

Young People



When young people start work for the first time, they may be at greater risk of injury than other employees.

This could be where young people are on work experience placements, starting apprenticeships, or as employees – including on a part-time or casual basis.

Whatever the extent to which young people are involved in your workplace, there may be some additional steps you will need to take to make sure that they remain safe. In most cases, you will already have the necessary health and safety precautions in place to protect others, so for many low-risk situations this should be straightforward.

Legal requirements

For our purposes, a **young person** is anyone under 18. A **child** is anyone who has not yet reached the official minimum school leaving age (MSLA). Students reach the MSLA in the school year in which they turn 16.

Under health and safety law, every employer must ensure that all their employees, irrespective of age, are protected from danger. With this in mind, additional consideration will be needed where young persons are employed whether for work, work experience, or as an apprentice.

Here, you will have duties under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and associated regulations (e.g. the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations). Broadly, you have a responsibility to ensure that young people employed or working with you are not exposed to risk due to their:

- lack of experience
- being unaware of existing or potential risks
- lack of maturity.

Risk advice line

Should you have any additional questions on this topic or other risk-related matters, as a valued Ecclesiastical customer you can contact us through our Risk Advice Line on

0345 600 7531

(Monday to Friday 9am – 5pm, excluding bank holidays)

and one of our in-house risk professionals will be able to assist.

Alternatively, you can email us at

risk.advice@ecclesiastical.com

and one of our experts will call you back within 24 hours.

Beyond this, if someone is injured you may need to show that you have met your duty of care. For example, if you organise an activity, you will need to make sure that it is done safely.

Working hours are not governed by health and safety law. Young people and children have different employment rights from adult workers and are subject to protection in relation to the hours they can work. More information can be found at www.gov.uk.

Children below the MSLA must not be employed in industrial workplaces except when on work experience. Children under 13 are generally prohibited from any form of employment.

Safeguarding matters are not covered by health and safety law. Here, you will need to refer to other resources for information and guidance on this.

Hazards to look out for

Typical hazards include the following:

- the layout of the workplace which might pose a specific danger to young people (e.g. vehicle movements, maintenance workshops)
- hazardous substances used on the premises during maintenance or cleaning
- work equipment requiring specific instruction or training
- tasks that require particular knowledge or skills to be done safely (e.g. lifting or moving items).*

Remember that hazards that are obvious to you, may not be to a young person.

*This list is not exhaustive

Precautions you can take

Typical precautions include:

- appointing a person(s) to supervise young workers and monitor their progress
- considering the need for tailored training or closer supervision for some
- considering if the work required of a young person is beyond their physical or psychological capacity
- taking appropriate precautions when exposed to hazardous substances or noise etc.* *Note: this list is not exhaustive

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Making a start

Action	Guidance
1. Identify where any young people work or are involved in volunteering activities at your workplace. This should include any future planned activities which may involve them.	<p>Young persons could be employed by you, working on a voluntary basis or as work experience placement. It may be helpful to make a list of these.</p> <p>In some cases, it may be necessary to discuss what the young person will be doing in advance with the organisers (e.g. a school). It may also be appropriate to take account of what they and the parents or carers tell you of the young person's physical and psychological capacity and of any other particular needs (e.g. due to any health conditions or learning difficulties).</p>

2. Check the precautions you have taken are adequate.

If they are not, identify any additional ones that are needed and who will be responsible for implementing them.

If you are an employer and have completed formal risk assessments, a simple review of these should help you identify if adequate precautions are in place to protect young persons. If not, you may need to take additional steps to protect them.

In instances where the environment is low risk, everyday risks will mostly be familiar to any young person. Here, your existing arrangements and precautions used to protect other employees and volunteers should be enough.

For environments with risks less familiar, you may need to make arrangements to manage these through suitable induction, supervision and site familiarisation.

For higher-risk environments, you may need to satisfy yourself that the any instruction, training and supervisory arrangements have been properly thought through and that they work in practice.

If you don't currently work with any young people, have not done so in the last few years or are taking on a work experience student for the first time, or one with particular needs, review your risk assessment before they start. This will help you decide if the precautions you already have in place will be adequate.

3. Ensure that young people know how to work safely.

Make a note of any information or training that is provided to individuals.

In some cases young people will be facing unfamiliar risks, from the job they will be doing and from their surroundings. You will need to provide them with adequate instruction, training and supervision to enable them to work without putting themselves and other people at risk.

Again, where you are an employer and have completed formal risk assessments, these should help you decide what is necessary. For example, this may need to cover:

- the specific risks in your workplace
- the risks from any work to be done
- the health and safety precautions to be taken
- emergency procedures.

It is important that you check young people have understood the instruction and training they have received. In some cases, it might be appropriate to provide supervision for young persons. You may also need to monitor their progress which will help you identify where additional adjustments may be needed.

4. Document your arrangements and responsibilities for ensuring the safety of young persons.

Review these where necessary, particularly if you suspect that they are no longer valid.

Retain records of the notes you have made in the steps outlined above.

If you have prepared a health and safety policy, record your arrangements as part of it.

In the event of a claim, evidence of what you have done may be important. This could include risk assessments; records of maintenance, inspections and other checks; records of information and training provided; your policy, your accident book etc.

Want to know more?

Other useful health and safety information is available at www.ecclesiastical.com/risk-management/

Further guidance and resources are also available at <https://www.hse.gov.uk/young-workers/index.htm>

Note: if you are in Ireland, Northern Ireland, Jersey, Guernsey or the Isle of Man, then regional variations might apply. In this instance, you should check the guidance provided by the Enforcing Agency for your region. This will be freely available on their website.

This guidance is provided for information purposes and is general and educational in nature. It should not be used as a substitute for taking professional advice on specific issues and should not be taken as providing legal advice on any of the topics addressed.



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