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workbook



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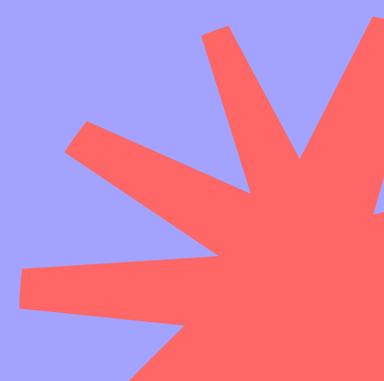
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Host Workbook for Work Experience in the Creative Industries

Thank you for considering or offering a creative industries work experience placement for young people.

By hosting, you are playing an important role in helping young people understand the world of work, build confidence, develop skills and imagine future possibilities, particularly within the creative industries. High-quality work experience has educational, social and economic value. It helps connect young people meaningfully to workplaces and opportunities, and it supports a growing national ambition to give every young person access to high-quality work experience during their education.

Creative industries are especially important in this picture. Not only are they a major contributor to the UK economy and a priority growth sector, but they also offer something broader: they help young people experience how ideas, people, processes and skills come together in real working environments, and see the value of communication, teamwork, initiative, problem-solving, organisation and creativity in practice. These are important not only for creative careers, but for many future pathways and for society more widely.

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This workbook is for creative businesses, employers, cultural organisations and other hosts offering creative industry work experience to young people.

It is designed to help you provide placements that are welcoming, meaningful, well-supported and safe, while keeping planning and delivery as straightforward as possible.



This workbook will help you to:

- plan clearly before the placement begins
 - support the young person during the placement
 - respond appropriately if problems or concerns arise
 - bring the placement to a positive and useful conclusion
- 

Young people will not all arrive equally prepared. Some may be confident and well-informed. Others may be nervous, quiet, unsure or need more help to settle in. Schools may also be working with significant pressures and constraints. A good placement does not depend on everything being perfect from the start. It depends on whether the young person feels expected, included, supported, safe and able to learn.

This workbook is intended to make hosting easier, not add to the workload. It should sit alongside your existing health and safety, insurance, safeguarding and workplace procedures, as well as any guidance agreed with schools or placement organisers. The checklists and prompts are designed to help you plan, supervise clearly and respond appropriately if problems arise.

The workbook is also shaped by work undertaken by students in developing the Five Pillars of High-quality Work Experience. These are the things that make a placement feel worthwhile and well organised. They represent a shared standard for what good work experience in the creative industries should provide when hosting a placement.

the five pillars

BELONGING

The host helps the young person feel welcomed, included and expected. They know who to go to and do not feel like they are in the way.

MEANING

The host helps the young person understand what they are doing and why it matters. Even small tasks should make sense and connect to real work.

SUPPORT

The host makes sure the young person knows who is helping them. They have guidance, supervision and someone they can ask if they are unsure.

SAFETY

The host makes sure the young person understands the rules, the boundaries, any hazards, and what to do in an emergency or if something does not feel right.

EXPERIENCE

The host helps the young person gain a hands-on insight into how creative work happens. They see how ideas, people, roles, processes and decisions come together in the workplace in real time.

As you move through this workbook, you are encouraged to return to these pillars. They are a simple way of checking: “Is this placement planned and working well? Is the young person getting what they need from it?”

Further guidance

This workbook is a short practical guide. Additional information about roles and responsibilities, safeguarding, planning, templates, references and external resources is available in the main Work Experience in the Creative Industries Toolkit.

PART 1. BEFORE THE PLACEMENT

Good preparation helps lay the foundations for belonging, support and safety from the start. It also makes a big difference to how confident, settled and included a young person feels when they arrive. A well-planned placement does not need to be complicated, but it should help the young person feel expected, safe and ready to take part.

CHECKLIST FOR HOSTS

The placement is planned clearly

- the placement arrangements have been confirmed with the school and internally with relevant staff
- a named contact and supervisor are in place
- the school knows who to contact
- arrival and reporting arrangements are clear
- timings, breaks, dress and essential items are clear

The young person's experience has been thought through

- there is a simple plan for what the young person will do and experience
- the placement does not assume prior workplace knowledge
- the placement includes meaningful activity and real insight into the organisation's work
- staff know they may need to explain things clearly and patiently
- the experience feels realistic, welcoming and age-appropriate

Safety, suitability and support are in place

- health and safety, safeguarding and risk arrangements have been considered
- important rules, boundaries and safety instructions are clear in advance
- known support, access, medical, communication or wellbeing needs have been shared
- relevant support strategies already known in school or other settings have been considered
- relevant needs linked to disability, health, communication, religion or belief, pregnancy, culture, dress or access have been considered respectfully
- enough information has been shared to plan appropriate support or adjustments
- the host has enough information to understand practical support needs in advance
- the young person is not expected to explain everything on the day without support
- there is a clear route for raising concerns or changes before the placement begins



Communication with the school is clear

- the host and school have agreed how to communicate
- any planned check-in or contact has been agreed in advance
- the host understands that schools may be managing multiple pressures around the placement
- any practical limitations, timings or working patterns have been clearly shared with the school



Where a young person has support needs, access requirements or other circumstances that may affect how they take part, it is important that relevant information is shared through the agreed school or organiser procedure before the placement begins. This may include support strategies that already help in school, communication preferences, access requirements, medical or wellbeing needs, or cultural or religious considerations. The aim is not to overcomplicate the placement, but to make sure the young person can take part safely, confidently and as fully as possible.

