

Work experience in the NHS

A toolkit for teachers and work placement organisers



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Foreword

NHS Careers is the information service for careers in the National Health Service (NHS) in England. The service consists of a telephone and email helpline, website, literature and supporting services for NHS employers, schools, colleges and careers advisers.

Step into the NHS aims to promote the broad range of careers in the NHS to secondary school and further education students. It includes a website, www.stepintothens.nhs.uk, a programme of ongoing communication with students and social media. The website includes a 'Smart guide to work experience' that offers support to students looking for placements. Step into the NHS also has resources for teachers and careers advisers including free teaching activities for use with 14 to 16 year-old learners and an annual schools' competition for students in years 8 and 9. More information is available at www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/teachers.

This toolkit provides background information and advice for schools and other organisations involved in arranging work experience for students in the NHS. We would like to thank everyone who gave their time to work with us on the production of this toolkit and the accompanying toolkit for employers.

NHS Careers is a service managed by NHS Employers on behalf of the Department of Health.

The NHS Careers team

Section 1

Not just doctors and nurses

More people in England work for the NHS than any other organisation. City by city, region by region, NHS trusts will always be among the largest local employers. This doesn't just mean doctors and nurses: it means healthcare assistants, business managers, clerical staff, domestics, engineers... over 350 different careers, each with a vital role to play in delivering a first class health service.

Across the NHS, there's a recognition that our future depends upon attracting the brightest and best-suited to the wide range of careers on offer. The starting point is to increase awareness among young people about how many different roles there are. Work experience is one way in which we can do this.

This toolkit gives teachers and education agencies some background to how the NHS works, the specific challenges that relate to organising work experience, and ideas and information about how you can work with us to grow the number of stimulating work experience programmes that are already happening in hospitals and other healthcare settings around the country.

How the NHS works

The NHS is a health service for everyone. To enable it to function effectively at a local level – and in different areas of care – it is divided into around 300 separate organisations. These organisations are chiefly:

- **Primary care clusters and clinical commissioning groups** – assess local health needs and commission the services to meet them.
- **Acute or foundation trusts** – provide hospital and outpatient treatment, and other services commissioned by primary care organisations to meet local population needs.
- **Ambulance trusts** – respond to 999 calls, transport patients, and provide out-of-hours care in some areas.

- **Mental health trusts** – provide specialist care for people with complex and severe mental health problems.
- **Care trusts** – coordinate health and social care services for individual users.

In addition, there are other significant employer groups:

- A range of **local primary care services** provided through GP practices, NHS walk-in centres, NHS Direct, dental practices, pharmacists and opticians.
- **Strategic health authorities (SHAs)** monitor the performance of trusts within their region and develop plans to improve performance and increase capacity.

Every NHS trust or organisation is run by its own management team with their own priorities and modes of operation. The NHS in your area may well be represented by at least three or four different trusts eg primary care, acute, mental health, ambulance. Any or all of these could be providing work experience opportunities for local young people.

Who works for the NHS

Doctors and nurses may be on the front line of providing treatment and care, but they are complemented by a wide range of allied health professionals (physiotherapists, dietitians, radiographers etc), healthcare assistants, healthcare scientists, porters, ward clerks, catering



and 'hotel services' staff, all who perform essential roles often working directly with patients. Behind the scenes, the NHS relies on staff whose work in administration, finance, IT, estates and maintenance and human resources keep the services running.

Hospitals employ by far the largest number of people in the NHS. However, increasing emphasis on primary care means that more people are working in community settings such as the primary care clusters, GP practices and other primary care services. Primary care clusters and clinical commissioning groups may also commission services from independent healthcare providers and not-for-profit organisations, whose staff, while not employed directly by the NHS, are working with NHS patients.

As well as being the country's largest employer, the NHS also has the most highly skilled workforce. All registered clinicians are qualified to degree or diploma level, and staff in a wide range of non-clinical areas are also encouraged to develop their skills and knowledge and take appropriate qualifications.

Voices of experience Chris Regan, Bristol

"I did two work placements with the hospital estates team during my Year 10, arranged by my school Connexions adviser. I hadn't thought about it before, but I enjoyed working in a hospital. I was with a welcoming, friendly team and the work was varied and different every day. They let me lend a hand with some of the simpler tasks. After GCSEs, I joined a carpentry/joinery course one day a week at a local college. For a couple of years I did two days a week at the hospital as work experience linked to the course, but had to give that up to get paid work. However, I'll be hoping to get on the hospital's craft apprenticeship scheme next year."

What work experience in the NHS can offer

For young people who are thinking about a career in one of the healthcare professions, work experience in the NHS offers the chance to see what the job is really like. It may confirm their career choice, or open their eyes to other options that they hadn't considered. A record of work experience will be an advantage when they come to apply for jobs or higher education courses. Because of what they already know, it also means they are less likely to drop out of the course they enter.

For young people who have no particular career in mind, work experience in the NHS offers the opportunity to sample from a wide variety of jobs, across the whole range of interest and academic ability. It will teach them about teamwork, and help to develop a range of skills linked to their own personal development. They will have the chance to develop key functional skills within the context of work-based learning.

Section 2

Managing expectations

The challenge of organising work experience in the NHS

Giving school students and others the chance to experience work within healthcare can present challenges for NHS employers. Quality of care and patient confidentiality are paramount, so careful consideration has to be given to where work experience students can go, when they can come and what they can do.

