



TOOLKITS FOR MANAGING A COMPREHENSIVE RANGE OF INDUSTRY VISITS FOR SCHOOL AND COLLEGE STAFF AND STUDENTS



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Toolkit 4: Morning or afternoon workplace visit

Toolkit abstract	
Duration of visit	½ day
Key beneficiaries	All students studying to KS3/4/5 and of additional relevance to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• those expressing interest in vocationally orientated full time courses <i>or</i> applying for apprenticeships after Year 11 and Year 13
	Staff teaching students to KS3/4/5 and of additional relevance to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Staff teaching vocational subjects• Careers and other CEIAG staff in schools wishing to gain deeper insights into specific careers and the local labour market
Gatsby Benchmarks associated with this activity	5/6
Activity aim	The aim of this type of activity is for students and their teachers and support staff to gain greater insights into workplace practice, types of skills required, job types and roles and the sorts of job offers made to young people via a bespoke half-day visit to a company or organisation in the private/public or third (charitable) sector.

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Section 1: First considerations before arranging visit to employer

1.1 Key questions to ask before initiating contact

1.1.1 What learning outcomes do I want for my students from the visit?

Knowledge	
Prior to the visit do my students need to find out about workplaces or roles or will this visit enable them to experience the workplace in its broadest sense?	What information do they need from this visit to help them make informed careers decisions?
What currently studied subjects will this visit link to?	What key questions do I want them to ask whilst there?
Skills	
Specific skills or aptitudes that may be needed to work in the workplace visited.	What opportunities would there be to use communication, team-working and other soft workplace skills in the workplace visited, or any other?
Importance of English, maths, ICT to workplaces visited.	Any other important career-related information e.g. unique qualifications needed to progress towards specific career goals in the workplace visited?

1.1.2. What do I want from the experience?

What are the objectives of the activity for the school and its students?	Will I or another member of staff be present, or will the student be alone?
What questions might I or the accompanying member(s) of staff want to ask the employer during the visit?	What will success look like?
Has the school already visited this establishment before and, if so, was it beneficial?	What activity will I plan in school to follow up the event?

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1.1.3. What does the organisation want from the visit?

What are the main objectives of the activity for the employer (and its employees)?	Is the company looking to recruit new employees, graduates, apprentices or interns?
Is this an opportunity for the organisation to develop its own staff?	Will my students be asked to take part in promotional activity for the company during the visit and if so, what do I need to do about it?

1.1.4. Group size, access considerations, budget and staffing considerations

How many students do I intend to be involved – i.e. a group of selected students or a year group. Is the group size realistic for the company to manage?	How will I ensure that this visit appeals to students with specific SEND needs e.g. autism?
Can I use the school mini-bus or will I need to hire a vehicle e.g. a 48-seat coach? If a coach is used, have I worked out who will pay? Will students need to pay?	How many staff will need to accompany the students on the visit?
What are my expectations of their staff?	What specific access arrangements do I need to consider? Can these be fulfilled by the employer?
Have I written a risk assessment? Will the employer do so? Have I also written an emergency care plan and have a list of emergency contacts?	Have I obtained parental consent and managed refusals?

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Section 2 – Research prior to making contact with the employer

2.1. Key considerations

<p>What sort(s) of employers might I wish to contact?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider employment sector • Size of organisation e.g. SME, local organisation, or branch of (multi) national • Reputation of the employer locally 	<p>Is the activity something available to all students, or will it be limited to a specific number of students?</p>
<p>Speak to representatives of locally-based organisations when they are at events already organised by your own school e.g. at a careers fair/post-16 event or practice interview sessions etc.</p>	<p>Speak to your designated careers lead in school as they will often have pre-existing contact with a range of local employers and organisations and may be able to recommend particular organisations of the right size for your needs who are approachable and/or have supported your school before.</p>
<p>Visit the website of the preferred employer organisations to establish if they already offer this type of activity or specific activities relevant and of benefit to young people.</p>	<p>Can your school alumni or parents help in terms of workplace visits?</p>
<p>Important points to remember!</p>	
<p>For Health and Safety/Safeguarding reasons some employers may not offer this type of experience, or may need your students to be 18 or over before undertaking a visit to their facility in the case of engineering, manufacturing or higher risk work environments.</p>	
<p>Employers, particularly SMEs will have limited time resources to support your visit, and are often inundated by requests for support from other schools, so be realistic about what they can offer you and be ready to compromise.</p>	
<p>Your initial contact could be part of a wider ask for support as opposed to a bespoke activity, so will volunteering be part of a potential menu of support that the employer could be asked to support?</p>	

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Section 3 - Making initial contact with the employer

3.1. Preferred method(s) of communication with employer

Communication method	Benefit	Drawback
<p>Preferred method(s)</p> <p>Initially make contact by phone with the organisation.</p> <p>For small organisations, it is probably best to approach or ask for the 'manager' or owner/director. Ring to confirm full name, preferred contact details and time of day it would be best to re-contact.</p>	<p>An e-mail might suffice, but a phone call is generally your first in-road when approaching a company cold.</p>	<p>In the case of smaller companies there is always the risk that you either won't get hold of the manager owing to workplace pressures, or your calls may be diverted or not responded to, so be prepared to move onto another contact if necessary.</p>
<p>In larger organisations there are several people that you could approach e.g.;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education Community Manager • HR or Training and Development Manager • Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Manager • Marketing and Communications Manager 		

Important points to remember!

