

# Employers' perceptions of the health and safety of young workers

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# Employers' perceptions of the health and safety of young workers

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The aim was to investigate perceptions and attitudes about health and safety and the employment of young people. The work involved a review of published documents and interviews with 14 representatives from employer organisations, schools/academies, work placement organisers and insurers.

No documents were found that examined employers' views about young workers and health and safety. However, evidence was found within published documents that links increase of injury in young workers, and a lack of work experience and training, poor awareness of occupational risks, inadequate supervision, and possible lack of physical and/or psychological maturity. Interviewees perceived that all environments can present a risk if a worker lacks relevant experience or awareness of them.

When taking on a young person, interviewees considered age to be less important than experience and ability. Misperceptions were found to exist about the health and safety considerations that need to be made for young people when they enter the workforce. There were also some perceptions that employers may hide behind health and safety and insurance as excuses for not employing young people, when a more likely reason is that they perceive a young person to be a burden and an additional cost.

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Introduction

There is a lack of robust evidence regarding perceptions of health and safety and the employment of young people. The aim of this research was to investigate what evidence exists and to explore the origins of perceptions about health and safety and the attitudes of employers taking on young people into work placements and full time employment.

HSE's policy position on the employment of young people is set out at: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/youngpeople/risks/index.htm>

## Method

The research has been undertaken in two parts. The first part was a review of published documents which addressed a number of research questions including employers' views on young people and accidents, accident rates amongst young workers, what activities and sectors create higher risks for young workers and what proportionate risk management arrangements look like for schools/colleges, placement organisers and employers. The review included UK and EU studies published between 2002 and 2012.

The second part involved carrying out telephone interviews with a total of 14 representatives from employer organisations, schools / academies, work placement organisers and insurers. The small sample size was intentionally chosen to provide insight and improve understanding rather than provide robust statistical data. The views reported are not necessarily representative of the stakeholder groups sampled. The interviews were carried out at the start of 2014 and the questions covered perceptions about risk assessments, health and safety barriers to employing young people and to arranging work placements for them, where advice is obtained from, and knowledge of tools and guidance.

## Key findings

The documents included in the review defined young people as those up to the age of 25. On the other hand, interviewees categorised young people as those up to 16 years old, those aged 16 to 18, and in instances where they were perceived to be immature (either physically or psychologically), this definition included those up to the age of 24.

The document review did not identify any studies that specifically examined employers' views about young workers and health and safety, or information on the extent to which employers perceived young people as having more accidents. Insurers were the only group who were interviewed that referred to accident statistics as evidence that young workers take more risks.

Documented information on the types of accidents experienced by young workers and whether the causes vary by sectors or occupations was limited, as were up to date accident/injury statistics and details on activities and how these are linked with accident and/or fatality rates among young workers. The limited information available suggests that the types of activities that create risks for young workers includes carrying dangerous explosives and goods, ship building and repairing, power presses, woodworking machines, and mechanical lifting operations.

No documented information was found that linked specific types of accidents for young people with specific sectors or occupations. However, young people were found to be at greater risk of

having an occupational accident when compared to older workers, with the risks being greater in certain sectors such as construction, manufacturing and agriculture, along with engineering, motor vehicle repair, hotels and catering. Common types of occupational accidents for young people include being struck by a moving vehicle, injuries due to incorrect manual handling procedures, slips, trips and falls-related injuries, injuries from electrical equipment, machinery-related injuries and injuries due to exposure/use of harmful chemicals/substances.

Evidence from across all of the interviews confirmed that construction, manufacturing and agriculture are perceived to be high risk work environments, with greater potential for accidents compared to an office or retail environment. Mention was also made of garages, factories, warehouses, cold stores and anywhere with high speed machinery being high risk environments for young people. It was acknowledged that all environments can be a risk if a worker lacks relevant work experience. Although the type of business was not likely to influence employers' decisions to employ a young person, it appeared to influence where they place the young person in the business, and the tasks they would be allowed to do. However, in contrast to these practices, which were reported by employers interviewed for this study, insurers perceived that young people aged under the age of 18 are excluded from working in certain industries such as steel works, foundries and the nuclear sector.

None of the documents discussed or defined what constitutes proportionate risk management arrangements for young workers. However, they covered a number of risk management practices that should be in place to protect young people, such as conducting risk assessments, workplace suitability assessments, monitoring visits, induction, training and supervision. In addition, a link was reported between increase of injury in young workers and a lack of work experience and training, poor awareness of occupational risks, inadequate supervision, and possible lack of physical and/or psychological maturity.