Nevertheless, many NHS trusts run busy and successful work experience programmes – arranged directly with local schools, individual students or, increasingly, through organisations such as local education business partnerships. You'll find examples of these programmes throughout this document.

As a teacher or representative of a placement organisation, you can help extend the scope and success of these programmes by being aware of the particular pressures that NHS trusts face, and preparing students to make the most of the experience.

For example, this means:

- allow plenty of time in advance of any placement for all the arrangements to be made, and the paperwork to be completed
- be flexible about periods of the year when your students can do work experience
- be flexible about the structure and timing of programmes – in some cases a succession of single days over a longer period may be more viable than a single one or two-week block placement
- only put forward students who you know will make the most of the opportunity



- be aware of the issues around patient confidentiality, dignity and health and safety, and share these with students
- support students during their placement in cooperation with the NHS staff who are supervising them.

With around 300 NHS trusts, each with their own policies and structures, there are significant differences in approach to providing work experience. The information in this toolkit will help you to identify who you should try contacting, the kinds of programme they may be able to offer, and the practical considerations around introducing young people into healthcare settings.

What kind of work can students do?

There's a wide range of clinical and non-clinical work that students can become involved in – as observers and participants. The aim is for the young person to experience work and to be exposed to the associated disciplines such as good timekeeping, reliability, team working and problem solving. Programmes that involve only observation of tasks or watching presentations will not meet the goals of work experience for young people – and may, quite quickly, bore them.

These are some examples of the roles that can support a work experience programme:

- nurses
- healthcare assistants
- allied health professionals such as occupational therapists, speech and language therapists and podiatrists
- healthcare scientists
- ward clerks
- doctors
- porters
- caterers
- gardeners and other estates staff
- office assistants
- administration and management
- IT
- human resources
- finance and accounts staff

Voices of experience David Palethorpe, Southampton

“Before I started work experience I had a stereotypical idea of how a hospital works. Doctors treat people and nurses help out the doctors. Wow, I was wrong. I learnt a great deal about how each role is as important as the other, from consultant to cleaner and how the hospital system would collapse without the dedication and effort put in by each member of the team. And that’s what it boils down to – teamwork. When I went onto the ward I learnt how each member of the team contributes to the efficient and effective care of patients and how no one person is more important than the other.”

Clinical tasks which are appropriate for young people to engage with may include assisting with bed-making, shadowing a nurse or healthcare assistant taking and recording a patient’s blood pressure, temperature and heart rate, completing fluid charts under direct supervision, assisting with meals, talking to patients, attending team meetings and helping with clinics (see Form 7 in the Templates section). The prime rule is that all tasks that involve contact with patients must first have the consent of the patient and students must be supervised at all times. Young people should also be given tasks that they are happy and competent to perform.

Myths you may hear about work experience in the NHS

Myth: *Work experience students in hospitals and clinics require special insurance arrangements*

Reality: Work experience students will be covered by the trust's employers' liability and public liability policies, provided the insurers are notified and an honorary contract is signed (see Form 3). Visiting student groups will be covered by normal public liability insurance.

Myth: *Patient confidentiality precludes work experience in many clinical areas*

Reality: Patient dignity and confidentiality must be maintained. This is written into the honorary contract that work experience students agree to abide to by signing. Patients should be consulted about the presence of work experience students but are generally more than happy to have them around. There are clinical areas which are inappropriate for younger students. However, these are limited and, looking more widely, work experience also provides the opportunity for young people to discover the variety of important non-clinical roles involved in delivering healthcare.

Myth: *There will be problems with CRB (Criminal Records Bureau) checks and child protection*

Reality: With very few exceptions, such as maternity and child health, CRB checks are not required for work experience students under 18 who will be under supervision throughout their placement. A preliminary risk assessment for the placement must be conducted, and standard occupational health checks followed as for any new recruit (see Form 2). For up-to-date information on the NHS Employment Check Standards (which include volunteers, students and trainees), please visit www.nhsemployers.org/employmentchecks

Myth: *There's nobody in the trust to contact about finding work experience placements for students*

Reality: Some organisations do have someone with responsibility for arranging and coordinating work experience programmes although this may vary from trust to trust. Try the volunteering, human resources or learning and development departments as first points of contact. There are also a number of agencies involved in organising work experience programmes for schools and colleges, including local education business partnerships and other education-linked bodies. They will be aware of local trust policies on work experience, and can help with much of the planning and administration.

Myth: *It's the children of NHS staff who stand the best chance of arranging a work experience placement*

Reality: Contacts through family and friends may sometimes trigger a work experience opportunity. However, each placement must go through a standard procedure of notification, signing honorary contracts, carrying out risk assessments etc. Once opportunities are created in this way, they should then be made available to others who have no family connections with the trust.

Section 3

Bringing schools and healthcare closer

NHS organisations recognise the importance of engaging with young people to develop a greater understanding of how healthcare works, and the many different roles involved in providing a universal health service. As well as attracting young people into our future workforce, it meets a greater responsibility to increase awareness among the citizens of tomorrow about a service that will at various times play an important role in their lives.

Work experience sits alongside a range of other activities through which schools can build closer relationships with NHS trusts. These include:

Schools liaison programmes – a concerted, long-term commitment by schools and trusts to bring healthcare closer to education, with clinical staff and others making visits to schools and arranging visits from school staff and students.

Ambassador schemes – NHS staff acting as representatives of the trust and their profession, going into schools to explain what they do.

NHS open days – enabling visits by groups of students to a particular department or on a wider scale.