In the case of smaller organisations, the scope they have to support larger groups will be much more limited, so think carefully about the type of employer and how supportable your visit will be. So, for example, taking twenty students to a dental practice is probably unrealistic, whereas a visit to council offices to look at a range of roles could be realistic.

Larger organisations will be more likely to have structures in place to deal with your request and, if your visit is to help young people generally orientate themselves with the workplace as opposed to a sector specific activity, this may be a better prospect than trying to broker visits with smaller or more specialist organisations. However, be careful not to reinforce employment stereotypes as this can provide your students with an unrealistic view of the labour market.

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3.2. What to include in your initial e-mail/say in your call

Providing correct and full contact details	
By phone	
When prompted to do so by the secretary or the person you make first contact with ensure that you supply the best number you can be contacted on. This is sometimes difficult in schools, and so also give information about when it is best for you to be contacted e.g. during break-time, lunch-hour or best after school.	If you need to have a subsequent conversation with a manager or other designated person in the company, ensure that you ask for their full title, direct telephone number and when they prefer to be contacted. If you are asked to e-mail ensure you have the correct address. Some companies will be informal and will say, ask for Jane or Dave for example, but keep it formal until you meet in person.
By e-mail (initial or subsequent communication)	
As designated lead, always ensure that you use your full name, job title and supply full contact details, including postal address for your school at the foot of your e-mail. Essentially, in this situation you are “sponsor” to the student or students volunteering.	Copy other members of your team into the e-mail so that the employer has alternative contacts to re-contact if you’re not available.
What do you want from them to make the visit a success?	
Explain that you would like to organise a half-day workplace visit for x amount of students on a date convenient to the employer, stating times when it would be difficult to the students to visit e.g. holidays, exam periods.	Specify ages as opposed to year groups as employers often won’t recognise terms such as Key Stage 4 or Year 11 unless they have children of their own. This is particularly important if you plan to visit a more hazardous environment e.g. a production facility or workshop.
It is also helpful to be clear about why you might have chosen this type of company to contact. Not only does it impress the organisation but it can also make the experience more specific to a subject area and more relevant to the student, i.e. it isn’t just an experience of work, it is directly relevant to their career planning.	Specify age of students coming as often activities can be geared to a specific group, and the employer may already have its own programme that you can engage with, which may include age-appropriate resources.
Important points to remember!	
Perhaps start with a smaller group if you are visiting an employer for the first time as this will enable you to trial the experience.	
Be aware that you may not be able to see a whole workplace because of commercial reasons, security or health and safety. This may cause disappointment if students aren’t aware of this before the visit.	

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3.3. Next steps after making initial contact

Some points to consider before the visit	
After the initial phone call it is very sensible to visit the employer or in their workplace so that you essentially create an agreement between the parties i.e. your school and the employer. This also gives you chance to iron out any bugs before the visit.	Establish with the employer if they plan for this to be a passive experience i.e. show and tell, or a more hands-on proactive visit where students will undertake specific activities.
During a site visit or other preparatory conversation ask the employer what skills and qualifications they value the most in their workplace. This will help you and your student(s) to link the activity to curriculum aims and assist to prepare the students for their visit.	If you are in a position to share general information about the characteristics of the student or students who will be visiting as this can be helpful for the employer, particularly if they need to consider access arrangements.
Housekeeping	
Ensure that the employer/volunteering host is aware that cancellations can occur owing to illness, unexpected changes at school, or a crisis. If they are parents they will know that this is common when working with teenagers, but it will avoid disappointment later on if they are made aware early on.	Ensure that you and the employer are clear about; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Duration of the visit – i.e. is it a half day or a full day. • Who the member of staff is who will be receiving your party. • What site you are going to? In the case of large organisations, the person you make the arrangements with might be based at a different site to the one you are due to visit.