There is evidence from across the interviews that employers are believed to be responsible for completing a young persons' risk assessment. However, there is also evidence from the interviews that work placement organisers and schools may also be doing this to some extent. Whilst there is a perception from employers that a separate risk assessment should be completed for all young workers, this was not held by all of those who were interviewed. Insurers believed that it was a misperception and schools and work placement organisers described it as a myth.

Employers who were interviewed varied in their practices regarding completion of risk assessments, ranging from those that completed a generic one for all young people, to those that completed one for every young person because they believed it was a legal requirement or that it was beneficial for both the business and the young person to do this. Perceived benefits of conducting a risk assessment included limiting risk and helping to tailor supervision and training to the young person, which would help to retain young people in the longer term, thus reducing recruitment costs. A benefit of employing a young person was perceived to be providing staff who supervise them with leadership skills.

Experience of the workplace, work tasks and the world in general, along with ability were perceived by all interview participants to be more important than age when employers are considering taking on a young person. However, there was a perception that there are a number of factors that can be linked to age, such as a lack of maturity and common sense and an unwillingness to ask questions (although these can be person rather than age specific). In addition to experience being a consideration when taking on a young person, employers perceived attitude to be important, for example having a desire to want to work for the employer and the ability to listen to what they are told.

Employers, schools/academies, work placement organisers and insurers who were interviewed all see it as the employers' responsibility to provide supervision for young people in the workplace, with extra support being required due to some young people being more willing to take risks and lacking awareness of risks. Schools and work placement organisers see it as the schools role to risk assess the young persons' suitability to be in the workplace and to make employers aware of any particular needs the young person has. There is a perception amongst schools/academies, work placement organisers and insurers that it is the work placement organisers responsibility to carry out assessments of the workplace and tasks to ensure that they are suitable for the young person, and to do these at a frequency depending on whether the workplace is a low, medium or high risk environment. In the view of a work placement organiser there may be duplication of effort in assessing the tasks, as schools and employers may also do this.

Employers and insurers who were interviewed generally acknowledged that all environments can present a risk if a worker does not have relevant experience or awareness of them. Some employers and work placement organisers perceived that employers can misinterpret legislation and hide behind it, using health and safety as an excuse for not taking on a young person. There was a suggestion from some employers that the health and safety considerations that need to be made for young people were complex and that employers can feel cautious, vulnerable and frightened as they are concerned and anxious about ensuring the safety of young people and about the impact on their business if something were to go wrong (e.g. being sued and their insurance premiums being affected).

Whilst insurers who were interviewed confirmed that there are no different insurance requirements for young people, there was a perception from schools and insurers that employers may use insurance as an excuse for not taking on those aged under 16. The cost of employers' liability insurance was believed to be a barrier to taking on young people for those employer groups that would usually be exempt, and would have to incur additional costs to obtain it before employing a young person.

Evidence from across the interviews indicates that checks made on the workplace may be a barrier to employing young people. There is evidence from the interviews with employers, schools and work placement organisers that an employer may be subjected to checks for every young person, and that they can be checked by both work placement organisers and schools, and asked repeatedly for information on their health and safety arrangements. There is also a perception that employers can find it a burden to complete what they may perceive to be lots of complex health and safety paperwork for a young person.

Employers and work placement organisers who were interviewed both felt that employers are likely to find that supervising the young person is the biggest burden (and a potential barrier) to taking them on, as this takes time away from business activities and thus can be costly for the organisation. Employers believed that the young person needs to be able to obtain helpful work experience, whilst at the same time contributing something useful to the business.

Employers reported obtaining advice and guidance on employing young people from a range of sources, both internal to their organisations (e.g. health and safety adviser) and externally (e.g. HSE, Education Business Partnerships and Local Authorities). There was evidence from the employer interviews that employers are not always up to date with the most recent health and safety guidance on young people, partly because they are using their own policies which they have developed over many years and will only become aware of new or revised guidance when they update their policies.

Whilst the available tools and guidance were generally believed, by employers who were interviewed, to tell employers all they need to know about taking on young people, employers had preferences regarding the way in which the tools and guidance were presented (and would appreciate the inclusion of examples, templates and checklists). There was a belief that employers will need to consult a range of sources of advice and guidance and to be able to adapt this to the reality of their own business.

All groups who were interviewed believed the relationship between schools and employers was important for arranging successful work placements for young people. However, there was a perception from work placement organisers and insurer interviews that there is room for improvement in the communication between schools and employers and parents have a role to play in helping with this.