Volunteering opportunities – volunteering provides an opportunity for young people to acquire valuable experience and feel they are doing something rewarding. Many trusts have volunteering schemes for people of all ages who feel they want to contribute to the running of hospitals and clinics. Some NHS organisations will insist on a CRB for all volunteers. However, other organisations will only need one where the position involves significant and regular contact with children and vulnerable adults in the course of their normal duties.



Who to contact

For a full list of NHS trusts in your area, go to www.nhs.uk and look for 'Health services near you'. When contacting an individual trust, ask to speak to either human resources, learning and development or voluntary services departments. They will be aware of schools liaison and workexperience programmes offered by the trust.

Section 4

Work experience: how to do it

There are many different models of work experience programmes already taking place across the NHS. These can vary from “tasters” of just a day or half day through to one week, two weeks, or programmes extended over a term or academic year. Below are just a few examples, from hospitals to primary care services and non-clinical roles, described by the programme organisers.

Two Year 10 students in an office environment (one-week programme)

This programme is set within the human resources department of a SHA, involved in a wide range of personnel and planning issues.

“For each programme, we assigned two students to a mentor whose role was to support them for the week. During the week, the students met a number of different people at pre-arranged times to talk about their work and how it fitted within the bigger picture of delivering healthcare.

“Most of the time the students worked alongside office assistants. We had a list of activities for them to undertake: taking notes of a meeting and writing them up, using the internet for research, amending a PowerPoint programme and helping to set up a presentation, greeting visitors, distributing post, using a spreadsheet, and accompanying a colleague to a meeting with an external organisation.

“Although they were supervised at all times, we encouraged them to work independently, and they had access to a computer to carry out tasks. The office assistants explained and demonstrated the tasks. We asked them to make a daily ‘to do’ list with deadlines for each task completion. Both enjoyed seeing the different tasks through to a result.

“At the end of each day they would complete their work diary and comment on how the day had gone. They were also encouraged to think about how and why they might have approached things differently.

“They became so engrossed in some projects that they needed to be reminded to take their breaks. Because we had agreed work lists, the students were able to use their own initiative. No one member of staff was required to support the students all day. We also realised it was as easy, if not easier, to have two students as one because they supported each other.”



Voices of experience Marie Cobbold, Southampton

"It was such a worthwhile experience, giving me an insight into busy ward life and showing me how many different health and social care professions are involved day to day with most patients. I really enjoyed talking to the patients and being a good listener. It was a good opportunity to see roughly where most things are to be found on a ward, although they all vary slightly. It gave me more confidence in communicating with other nurses etc, and made the whole prospect of beginning nursing training and hospital placements less daunting. Also, I had the chance to talk to other nursing students and ask them questions about university life and the sorts of things they get to be a part of on the ward."

Extended programme for students, GCSE in Health and Social Care (Double Award)

"This programme is designed for school students whose choice of course already points towards an interest in healthcare. It takes around 30 students in Year 11 (15 to 16 year-olds) divided into two groups, and is spread out over the school year.

"As programme leader, I start by visiting the school to outline the programme and discuss expectations – both ours and the students. We talk about practicalities such as the badges that students will wear, dress code, behaviour and protecting patient confidentiality. I'll also run through the different uniforms that staff will be wearing so that students can recognise who they are.

"We work through various issues and What if? questions. These include ward etiquette, approaching staff and patients, infection control and what to do in case of an emergency, such as a fire. It gives students the chance to think through the work experience they're going to have.

"Their first visit to the hospital provides an orientation and reiterates the points made during the school visit. On this particular programme the focus areas are radiology and elderly care. The two groups are introduced, alternately, to these areas by staff and a trainer.

"Following the first visit we send students in pairs to different wards to observe and shadow the work of staff. On this visit we'll ask the students to complete patient questionnaires with people who are on the ward at that time so that they can form a picture of different health backgrounds and their individual care needs.

"Through the rest of the academic year, students will have the opportunity to visit different departments and discuss their career options. The aim is to give students a full picture of what's involved in delivering healthcare. Exposure to the different roles and settings of care will help them make the career choices that suit them best."

Work experience in the community. Years 10/11 (two-week programme)

“We developed this programme to give school students the opportunity to experience job roles such as midwifery, school nursing and district nursing. Patient confidentiality, health and safety, and the vulnerability of young people are typically cited as barriers to work experience in community settings. But, with proper planning, it is both possible and worthwhile.

“Through structured work experience programmes, students as young as 14 (Year 10) have been placed with district nurses, midwives, podiatrists, and school nurses. We carefully consider appropriateness of areas and health and safety before placing students, and ask them to complete an application form and attend an interview prior to the two-week placements. This enables us to make a judgement about their suitability, and gives the students themselves an experience similar to that of applying for a job.

“There’s a range of activities that students can be involved in. Ours have helped out at baby massage and weaning sessions, mother and baby clinics, and planned home visits. They have visited smoking cessation services, drug and alcohol teams, intermediate care and Sure Start services. They have also shadowed staff in a range of clinical and non-clinical roles.

“Each student is based in one area for two weeks, with a timetable built around their career aims and interests balanced against what we can realistically offer.

“The feedback from students and staff has been very positive. Previously, students may have had work experience opportunities arranged ad hoc through family or friends. Our structured approach makes the whole process safer and more equitable.”

‘Work observation week’ – Year 11 students

“Our work observation week for Year 11 students (15 to 16 year-olds) is a key element in developing a worthwhile and equitable response to the increasing demand for work experience placements.

