

Health and Safety Executive ‘Myth Busting’

Under 18s cannot be employed on construction sites for work or work experience

There is no reason why a young person under 18 could not be employed on a building site for work or work experience, provided the work was properly assessed and suitable controls put in place. Although there may be times when it would not be appropriate for an under 18 to be employed, these will be very much the exception rather than the rule.

A separate risk assessment is required for work experience students

A separate risk assessment is not required specifically for work experience students, as long as your existing assessment already considers the specific factors for young people. Furthermore, there is no requirement to re-assess the risks each time an employer takes on a new work experience student, provided the new student has no particular needs.

Schools, colleges and those organising work experience placements on their behalf, such as Education Business Partnerships, must visit all workplaces in advance of a student starting a work experience placement

It is not for schools, colleges or those organising work experience placements on their behalf, to assess work places. The employer who is taking on the student for work experience has the primary responsibility for their health and safety. However, schools, colleges and others organising placements do need to take reasonable steps to satisfy themselves that an employer is managing any significant risks. For many low risk premises a visit will not be necessary, there is no reason why this couldn't be done over the phone, with placement organisers simply making a note of the discussion. A conversation with an employer could include finding out what the student will be doing, what the risks are and how they are managed.

Organisers including schools and third-party independent businesses advise you that WEX is not possible due to health and safety.

The person giving you that advice may well be wrong – there are very few work activities a student cannot do due to health and safety law. You can question their assertions by contacting HSE.