Schools who were interviewed did not perceive that there were any health and safety difficulties in arranging work placements, although commented that if a young person was only taken on in an observation role (if the employer perceived the task to be too risky) then their experience would be limited. Schools reported checking with the employer about health and safety and also with young people about what tasks they had been doing and the health and safety arrangements that were in place for them. Schools perceived that one of the main difficulties in arranging work placements was finding employers who had the time to supervise young people. If schools required advice on arranging work placements, then they were most likely to consult their Education Business Partnership (EBP).

### **Conclusions and limitations**

Misperceptions exist about the health and safety considerations that need to be made for young people when they enter the workforce. Evidence from some of the interviews with employers and work placement organisers that participated in this study indicate that employers may hide behind health and safety and insurance as excuses for not employing young people, when a more likely reason is that they perceive a young person to be a burden and an additional cost.

A range of factors were considered, by employers who were interviewed, when deciding whether to take on a young person. These include the experience, ability and attitude of the young person, how useful they will be to the business, and the time that will be required by the employer to supervise them.

The findings from the review of the documents need to be considered in light of the limitations of the documents which were reviewed, and of the literature on the health and safety of young workers more broadly. The sample for the interviews was intentionally small (n=14). This is usual with qualitative research that seeks to explore a topic and obtain insight and understanding, rather than to produce numerical statistics (sample sizes typically vary between 3 and 30 participants).

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 BACKGROUND

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) are aware of anecdotal evidence which suggests that health and safety presents a barrier to employers taking on young students and apprentices into work placements and full time employment. However, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) are not aware of more robust evidence to confirm this. HSE wished to explore where this perception about employment of young people comes from, and to investigate what evidence exists.

According to HSE's knowledge, many employers have considerable experience of successfully employing young people or taking on work experience students. HSE understand that those who are new to the workplace (which may include young people) are at greater risk of accidents.

HSE's policy position on the employment of young people is set out at <http://www.hse.gov.uk/youngpeople/risks/index.htm>

HSE policy is that taking on young people or work experience students should be straightforward, it should not be about generating unnecessary paperwork. HSE request that anyone who is advised to do something contrary to, or that goes beyond HSE guidance, can question this by contacting [HSE's Myth Buster Challenge Panel](#).

There is no requirement for a separate risk assessment for a young person. Employers have the same responsibilities for the health and safety of young workers under 18 as they do for other employees. Employers are already obliged to be managing any significant risks in their workplaces and should have the necessary control measures in place. If an employer currently employs a young person, their existing arrangements for assessment and management of the risks should be sufficient.

HSE advocate that it is important to take a proportionate approach. If employing a young person for the first time, or employing one with particular needs, HSE guidance will help to keep it simple: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/youngpeople/workexperience/cutting-bureaucracy.htm>

HSE commissioned the Health and Safety Laboratory (HSL) to obtain a broad overview ('snapshot') of what key information is available relating to the health and safety of young people, and also to explore the perceptions of employers, schools / academies, work-placement providers and insurers regarding the health and safety of young workers.

The research was undertaken in two parts. The first consisted of carrying out a review of key documents and reporting the findings in a letter report (HuSU/LET/13/34), in order to inform the revision of HSE's guidance on young workers. The second part consisted of undertaking telephone interviews with a small sample of representatives from employer organisations, schools / academies, work-placement providers and insurers.

This report includes the research from both pieces of work.

## **1.2 RESEARCH AIM**

The aim of the research was to gather evidence and investigate employers' perceptions about the health and safety of young people and about taking them on into work placements and full time employment.

## **1.3 OBJECTIVES AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

### **1.3.1 Part 1 Extraction of data from documents**

The first part of the research involved reviewing information from a range of published documents in order to address the following research questions:

- 1.1 What are employers' views on young people and accidents?
- 1.2 Do employers think young people have more accidents, if so why?
- 1.3 Does statistical evidence suggest that accident rates are higher amongst young workers in certain sectors? If so, what do we know about the types of accidents that occur and why they occur?
- 1.4 Do particular work activities/sectors create higher risks for young workers?
- 1.5 What do proportionate risk management arrangements look like for schools/colleges, placement providers and employers?

### **1.3.2 Part 2 Interviews to explore perceptions about young workers**

The second part of the research involved carrying out interviews with 14 participants from a range of businesses, schools/academies, work placement organisers and insurers in order to explore their perceptions about young workers.

The interviews took place at the start of 2014, and the following research questions were addressed by the interviews:

- 2.1 Is there a perception that a risk assessment needs to be completed for every young worker? If so, what drives this?
- 2.2 What are the current health and safety barriers to sensible approaches in employing young people - specifically for work experience/apprentices/employees?
- 2.3 Where do employers get their advice on employing young people from?
- 2.4 What tools/guidance is available/needed to maintain a sensible and proportionate approach when employing young people?
- 2.5 What health and safety difficulties do schools/colleges experience in arranging work placements for their students?
- 2.6 Who advises schools/colleges arranging work experience for their students?