“It takes place in early July each year with a group of 40 to 50 young people nominated by local schools. We have a liaison programme with the schools and Connexions, so they know what the programme involves and who best to nominate. The aim is to provide a flavour of what goes on in a hospital. Half days are spent in different ward areas, and students see a series of 15 to 20-minute vignettes of different roles presented by people who do them.

“We are also able to use the training facilities that are used during the rest of the year for staff development, so they can try their hand in the clinical skills lab, and the highlight of the week is the mock ward where in groups of six they play different roles: doctor, nurse, housekeeper, occupational therapist, physiotherapist and patient. Actual staff come in to observe and assist. There’s even a matron’s inspection. It gives them a real insight into what each job is and the teamwork involved.

“The whole programme is designed to be very interactive and engaging for the young people who get places. We want them to leave with a much fuller picture of all the different roles involved in looking after patients.”

Section 5

How you can help

Work-related learning is now regarded as an integral part of the school curriculum, particularly with the introduction of the diplomas for 14–19 year-olds. Therefore, it is important that work experience programmes are planned and structured to be engaging, informative and worthwhile for the students who participate.

Programme organisers within NHS trusts will try to ensure that the experience produces outcomes for students in terms of skills development, as well as a greater understanding of how health services operate and the different roles within the healthcare team. However, they will also rely on input from teachers and placement organisations to link their programmes to the curriculum needs of students.

Work experience within the NHS can achieve learning outcomes across a number of main curriculum areas. For example:

Employability and key skills: the opportunity to develop, practise and demonstrate key skills linked to work – maths, IT, communication (written and verbal), improving own learning, completing tasks on schedule, problem solving and working with others.

Careers education and guidance: exposure to a range of different work roles and the relevance of students' own learning.

Vocational subjects: a richer understanding of vocational subjects being studied, and a wider appreciation of the options available.

Personal and social development: improved motivation, self-confidence and interpersonal skills, independent enquiry, team working and effective participation.

General: developing a better understanding of health, hygiene, and the personal, social, economic and political issues around healthcare.

By liaising with trusts and preparing students in advance of their placement, you can enhance

the educational value of the experience. At the end of each placement, the employer and student will provide evaluations. This feedback should be used by employers and schools in developing future programmes, and will form part of their own coursework and personal development for students.

Some trusts will arrange interviews as part of the selection process for programmes, and this forms part of the overall experience of the world of work. However, it can be time-consuming and not all programmes will have the resources to carry out interviews. In these cases, the teacher and school play an important role in putting forward the students who will benefit most from the experience, and providing support during the placement.

It is also important that parents are involved in the preparation for the experience: understanding the aims and educational value, the actual work environment and the things each student will see and do. Parents will have to be informed about where and when the programme will take place, any special travel arrangements and associated costs, and a contact name and details for emergencies. For students under the age of 18 a signed consent of a parent or guardian will normally be needed before a placement begins.

Practical considerations

Teachers and work experience organisers should take account of different levels of maturity, confidence and experience among students when deciding on placements.

Most hands-on patient contact will not be appropriate for under-16s, but they can be



directly involved with patients in a variety of other ways.

Some students may be comfortable helping with a range of patient care-linked activities, for example helping with drinks and meals, but this will always be directed and supervised.

It's useful for young people to be introduced to a variety of roles during their work experience. They get a wider appreciation of the range of the different aspects of healthcare, and the importance of teamwork.

A full day in a hospital or offices can be tiring for younger students. Organisers will take account of this in planning the programme.

Hospitals and clinics tend to be warm. It's a good idea for students to wear clothing in layers they can take off if they get hot.

Young people should be in the company of a member of staff at all times, but it won't necessarily be the same person.

They will be asked to wear a badge that identifies who they are and what they are doing.

Work experience offers opportunities for students to undertake projects that will support their own coursework as well as being useful to the trust where they are placed, for example patient surveys and analysis of data, or research.

Voices of experience David Bendell

"In my first year as a science A-level student, I was offered a hospital placement on a medically-related Nuffield Science Bursary. It turned into a five-week project investigating possible bacterial cross-contamination in food and drink distribution. I was encouraged by the directorate nurse manager and was given the assistance of the microbiology department in analysing samples of various materials which came close to patients' meals and drinks. As a result of the research, new procedures have been introduced, including replacing sticky tape with metal clips to attach paper rubbish bags to patients' personal trays. My research showed that the tape contained cellulose which is an energy source for C. difficile bacteria. Metal clips can easily be washed and sterilised.

"I found being able to work on my own initiative very satisfying, seeing the workings of a hospital lab fascinating and being able to effect change very exciting. The extension to my educational experience has been profound, not least in opening my eyes to the day-to-day running of a hospital ward. Being able to go into a hospital for a decent length of time and to be accepted as part of a team, could be invaluable in helping students decide about their careers. The more placements that are made available in hospitals, the greater the likelihood that more students will consider career paths that are healthcare-based".

For more information on Nuffield Science Bursaries, contact Sharmila Banerjee.
Email: sbanerjee@nuffieldfoundation.org.uk

Section 6

The process

Issues such as patient confidentiality, health and safety, and protection of young people make it essential that proper procedures are followed in the preparation for work experience in hospitals and other healthcare settings. Throughout the placement, it is also important that correct conduct is observed and that students are aware of the do's and don'ts.

