**Work Experience Programme**

The Work Experience Programme provides employers of all sizes with the opportunity to offer meaningful work experience which can provide a valuable contribution to the development of people’s employability skills and career aspirations.

The work experience placement may be within private, public, voluntary or community sector businesses or organisations. Placements must be organised in a variety of real work environments which help a jobseeker develop or update their work skills or habits. The emphasis must be to provide jobseekers with meaningful work experience which will be of real benefit to them in their journey towards employment.

The Work Experience Programme is open to 18-65 year olds who are unemployed or in receipt of benefits. Employers who provide a person with a work experience placement may receive an incentive payment of £250, and may also receive funding of up to £100 for certain costs incurred as a result of taking the placement on.

**Opportunity Guarantee**

The Opportunity Guarantee strand of the Work Experience Programme is for young people aged 18-24. Employers may provide Opportunity Guarantee placements where they will be in a position to offer the young person an interview for a job or apprenticeship at the end of the placement.

Employers who provide an Opportunity Guarantee placement will receive an additional £250 incentive payment at the end of the placement. Opportunity Guarantee can also link with JobStart which can provide government funding for a six-month job opportunity.

**Eligibility**

For the Work Experience Programme, employers need to be willing to host a work experience participant for a period of two to eight weeks.

For Opportunity Guarantee, employers need to be willing to host a participant for a period of thirteen weeks, be in a recruitment position and willing to offer participants an interview for a job or apprenticeship.

Employers will not be asked to make any payments to participants on the programme. Participants will receive an incentive payment of £10 per day from the Department for Communities, and will retain their benefit entitlement during the period of work experience.

**Benefits**

There are a range of benefits for your business to taking someone on work experience including:

* an opportunity to develop the supervisory and management skills of your workforce
* it can enhance your public profile through supporting your local community and contributing to economic development in your local area
* you will be directly contributing to the development of people’s employability skills and career aspirations
* you can access the local labour market and explore a pool of hidden talent – people who offer enthusiasm and a fresh perspective to your business
* you can engage with someone on work experience on a trial basis before signing a contract of employment

**How to get involved**

Speak to an Employer Adviser in your local [Jobs and Benefits Office](https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/contacts/jobs-and-benefits-offices) or a Client Executive if you are a large or public sector employer. Before offering placements employers will be asked to sign an agreement setting out the terms and conditions of the Work Experience Programme. Employer Advisers will discuss the details of the Agreement with the employer and answer any questions you may have.

**Further Information**

[NI Business Info](https://www.nibusinessinfo.co.uk/content/work-experience-programme)

[NI Direct](https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/work-experience-programme)