This is a perfect opportunity to build their knowledge and confidence.

Great for: 'Career advice'

The perfect ending

It would really help the student if you can find a little time before they leave to...

Speak to the teacher... It's likely that the teacher will want to pop in for a visit, or make contact over the phone towards the end of the placement. They'll be interested in the student's performance and perhaps the placement itself.

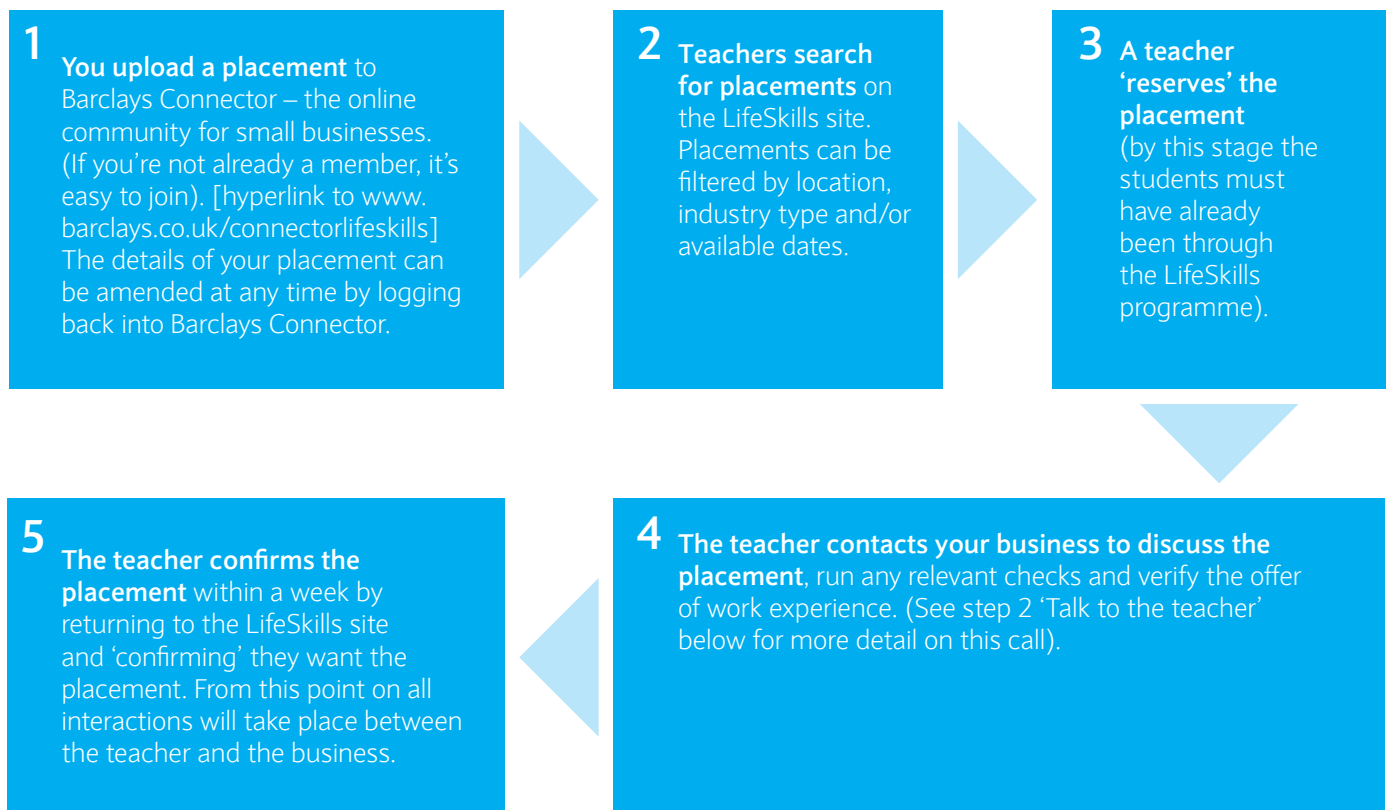
...and the student. On the last day, try to sit down and talk with the student. Use this time to:

- Talk about their career goals and how they could achieve their ambitions.
- Go through the CV they produced as one of their tasks, making suggestions about layout and how it could be improved.
- Read their work experience log. Ask the student a few questions about their time with you to help shape your next placement. For example, what did they learn about your business? Which of their tasks was the most enjoyable? And which was the most difficult?