In almost all cases, CRB checks will not be needed for students under 18 on temporary placements, because they will be under supervision at all times during the work period. However, they and their parents/guardians will have to sign an honorary contract which gives permission for the placement to proceed and binds students to certain standards of behaviour.

Failure to observe this code may mean instant termination of the placement. Employers cannot be held responsible for checking on absences by students. In these cases, the school will be responsible for their students in the normal way.

This section outlines the typical procedure a NHS trust would follow from receiving an enquiry through to confirmation and completion of the programme. Items marked with an asterisk* are considered mandatory. The rest follow proven good practice. Templates for the paperwork relevant to schools and colleges are available in Section 8.

Voices of experience

Myriam Guessoum

In Year 12, Myriam attended a week long medical experience course organised by Nottingham Widening Access to Medicine School (WAMS) – a group of medical students based at The University of Nottingham who are keen to promote medicine to non-traditional higher education entrants. The course is run every August for up to 20 Year 12 students, and includes hands-on clinical skills practice and shadowing of final year medical students or junior doctors on the wards. Through donations from Astra Zeneca, the course is funded by the educational charity, The Brightside Trust, who are currently rolling out the programme to medical schools and NHS trusts across the country.

“It was a really useful experience. We were given good advice on where to apply as well as how to sell ourselves in our personal statement for university application. The experience itself was a unique extra as it was different from most other medical experiences. I was asked in interviews to elaborate on what we did and how useful the fifth-year medics were. I got four interviews and four offers to study medicine, and chose Cambridge. I hope the people this year gain as much as I did from the experience.”

For more information about this initiative, contact Aidan Kelly, The Brightside Trust.
Email: aidan.kelly@thebrightsidetrust.org

The application process

1. Enquiry from a school, college or individual applicant

Send:

- response letter
- application form
- summary of regulations and conditions
- outline of objectives.



2. Application form received

Check:

- is the application acceptable?
- is the experience requested suitable for the applicant?
- does a suitable work experience opportunity exist?
- risk assessment for relevant department(s)*
- identity checks in line with NHS Employment Check Standards*.



3. Invitation to interview, health questionnaire*

Not all programmes insist on interviews. Some, subject to a suitable application, will fill places on a 'first come, first served' basis.



4. Interview

- interview form completed
- health questionnaire checked by manager*
- objectives discussed.

Decision made on whether individuals are accepted/not accepted



5. Confirmation letter

Send:

- two honorary contract forms*
- placement information sheet
- risk assessment and health and safety advice
- instructions on dress, behaviour, patient confidentiality
- evaluation form
- CRB check where required*.



6. The work experience programme

Work experience programmes range from a taster session of a few hours to an extended voluntary placement. However, all or some of these elements should be in place:

- face-to-face identity checks (if not carried out at interview)*
- pre-placement visit to arrange uniform and photo identity badge (take a deposit)
- induction programme
- exit interview
- student evaluation
- supervisor's report.



7. Follow up

Evaluation reports by students and staff form an important part of the work experience programme. Beyond this, it will be useful to student and employer to follow up the work experience some weeks later. Email offers an effective route for this follow-up.

Section 7

Useful links

The following organisations are sources of information, advice and assistance with setting up and running work experience programmes.

NHS Careers

www.nhscareers.nhs.uk

The information service for careers in the NHS in England.

Step into the NHS

www.stepintothens.nhs.uk

A website and communications programme for 14–19 year-olds which aims to stimulate awareness of the huge range of opportunities available within the NHS.

Other useful links

Connexions Direct

<https://www2.cxdirect.com>

Provides confidential advice, support and information for young people on a range of issues from careers and learning to health and relationships.

Department for Education

www.education.gov.uk

Leads work across Government to enable all children and young people to reach their full potential.

Institute for Education Business Excellence

www.iebe.org.uk

The Institute for Education Business Excellence (IEBE) is a charity dedicated to improving the employability and life chances of young people. Created in June 2009, the IEBE sets and safeguards the standards for all types of work experiences up to the age of 19.

NHS Choices

www.nhs.uk

Provides information on how the NHS works, and details of local trusts and health services.

Skills for Health

www.skillsforhealth.org.uk

The Sector Skills Council for the health sector which aims to help the whole sector to develop solutions that deliver a skilled and flexible UK workforce in order to improve healthcare.

Young People's Learning Agency

www.ypla.gov.uk

Champions education and training for young people in England. They do this by providing financial support to young learners, by funding Academies for all their provision and by supporting local authorities to commission suitable education and training opportunities for all 16-19 year olds.*

*Responsibility for this is likely to move to the Education Funding Agency in April 2012.

Section 8

Templates

The template forms in this section are the standard forms that NHS trusts may use when arranging a work experience placement, although they may be adapted to suit individual circumstances. You may find it useful to anticipate the questions that will typically be asked, the information that will be provided, and the commitments that students will be required to make.

Form 1

Application for work experience placement

This form should be sent to students enquiring about work experience opportunities in order to enable employers to gather the necessary information before beginning to organise the placement.

Form 2

Confidential pre-placement health questionnaire

This form is necessary to assess whether the individual is fit to undertake the work experience placement and that no risk is presented to the individual or people they may come into contact with.

Form 3

Honorary contract

A contractual agreement between the employer and the student to confirm acceptance of the work experience placement.

Form 4

Placement information sheet

Provides students with written confirmation of their placement and gives information on code of conduct and how to make the most of their placement.

Form 5

Daily diary

To be completed by students during their placement to record their thoughts and what they have learned.