## 2. METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 PART 1 EXTRACTION OF DATA FROM DOCUMENTS

In agreement with HSE, the scope of stage one was to obtain a broad overview ('snapshot') of the available evidence rather than conduct an in-depth review. This was limited to a maximum of twenty-five documents published between 2002 and 2012.

Two searches were conducted in order to identify potentially relevant documents. First, the HSE search team identified potential papers for inclusion by examining several databases (e.g. EBSCO, OSHUPDATE, ProQuest). Secondly, a separate search was conducted by an HSL researcher on the websites of a total of 24 organisations identified by HSE as organisations that may have conducted research and/or have relevant guidance on young workers.

The search produced a total of 35 potentially relevant documents. In consultation with HSE, additional criteria were applied in order to ensure that pertinent documents were included in the review (inclusion only of UK and EU-based documents/studies, and those with findings for young workers up to the age of 25). This resulted in a total of 21 relevant documents (Appendix 1). With the exception of one, all of the documents identified were grey literature (i.e. publications issued by government, academia, business, or industry and typically comprising of newsletters, reports, fact sheets, and other publications).

HSE published documents were not included within the scope of this work.

### 2.2 PART 2 INTERVIEWS TO EXPLORE PERCEPTIONS ABOUT YOUNG WORKERS

#### 2.2.1 The Sample

The sample was provided by HSE. It was selected purposively, using existing HSE networks and contacts, in order to include people that would provide a range of views and experiences relating to the health and safety of young workers.

**Table 1: Sample**

Category	Number in the sample
Service industries (Services/hospitality/leisure, office based and retail).	4
Manufacturing Construction and Agriculture	4
Schools and Academies	2
Work placement organisers	2
Insurers	2
Total number of interviews	14

The final groupings and numbers within the sample were revised and updated, in consultation with HSE, following delivery of part one of the work.

### **2.2.2 Data collection**

Four semi structured interview guides were developed, one for employers, one for schools / academies, one for work placement organisers, and one for insurers (See Appendix 2 for the employers interview guide). The guides contained a number of common questions, as well as including content that was specific to each category of interviewee. Each interview guide was discussed and agreed with HSE.

A total of 14 telephone interviews were carried out, each lasting between forty five minutes and one hour. Consent was obtained from the participants for the HSL researchers to take written notes and audio recordings during the interviews, and they were assured of anonymity.

### **2.2.3 Data analysis**

Data was analysed using a systematic approach as advocated by the National Centre for Social Research. This approach develops, refines and modifies an analytic (or thematic) framework, into which every piece of data is then systematically and consistently analysed. Four separate analytical frameworks were developed, one for each group in the sample. These frameworks were informed by the research objectives, research questions and by the key issues that were identified from the interview data.

In order to ensure that the data analysis accurately reflected participants' responses to all of the interview questions, data was entered into the frameworks using both the interview notes and by listening to the audio recordings taken during the interviews. Inter-rater reliability checks were also carried out on the data in the framework in order to ensure completeness and consistency in the analysis.

In line with the nature of the research questions, the interpretation stage involved descriptive analysis (describing the data within a series of themes), in order to present the range and diversity of views given by participants.

## **3. RESULTS**

The results are reported under two main sections.

The findings from the document review (part one of the research) have been reported in full in a letter report (HuSU/13/14). The findings and are summarised here in Section 3.1 and the references for the document review, which are reported in the letter report, are included in Appendix 3.

Findings from the 14 interviews (across all 5 groups that were interviewed) are reported together (Section 3.2) under four main themes (which have been agreed with HSE), with a series of sub-themes within each one. Where there are differences between the different groups these are reported in the text and any direct quotes from those who were interviewed are shown in the text in inverted commas. The themes are as follows:

Perceptions (Section 3.2.1)

Practices (Section 3.2.2)

Expertise / knowledge (Section 3.2.3)

Improvements that were identified by those interviewed (Section 3.2.4)

### **3.1 PART 1 EXTRACTION OF DATA FROM DOCUMENTS**

#### **3.1.1 Employers' views on young people and accidents**

Within the documents that were reviewed there appears to be a lack of consensus regarding the age range covered by the term young workers, with documents including those aged up to 25 in this definition.

No studies were identified that specifically examined employers' views about young workers' health and safety and the extent to which they perceive young people as having more accidents.