Your Next Steps

1. Upload a placement – what to expect

Getting involved with LifeSkills couldn't be easier. Here's how to register your placement.



2. Talk to the teacher

What the teacher might ask you

The teacher will want to satisfy themselves that students are not exposed to health and safety risks and that a suitable risk assessment procedure has been carried out. They should let you know about any paperwork they will need completed and they may ask for a copy of the employer's liability insurance policy.

They'll also want to gain an understanding of the placement, ensure all the relevant consents have been obtained and learn about the activities the student will undertake. Many teachers will want to visit the workplace where the student will be located.

Most teachers will arrange a visit during the placement. They may also ask you to support the student by completing an assessment on them. Finally, they may want to call you after the placement to get your feedback on how the student performed.

What you might ask the teacher

The call with the teacher before the placement is confirmed is your moment to get all the information you need on the student and to set expectations of what you require. Here are some of the areas you may want to explore:

- **ID.** Do you need ID from the student or has your business any screening requirements? If so, notify the teacher on this call, specifying whether there is anything to complete before the placement can be confirmed, and / or anything the student needs to bring on their first day.
- **Confidentiality.** Does the placement require students to adhere to a confidentiality agreement before the placement is confirmed? Is there a form for students to complete? A sample confidentiality agreement is included later in this guide.
- **Behaviour.** Are there any general conduct rules that the student should comply with? Make the teacher aware of any rules specific to your workplace and go through this with the student when they start. Students may have never been in a workplace environment, and may be as young as 14, so explain this as clearly as possible.
- **Background.** You should discuss the student attending the placement with the teacher to ensure you're comfortable with the young person who is to participate. Any medical or behavioural issues that could be of relevance should be addressed at this time.
- **Contact details.** Ask for a contact at the school should you need to speak to anyone during the placement. You should also get the student's contact details.
- **Attendance/absence notification processes.** Let the teacher know the student's working hours, as well as the procedure for reporting absence. The student should inform both their placement supervisor and their teacher if they are absent.

3. Expect a call from the student

Once a placement has been confirmed, some teachers ask their students to also contact the business to introduce themselves. This can be a valuable part of the work experience process – but should not happen before you have agreed the placement with the teacher.

Make sure you exchange contact details and tell the student about:

- What time you'd like them to arrive, who to ask for and where to go
- Working hours
- Lunch arrangements / coffee breaks
- Dress code

4. Read our FAQs

What happens if a student falls ill at work?

If a student becomes ill at your workplace you should contact the student's teacher to tell them that the student needs to be picked up and returned to school or home. The teacher will be responsible for arranging the collection of the student.

Are students visited by their teachers?

All teachers will either telephone or visit your workplace to discuss and agree the opportunity before the placement is confirmed. Teachers may wish to conduct additional visits – they might pop in to find out how things went, for example – but if they do they'll arrange this with the student's supervisor.

Do students need to have additional breaks to regular staff?

You should ensure the student is given regular breaks, though these can be fitted around their tasks and supervisor's/ buddy's schedule. This can be discussed in advance with their teacher.

What happens if a student doesn't show up for work experience?

If a student fails to show up at the arranged time, it will be your responsibility to notify the teacher. The teacher should attempt to find the student and get them to the workplace, but it will be your decision as to whether the student is allowed to continue with their placement.

What do I do if my student does something inappropriate at work?

If there are any behavioural/conduct issues you should report them to the student's teacher. Incidents will be treated very seriously and could result in the student's removal from the LifeSkills programme. If a student needs to be removed from site then you need to call the student's teacher who will make the necessary arrangements.

What if a student is inappropriately dressed?

If you have any problems with a student's clothes please contact their teacher. (As prevention is always better than cure, do explain your business' dress code to the student before they start the placement.)

Who is legally responsible for the student while they are on work experience?