Form 6

Evaluation form

To be completed by students at the end of their placement to reflect on and what they have achieved and how useful they found the placement.

Form 7

Suggested clinical tasks for work experience students

A list of clinical tasks that students may be asked to undertake during their work placement.

Form 1: Application for work experience placement

Information will be treated in the strictest of confidence.

Personal details

Title: _____ Surname: _____ Forename: _____

Address for correspondence: _____

Date of birth: _____ Email: _____

Telephone: _____ Mobile: _____

Next of kin: _____

Relationship: _____ Telephone: _____

School/college: _____

Address: _____

Teacher/careers adviser: _____

Telephone: _____

Dates of work experience: _____

Area/dept required: _____

Previous work experience or employment

Please give details of any previous paid or voluntary work you have had.

Employers details	Dates from/to	Duties and responsibilities

Form 1 cont'd: Application for work experience placement

Supporting information

This is your opportunity to promote yourself, to identify why you would like to gain some work experience in the NHS. Please use this space to provide any supporting information to go with your application. Supporting information can be anything that is not already covered by the questions on the form and may include any hobbies, interests or other activity either within or outside of school which you enjoy (continue on a separate sheet if necessary):

Student, parent and teacher agreement to trust requirements

1. The Trust places considerable importance on the need for attention to health and safety at work. You have the responsibility to acquaint yourself with the safety rules of the workplace, to follow these rules and make use of facilities and equipment provided for your safety. It is essential that all accidents, however minor, are reported.
2. The Trust will also expect you to observe other rules and regulations governing the workplace which are drawn to your attention. Please note that there is a no smoking policy covering the whole working environment and that there are security arrangements applicable to most locations.
3. The Trust fully supports equal opportunities in employment and opposes all forms of unlawful or unfair discrimination on the grounds of ethnic origins, gender, disability, age, religion or sexuality.
4. There will/will not normally be payment for meals or travelling expenses.

I have read and understood the above requirements.

Signature (student): _____

Print name: _____ Date: _____

Please obtain the following signatures if under 18yrs.

Parent/guardian

I have read and understood the above requirements. I will ensure the student carries out these obligations and confirm that he/she is not suffering from any complaint, which might create a hazard to him/herself or to those working with him/her. I give permission for my son/daughter _____ to attend the placement and observe during his/her visit to the **[Insert name of trust]**

Signature: _____

Print name: _____ Date: _____

Teacher/careers adviser if under 18 yrs.

I have read the work experience programme information and give permission for **[Insert name of student]** to attend the placement and observe during his/her visit to **[Insert name of trust]**. I also confirm that he/she is currently studying at **[Insert name of school or college]**

Signature: _____

Print name: _____ Date: _____

Please return to: **[Insert contact details]** _____

Form 2: Confidential pre-placement health questionnaire

Information will be treated in the strictest of confidence.

Surname: _____

Forename: _____

Date of birth: _____

Home address: _____

Postcode: _____ Telephone: _____

Job placement: _____

1. Do you have any illness or disability at the present time? Yes No
If yes, please give details:

2. Have you had any other serious illnesses or operations in the past? Yes No
If yes, please give details:

3. Are you taking or being prescribed any medicines, inhalers, injections or eye/ear drops at the present time? Yes No
If yes, please give details:

4. Is your ability to perform physical work limited in any way? Yes No

5. Have you had or been in contact with any infectious disease in the past four weeks? Yes No

6. Which of the following infectious diseases have you been immunised against?

BCG (Tuberculosis) Pertussis (Whooping Cough) Diphtheria Polio

Measles Rubella Meningitis C Tetanus Mumps

Signature: _____

Print name: _____ Date: _____

Parent/guardian's signature if under 18: _____

Print name: _____ Date: _____

If any of the above circumstances change from the time of completing the form to the time of placement, you must inform the *[Insert appropriate dept]* immediately.

Please return to: *[Insert contact details]* _____

Form 3: Honorary contract

[Insert trust address]

Our Ref:

Date:

Dear

I have pleasure in confirming our offer of an honorary contract/placement to work within the *[Insert name of trust]*.

Please read the terms and conditions carefully and sign both copies of this letter, returning one copy to *[Insert contact details]*.

This placement is for the period from *[Insert date]* to *[Insert date]* in the *[Insert name of department/ward]*.

The working arrangements, hours will be from *[Insert time]* to *[Insert time]*. Please report to *[Insert contact name]* who will be responsible for your supervision throughout this placement.

Specific details of the placement are outlined in the placement information sheet attached.

Sick leave arrangements: If you are unable to attend because of sickness you should inform the supervisor or head of department as soon as possible and keep the manager informed as to the likely date of return.

Security badges: It is a requirement that every person should display an identification badge when working on any site associated with the trust. This will be issued to you, on arrival, by the person responsible for your supervision.

Uniform: *[Insert details of uniform and arrangements for supply]*.

Confidentiality: Any matters of a confidential nature, in particular information relating to the diagnosis and treatment of patients, individual staff and/or patients records, and details of contract prices and terms must under no circumstances be divulged or passed on to any other unauthorised person or persons. The placement may be terminated if confidentiality is breached.

Termination of work experience placement: Any act of misconduct (e.g. theft) or breach of confidentiality may result in the termination of your placement. Discussions will be held with your school/college before the placement is terminated.