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Section 4 – Planning the Activity

4.1. SMART Objectives for visit

1) Activity prior to visit (students)	Measure of success
1.1 Students briefed to ask at least one question arising out of the visit e.g. what roles do you have in your organisation?	Student to complete reflective log or prepare a presentation in groups about their visit after visit to discuss what they learned and what question(s) they asked whilst visiting the employer. It is suggested that the students consider questions specific to the workplace, but those that would be more general in nature- e.g. Other than qualifications, what things do you look for in your employees?
2) Activity during the visit (staff)	Measure of success
2.1. Staff to observe and assess questions asked and activities undertaken by student(s) and reflect on ways to improve the experience and feed this back to employer.	Verbal or written feedback given to the student on the day in response to comments made by the student in the reflective log and the group presentation. Verbal or written feedback given to the employer host on the day of visit.
2.2. Ensure that all students and staff complete any feedback forms provided by the employer to improve future experience.	All staff and students present submit forms to employer at the end of the visit.
3) Activity during the visit (students)	Measure of success
3.1. Student to observe the various work roles in the workplace visited and ask questions of the people that they meet during the visit.	Student to gather information to complete reflective log and a group presentation to help them reflect on what they learnt from the visit.
3.2. Student to discuss what they liked/disliked and suggest what could be improved for future visits.	Student to complete reflective log to discuss what they liked and disliked and would improve upon for a future visit, or for other students having the same experience.

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4) Activity after the visit (students)	Measure of success
4.1. Student to complete a reflective log of their experience.	<p>In addition to the above, reflective log could include response to the following sample questions;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The best part of the visit was (why) • The part I enjoyed the least about visit was (why) • Did you enjoy the visit (why) and, if not, why? • Have you learnt something new from this experience? if so, what? • Do you think you know more about this particular type of employment? Describe what you have learnt from the visit. • Describe the activities you undertook whilst with the employer. Did you feel challenged enough? What could you do differently next time? • What has this taught you about the workplace? Describe how is it different from school?
5) Activity after the visit (staff)	Measure of success
5.1. Staff to collect contact details from other members of staff met during the process of the visit to maintain contact following the activity.	Contact details included on a school database of employer contacts and shared with specific members of the school team, e.g. Careers Education lead.

Section 5 – After the Activity

5.1. Follow-on activity after visit is complete

5.1.1 Follow-on steps for the students

- Ensure the student has information to enable them to meet the employer again e.g. at a future careers event, or know how to apply for jobs, apprenticeships or school leaver/graduate schemes with them in the future.
- As above, ensure the students write a reflective log about the experience outlining what they learned, e.g. unexpected things about the activity, likes and dislikes, and questions to establish if this activity helped them to plan their subsequent career steps.
- Encourage one or a group of the student(s) to be the one(s) who write to thank the employer. Often a letter shows greater professionalism and commitment to the company.

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5.1.2. Follow-on steps for the staff

- It is often sufficient to thank the staff on the day but an e-mail or follow up call on behalf of the school is often welcome and ensures continuity, especially if the organiser doesn't attend the event in person.
- Provide feedback when requested and anecdotal observations to host staff.
- Publish your experiences on your website including photos and videos and share with your team and the employer (data protection permitting).
- As outlined above, ensure that accurate records have been made of the names and positions of any staff met/contacted whilst brokering the visit.
- Make timely suggestions about improvements which can be made to the learning experience to your team and the employer.
- Brief other colleagues about the experience and celebrate the successes of individual students and any particular noteworthy moments.

Section 6 – Timeline

6.1. Timeline

- 6 months – 2 months prior to visit contact the employer in question to broker a visit.
- As soon as possible after arranging the visit, pre-visit the employer to clarify arrangements and see what the student(s) will see and be working on if activities are included that adequate risk assessments are in place for the visit.
- Day of visit ensure that students attend and leave at times agreed.
- 1-2 days after the visit, call, e-mail or write to the employer to thank them, provide any feedback, and follow up on any student queries.
- 3-4 days after the visit, publish pictures, write an article and share with the employer.
- Up to 6 months after make contact again with the employer to schedule another visit.

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Section 7 – Information Sources

7.1. Additional resources and helpful contacts

Dyson year 8 workshops (30 mile radius from SN16 ORP only) <http://www.jamesdysonfoundation.co.uk/form/request-a-workshop-for-your-school/>

Gloucestershire County Council <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/jobs/about-working-for-gloucestershire-county-council/work-experience/>

Gloucestershire NHS Trust – work experience <http://www.gloshospitals.nhs.uk/en/Work-for-Us/Work-Experience/>

Renishaw - www.renishaw.com/en/working-with-schools--34611

Schoolsnet - <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/schoolsnet/school-office/school-visits/> Suggested locations for visits, and H+S guidance for offsite visits

Top 100 businesses in Gloucestershire <http://www.southwestbusiness.co.uk/regions/gloucestershire/top-100-businesses-in-gloucestershire-2016-29062016072734/>

Yell.com <https://www.yell.com/>

Yes to Jobs <http://yes2jobs.co.uk/employers-map>