You will be responsible for the student while they are at work, and if they travel during work time for the purposes of the placement. It's highly unlikely you will be liable when they are travelling to and from the workplace (as this is deemed to be personal time). You will need to ensure your employers' liability insurance covers students while at work and that a full risk assessment has been completed. A sample risk assessment form is included in this guide, but you should use existing business processes and paperwork where this exists.

5. Spread the word!

Work experience placements like yours are essential to the success of the LifeSkills programme. Quite simply, without them, LifeSkills would not exist. So, if you know someone in your business network who would be interested in helping young people take their first steps in the workplace, and who would value an introduction to great young business talent, why not send them this guide?

Paperwork – the detail

The complete list of excluded workplaces

Here is a list of those workplaces where work experience placements will not be offered to young people through the LifeSkills programme.

Type of work/industry	Restrictions - Age below which opportunity cannot take place
Work on any sea going ship or boat	Below school leaving age
Work in a cinema, theatre, discotheque, dance hall or nightclub – including box office, kiosk, franchised coffee shop in cinema or theatre.	Below school leaving age
Delivery of milk – (in some areas)	Below school leaving age
Delivery of fuel oils	Below school leaving age
Work in a petrol filling station	Under 16
Cooking in a commercial kitchen	Below school leaving age
Working 2 or more metres above ground or below floor level	Below school leaving age
Work on roofs	Below school leaving age
Door to door selling / collection / canvassing	Below school leaving age
Telephone sales	Below school leaving age
Work in premises solely or mainly involved in the sale of alcohol	Under 18
Sale or delivery of alcohol except in sealed containers (as per licensing act 2003 and relevant bylaws)	Under 18
Residential care / residential nursing	Under 18

Type of work/industry	Restrictions - Age below which opportunity cannot take place
Work which is beyond the Young Person's physical or psychological capacity	Any age
Work involving harmful exposure to toxic or carcinogenic substances (e.g. asbestos, rubber manufacture)	Any age
Exposure to harmful physical, biological or chemical agents (implications for hair dressing, laboratories etc.)	Any age – except when appropriate risk assessment and training has been carried out
Locomotive driving and the driving of cranes in docks	All
Exposure to medical hazards (e.g. sharps)	All
Vitreous enamelling on metal or glass	All
Harmful exposure to radiation	All
Work involving a risk which cannot be recognised or avoided by young persons because of their lack of attention to safety or lack of experience or training; e.g. employment involving the use of sharp knives or slicers will be prohibited	All
Work in which there is a risk to health from extreme cold or heat, noise or vibration.	All
Adult entertainment industry	All
Gambling (casinos, bingo, lotteries, betting shops, amusement arcades, fairgrounds)	All
Slaughtering/butchering	All
Tattooing/piercing	All
Sale or manufacture of guns or ammunition	All
Collecting or sorting rags, scrap metal or refuse	All
Street trading	All
Agricultural work involving heavy strain/poisonous substances	All
Use of any dangerous plant or equipment	All
Cleaning of machinery in motion	All

Criminal record checks

The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) is responsible for processing requests for criminal record checks in England and Wales. The equivalent body in Scotland is Disclosure Scotland, and in Northern Ireland is Access NI. Their purpose is to prevent unsuitable people from working with vulnerable groups, including children.

There is no legal requirement to do a criminal record check on any adult working with young people on work experience. However, in the interests of safeguarding young people, the then Department for Children Schools and Families issued guidance in 2010.¹ The guidance suggested that there are only limited placements (about 1 per cent) which would require a criminal record check to be done. In the vast majority of placements, the employer will not have regular unsupervised access to the student and it is not recommended that checks should be done in such cases.

Teachers may consider requesting a criminal record check where:

- The student is identified as vulnerable
- The placement is for more than 15 days, especially where this involves:
 - Regular lone working with an employer over long periods (i.e. over half a day at a time – so a teacher is advised to consider requesting a check if the student is to be with a sole trader in the workplace)
 - Placements in particularly isolated environments
 - Placements involving a lot of travelling.

It is rare for a criminal record check to be needed on the young person themselves but a business should consider carrying out a criminal record check on a 14 to 19-year-old student if they might have unsupervised access to children or vulnerable adults, for example, in a nursery, school or care home. This will not be necessary if the student is supervised in such environments.