Health and Safety at Work Act: You are reminded that in accordance with the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, you have a duty to take reasonable care to avoid injury to yourself and to others by your work activities, and are required to comply with the trust policies in meeting these statutory requirements. A copy of the Health and Safety policy is available for inspection.

Form 3 cont'd: Honorary contract

Loss/damage of personal effects: No liability can be accepted for loss or damage to personal property on health service premises by burglary, fire, theft, or otherwise. Staff are advised accordingly to provide their own insurance cover.

During the period of your placement you will not, at any time, except where the law requires, be regarded as an employee of the trust, and will not be eligible for remuneration in respect of your work placement with the trust.

Yours sincerely

[Insert name]
[Insert job title]

Form of acceptance

I accept this placement on the terms and conditions outlined and have retained a copy.

Signed: _____

Print name: _____ Date: _____

Parent/guardian's signature if under 18: _____

Print name: _____ Date: _____

Form 4: Placement information sheet

Profession:	
Department/unit:	
Name of supervisor:	
Location:	
Contact numbers:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Department: _____• Emergency number: _____• Human resources: _____
Description of department/unit:	
Hours of work/break times:	

Activities to be carried out

This list is an example of the types of activities you will be involved in on this placement:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

However, it is impossible to list every activity you might be asked to undertake and you should be prepared to complete other tasks if asked of you.

Learning outcomes of activities

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Personal qualities

Whilst on a work experience placement you will be expected to work towards achieving the trust's P2P (person to person) competencies which are:

- Maintain a friendly, caring, safe environment for staff, patients and visitors.
- Treat patients, their families and visitors as we would like to be treated ourselves.
- Support colleagues with teamwork.
- Provide a polite and helpful telephone service.
- Be an excellent role model for the trust.

Dress

- It is expected that students will arrive for duty smartly dressed.
- Clothes should allow for a range of movements. Long trousers, or a calf length skirt, should be worn with a polo shirt or t-shirt/short-sleeved blouse, as clinical areas can be quite warm.
- Shoes should cover the whole foot and be low heeled. Trainers are acceptable if clean and well maintained.
- Clothes should be changed daily to minimise the risk of cross-infection.
- Jewellery should not be worn, except for a watch and plain band/wedding ring.
- A set of surgical scrubs will be provided for your time in theatre.

Form 4 cont'd: Placement information sheet

Confidentiality

It is natural to wish to discuss your experience on a work placement with friends and family. However, you must ensure that you do not disclose confidential information which could identify an individual patient or member of staff, or information about the business of the trust.

You must also let your supervisor know immediately if you know any patient personally. This applies even if they are a patient of a service which is different to the area of your placement.

Health and safety

- You will be given a health and safety briefing when you first start your placement and you should pay attention to the information you are given at this briefing.
- You will be given an ID badge at the start of your placement. You must wear this at all times.
- You will be supervised at all times and will also be given training when using equipment.

Working in a hospital

We want you to enjoy your placement and to experience life within a hospital setting. However, it can also be a very intense experience and is not without risk. You may witness distressing incidents or even feel unwell. We take your safety on your work observation placement extremely seriously and the following information is designed to help to ensure your placement is as safe as possible.

A hospital is considered to be a high-risk organisation and shadowing a clinician in a hospital setting carries with it an element of risk. We have put in place a set of rules and guidelines which aim to minimise this risk. However, it is impossible to eliminate risk entirely and you must also take some responsibility for ensuring your own safety by listening to and following instructions at all times, particularly when these relate to health and safety issues.

You must be prepared for the fact that you may be prevented from attending planned sessions at very short notice, and you may also be asked to leave a session if it is considered unsafe or inappropriate for you to be present. You must comply with any requests asking you not to enter or to leave an area at any time.

Below is more information specific to your placement. Please make sure that you and your parents read all of this placement information sheet carefully. There is a lot of information to take in, but reading this information will help to prepare you for your placement.

If you are unsure about any of the information provided, or about the placement you have been offered, then you must discuss this with the contact person for the area you are going into, or the work experience coordinator as soon as possible. This could be before, during or after your placement.

Your placement

Psychological/emotional

Within the daily work of the hospital, you may be exposed to distressing situations. This might include a patient becoming distressed, a patient's condition deteriorating, or even the death of a patient. You may also see procedures or conditions which you will find upsetting. Although we will do our best to pre-empt these situations, you should be prepared for them. Please tell the person working with you if you are upset, so that we can talk about the issues as soon as it is clinically possible.

There is a risk of verbal abuse from patients or visitors of the trust. You will not be expected to deal with any incident of this sort. If you are unfortunate enough to witness this type of behaviour, you should excuse yourself, and contact the nearest member of staff.

Form 4 cont'd: Placement information sheet

Physical

You must not move or handle any heavy objects. These can include boxes, equipment, and patients.

There is a risk that you may feel physically unwell after observing medical procedures. This is perfectly normal, and most people feel faint the first time they witness surgery for example. If this happens please let a member of staff know immediately. If you feel faint or sick you should sit down or leave the area, whichever is the most appropriate. There is a risk of injury if you should faint.

There is a risk of physical abuse from patients or visitors of the trust. You will be supervised at all times during a clinical session, and therefore this risk is considered low. Between sessions you are advised to take normal precautions when walking in and around the internal and external parts of the hospital site to ensure your safety. This might include not walking in areas which are isolated, or deserted.