Why this matters

Young people, schools and hosts may all come into a placement with different expectations, pressures and levels of readiness. Some young people will be eager to get started, while others may need more time, reassurance or explanation. Schools may also be balancing a range of practical and safeguarding responsibilities around the placement. Hosts may have limited experience of offering work placements to young people in their organisation. Taking time to plan clearly and communicate well in advance can help reduce uncertainty and support a stronger start for everyone involved.

A well-prepared placement is more likely to feel calm, purposeful and supportive. It helps the young person feel expected and included, helps the school feel assured that the right arrangements are in place, and helps the host focus on what matters most: welcoming the young person, helping them understand how work happens in a creative organisation, supporting them to take part meaningfully, and giving them an experience they can learn from.



PART 2. DURING THE PLACEMENT

A young person's experience of the placement will often be shaped by how welcomed, included and supported they feel once they arrive. Clear communication, patient supervision and realistic expectations can make a significant difference.

CHECKLIST FOR HOSTS

The young person is welcomed and helped to settle in

- the young person is greeted and shown where to go on arrival
- they are introduced to the people they will be working with or alongside
- the purpose, structure and timing of the placement have been explained clearly
- they are told where key facilities are and who to speak to if they need help
- time is taken at the start to help them feel comfortable and included

The placement is explained clearly

- workplace expectations, routines and boundaries are explained in a clear and age-appropriate way
- any important safety information or instructions are shared clearly
- tasks are explained patiently and checked for understanding
- the young person is not expected to already know how the workplace works
- staff involved understand that questions, uncertainty or nervousness may be part of the experience

The young person is able to take part meaningfully

- the placement includes purposeful activity, not just passive observation
- the young person has opportunities to contribute, notice, ask questions and learn
- tasks are realistic and suitable for their age, confidence and level of experience
- the balance of activity feels manageable and supportive
- where appropriate, the young person is helped to understand why tasks matter and how they connect to the wider work of the organisation





Support and communication remain clear

- the young person knows who to speak to if they are unsure, worried or need help
- a named member of staff is checking in to see how things are going
- the school is contacted through the agreed route if an important issue, concern or change arises
- any communication with the school is carried out respectfully and proportionately
- the young person is not left to manage a problem or concern on their own

Problems are handled calmly and appropriately

- late arrival, uncertainty or under-preparedness are handled calmly
- anxiety, overwhelm or withdrawal are noticed and responded to supportively
- changes are explained clearly and communicated where needed
- issues affecting safety, wellbeing, behaviour or suitability are taken seriously
- misunderstandings are reframed positively rather than assumed to be disinterest

Why this matters

A good placement does not depend on everything running perfectly. Young people may need time to settle, may ask basic questions, or may need more reassurance than expected. What matters most is whether they feel welcomed, supported, safe and able to learn.

When hosts provide clear supervision, meaningful activity and a calm response to problems, the placement is more likely to feel positive and worthwhile for everyone involved. It helps the young person gain confidence and understanding, helps the school feel reassured, and helps the host create an experience that reflects the values and realities of the workplace.



PART 3. AFTER THE PLACEMENT

The end of a placement is an important part of the experience. A short conversation, a few words of feedback or a moment to reflect can help a young person make better sense of what they have done and what they have learned. It can also help the host reflect on the quality of the placement, strengthen future practice, and build a positive connection with a young person who may remain engaged with the organisation and speak positively about it in future.

Hosts may also find it helpful to reflect on the experience through the Five Pillars: did the young person feel welcomed, understand the work, feel supported, feel safe, and gain a realistic insight into working life?

CHECKLIST FOR HOSTS

The placement is brought to a clear and positive close

- time is set aside at the end of the placement or final day to bring the experience to a proper close
- the young person is thanked for their time, effort and contribution
- they are given a chance to ask any final questions and share reflections about the work and the host organisation
- they leave understanding that their participation and learning have mattered

The young person is helped to reflect

- the young person has an opportunity to talk about what they did, saw or took part in
- they are encouraged to reflect on what they enjoyed, found interesting or found challenging
- they are helped to recognise some of the skills, strengths or qualities they used or developed
- where appropriate, they are helped to see how the experience connects to future study, work or career ideas



Useful feedback is shared

- the young person receives simple, constructive feedback
- positive contribution, attitude or progress is recognised
- brief feedback is shared with the school where helpful
- the host has a chance to receive feedback on the placement
- useful concerns or learning points are communicated appropriately

The learning is used

- the host reflects briefly on what worked well
- any aspect to improve next time is noted
- feedback is used to improve future hosting where helpful
- useful planning or communication points are identified for future work with the school
- the organisation considers whether and how it might host again.

Why this matters

A short, thoughtful ending can make a significant difference to how a young person remembers and understands the placement. It can help them leave with a stronger sense of confidence, learning and achievement, and with a clearer understanding of what work in this kind of setting can involve.

It can also help schools build on the learning afterwards and help hosts understand how the placement was experienced by others. Even brief reflection and feedback can strengthen future relationships, improve future placements and make the experience more valuable for everyone involved.