¹ Safeguarding young people on work-related learning including work experience (DCSF, 2010)

Employer's liability insurance

If you have already employed a young person under 18, your employer's liability insurance should cover young people. The teacher will want to see a copy of the employer's liability insurance policy, or at least the section relating to young people aged under 18.

If you have not previously employed someone under 18, or are unsure whether your insurance is appropriate, you should get in touch with your insurance provider.

While you may be liable for the student if they travel for work reasons while on the placement, it's highly unlikely the business will be responsible for students while they are travelling to and from work (as this is deemed to be personal time). You should check with the student's teacher (or the Local Education Authority) to establish if the school has its own insurance arrangements to cover their journey to and from the placement.

Barclays terms and conditions

In order to take part in the LifeSkills programme, employers will need to agree they understand, and to adhere to, the following guidelines:

- Barclays will use the personal and business information you provide to administer the LifeSkills programme and to help the LifeSkills participants communicate with one another.
- Barclays may also use information you provide to carry out regulatory checks on you and/or your business and meet its obligations to any relevant regulatory authority. For these purposes, Barclays may need to pass your information to third parties, including to its service providers or agents, on the understanding that your information is kept confidential.
- Prior to uploading the work experience placements you provide, Barclays may review opportunities offered and may remove those it considers inappropriate from Barclays Connector and LifeSkills. Placements may also be removed following feedback from users.
- You understand that your work experience opportunities will be made available to teachers registered with LifeSkills. Teachers may wish to contact you, or arrange to visit your business, prior to arranging work placements.
- Work placements are offered to students between 14 and 17-years-old. All details in relation to the placements are to be agreed between the teacher responsible for the students and you/your business in advance.
- You acknowledge that young people on work experience are not employees of Barclays.
- Barclays excludes its liability to the full extent permitted by law, in relation to the interaction between you/your company, teachers, and the work placements undertaken by students.
- You must ensure that your work experience opportunity meets all necessary health, safety, insurance and safeguarding responsibilities in relation to the participants.
- You have read this guide.

Sample risk assessment form:

Name of Young Person:	Age:
Home Address:	
Business/Organisation Address:	

I/we will ensure that:

- The work is within the young person's physical or psychological capability
- Information on what to do in an emergency will be given i.e. fire procedures, first aid, accident reporting and other health and safety induction training
- Any specific risks will be brought to his/her attention
- Adequate supervision will be provided at all times
- Display screen equipment and manual handling training will be undertaken, and the appropriate risk assessments completed, if the young person is likely to undertake these types of duties
- Exposure to hazardous substances will be reduced or eliminated (e.g. care will be taken when replacing toner in photocopiers and printers)
- Any known physical needs have been/will be taken into account
- Colleagues will be made aware of his/her presence and reminded to keep a watchful eye over him/her and intervene if they feel safety is being compromised.

Significant hazards to which the Young Person may be exposed:	
Action required:	
Additional comments:	
Risk assessment undertaken by Name (block capitals):	Signature: Date:

Sample confidentiality agreement

Confidentiality Undertaking

To the provider of my work experience placement:

I recognise that during the period of my work placement at your workplace, confidential information relating to your business, its subsidiaries, holding companies and affiliates, clients and any third parties will come into my possession.

I accordingly agree that at all times during my work placement I shall treat all such information as confidential and at the end of my work placement I will not, whether alone or jointly with others, divulge, use or otherwise disseminate such information to any third party.

I acknowledge that this confidentiality restriction is reasonable and necessary for the protection of your business and its clients provided always that this undertaking shall not apply to such parts of the information as:

- Are or become publicly available otherwise than through any fault or action on my part
- Were known by or made available to me on a non-confidential basis before being supplied to me in the course of my work placement
- Becomes available to me on a non-confidential basis from a source which is not prohibited from disclosing that information to me by any contractual, legal or fiduciary obligation to you and/or
- Are required by law, court order or any applicable regulatory body to be disclosed by me.

I agree to abide by all your relevant business policies as notified to me during my work placement.

Student's signature:

Dated:

Print name here:

Company providing the work experience placement:

LifeSkills

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