Infection control

All students who will be observing in clinical/patient areas must be immunised against TB. You are asked to confirm this on your health declaration. You must also be aware that being in a hospital environment may mean that exposure to viruses and other infections will be higher than in your normal environment. However, the infections will not be different to those you may come into contact with in your normal life. We will not expect you to work in areas, or with patient groups, where observation would carry a high risk of infection. Students should avoid contact with bodily fluids, but be aware that there may be a risk of contact in unpredicted situations.

In order to minimise risk of infection, you must follow instructions given by members of staff at all times. You must also ensure that your standards of personal hygiene are very high. You must wash your hands at the beginning and end of each session, and if you use the toilet facilities. In order to minimise risks of cross infection clothes should be changed daily.

You must not under any circumstances handle sharps (needles or other sharp objects) and when in clinical areas should take extreme care where you put your hands, and check before you sit down. Do not handle patient belongings.

Exposure to substances

A hospital will use a number of hazardous substances. You will not be expected to handle any substances which are considered to be hazardous. You must not touch any substance unless you are sure you know what it is and that it is not hazardous. This is particularly important when you are observing in clinical areas.

Risk of accidents

A hospital setting will probably be new to you, and you are not a trained member of staff or a clinical student. Therefore, you will be at a higher risk of accidents than other members of staff or students. In order to minimise such risks you will be supervised at all times when you are observing a clinical session. At other times you must ensure that you only access areas you have been given permission to enter, and that you only observe planned procedures under supervision. It is essential that you follow instructions carefully, and leave any area immediately if you are asked to do so.

Finally

If any of the above information concerns you, or is unclear, please discuss these with your supervisor, or the work experience coordinator. Please also let your supervisor or the work experience coordinator know if you have any concerns or worries or need any help or support during your time with us.

Source: Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust.

Form 5: Daily diary

Name: _____

Department: _____

Day <i>[Insert date]</i>	Hours	Who I shadowed/ observed	What I learned
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			

Form 6: Evaluation form

To enable us to assess how useful you found your work experience it would be very helpful if you would answer the following questions. This information may be used to develop programmes for future students.

1. What did you hope to learn from your placement?

2. Has this been achieved?

Yes No

3. Do you feel your placement has given you a better understanding of the work that is undertaken in a trust?

Yes No

If no please give details:

4. Do you feel the structure of the programme was:

Satisfactory Unsatisfactory

5. Do you feel the length of each session was:

a) Satisfactory b) Too long c) Too short

6. Which sessions did you find most interesting?

7. Which sessions did you find least interesting?

Form 6 cont'd: Evaluation form

8. Are there any additional sessions, or visits to other departments, which you feel should be included in the programme?

Yes No

If yes, please give details:

9. Do you feel it would have been useful to have been provided with any more information before your placement?

Yes No

If yes, please give details:

10. Has your placement influenced your choice of career in any way?

Yes No

If yes, please give details:

11. Please add any other comments you feel would be helpful:

Thank you for your help in completing this questionnaire. Please return to:
[Insert contact details].

Form 7: Suggested clinical tasks for work experience students

These are examples of the tasks that would be appropriate for work experience students to participate in:

Nursing/nursing assistant:

Assist with bed making	Observe handover
Watch observation taking	Attend team meeting
Observe completion of fluid chart	Attend multidisciplinary team meeting
Assist with menus	Attend ward round with patient's consent
Talk to patients	Observe the nurse discharging the patient, with the patient's consent
Observe drug round	Obtain results from the computer under supervision
Observe simple dressings with patient's consent	

Other staff groups can also get involved with the work experience students. These are some suggestions. Your department may have other professions they deal with that could be approached.

Ward clerk:

- Talk to ward clerk and find out what job involves
- Answer the phone
- Assist with filing
- Input data on computer with the ward clerk's supervision

Physiotherapist:

- Talk to the physiotherapist and find out what the role involves
- Observe the physiotherapist treating the patient with the patient's consent
- Observe the physiotherapist discharging a patient with the patient's consent

Pharmacist:

- Talk to the pharmacist and find out what the role entails

General assistant:

- Find out the role of the general assistant
- Observe the process of preparation and serving of meals

Doctor:

- Talk to the doctor and find out what the job entails
- What hours does the doctor work?

Occupational therapist/speech and language therapist:

- Find out what the jobs entails
- Observe them working with the patient, with the patient's consent.

Overview

It is the responsibility of the person responsible for the clinical care of each patient to determine the extent of a young person's participation, taking into account the findings of the risk assessment and the relevant clinical protocols. You must also ensure that the consent of the patient is sought before the young person is allowed to be present and/or participate. Where consent is not given or available, the young person must be excluded from the activity/area.

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- Royal Devon and Exeter NHS Foundation Trust
- Southampton University Hospitals NHS Trust
- The Brightside Trust
- The Nuffield Foundation
- United Bristol Healthcare NHS Trust
- Yorkshire and The Humber Strategic Health Authority

Legal addendum

In addition to the Health and Safety at Work Act (HSAWA) there are other regulations which place responsibility on employers. In particular, Regulation 19 of the Management of Health and Safety Regulations (1999) obliges an employer who employs a young person (someone under 18) to protect that young person from risks arising from their lack of experience, absence of awareness of existing or potential risks or from their lack of maturity. These regulations would capture the non-employee–non-employer relationship that trusts will be setting up. However, it would be wise to comply with these regulations even if strictly they don't apply. Trusts owe a duty of care to these young people and failure to follow statutory requirements may be used as evidence of negligence. Health and safety legislation with which trusts are no doubt familiar should be complied with as usual.



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