There was limited information in the documents regarding the types of accidents that young workers experience and whether the causes of accidents may vary between different sectors and occupations. In addition, there was a lack of up to date accident/injury statistics (both European and UK-based).

#### **3.1.2 Rates and types of accident amongst young workers**

Based on the evidence that was reviewed, young workers are at greater risk of having an occupational accident when compared to older workers with some sectors carrying greater risks for young workers, for example construction, manufacturing, agriculture and fishing (European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, 2007). Young workers have lower fatal accident rates compared to older workers (HSE health and safety statistics 2000/01; EUOSHA, 2007). However, fatal accident rates among young workers under the age of 25 can be considerable in some sectors such as agriculture, construction, transport and communication, manufacturing and the motor industry (European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, 2006d; 2007).

Very limited information was available regarding the types of accidents that occur among young workers. Common types include being struck by a moving vehicle, injuries due to incorrect manual handling procedures, slips, trips and falls-related injuries, injuries from electrical equipment (Oxenforth, 2004), machinery-related injuries and injuries due to exposure/use of harmful chemicals/substances (Oxenforth, 2004; European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, 2006a). No information was identified that linked specific types of accidents that young workers may experience with specific sectors or occupations.

The evidence that was reviewed suggests that an increase of injury in young workers has been linked to lack of work experience and training, poor awareness of occupational risks, inadequate supervision, and possible lack of physical and/or psychological maturity (Oxenforth, 2004; European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, 2006a, 2006d; British Safety Council, 2010, Belin et al., 2011).

### **3.1.3 Work activities/sectors that create higher risks for young workers**

A number of documents suggest that young workers in agriculture and construction are at highest risk both in the UK and Europe, and other sectors that are identified as posing risks for young workers include engineering, motor vehicle repair and hotels and catering.

Findings from the European Survey of Working Conditions, 2000 (cited in European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, 2007) indicate that, compared to the average working population, young workers are more likely to be exposed to heat and cold, noise (e.g. in hotels and restaurants), vibrations, fumes and dangerous substances (e.g. in agriculture and construction) which are present in many sectors that typically employ young workers. In construction, agriculture and manufacturing, young workers may be particularly at risk from developing musculoskeletal disorders as a result of adopting awkward postures and carrying heavy loads.

There was limited information regarding specific work activities that create risks for young workers in these sectors, or how these work activities are linked with accident and/or fatality rates among young workers. Other activities that create risks for young workers include carrying dangerous explosives and goods, ship building and repairing, power presses, woodworking machines, and mechanical lifting operations (Steemson, 2011).

### **3.1.4 Proportionate risk management arrangements**

A number of documents were identified that discussed the risk management arrangements that should be in place to protect young workers (Oxenforth, 2004; European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, 2006a; European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, 2006b; European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, 2006c; Institution of Occupational Safety and Health, 2006; Learning and Skills Council, 2006a; Learning and Skills Council, 2006b; National Work Experience Partnership Group, 2006; Trades Union Congress, 2006; Construction Skills Council, 2008; European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, 2009; Steemson, 2011; Association of Colleges Eastern Region, 2012; Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents, 2012).

However, none of these documents discussed or defined what constitutes ‘proportionate’ risk management arrangements for young workers. The documents covered a number of risk management practices that should be in place to protect young workers, such as conducting risk

assessments, workplace suitability assessments, monitoring visits, induction and training, and supervision.

A number of documents highlighted the need for employers to take into account factors specific to young workers when conducting a risk assessment, such as their age, inexperience, potential physical and/or psychological immaturity, and a lack of risk awareness (Oxenforth, 2004; National Work Experience Partnership Group, 2006).

For young workers under the school leaving age, several documents recommended that employers must inform parents of the risk assessment and the measures in place to reduce any risks to an acceptable level (Oxenforth, 2004; European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, 2006a; Trades Union Congress, 2006; Construction Skills, 2008; Steemson, 2011). It was also recommended that other issues such as learning difficulties, disabilities or health conditions should also be considered in risk assessments if they pose additional risks for young learners (National Work Experience Partnership Group, 2006). Several documents also advised that employers should take into consideration the nature of any physical, biological and chemical agents to which young workers may be exposed to, including tasks that young workers should be prohibited from carrying out (European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, 2006a; Steemson, 2011). It is recommended that young workers over the minimum school leaving age can carry out tasks that are 'prohibited' only if the work is necessary for their training, they are properly supervised, and the risks are reduced to the lowest level as far as is reasonably practicable (Learning and Skills Council, 2006b).

A document from the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, (2006c) discussed the needs for specific age groups of young workers. It recommended that for young workers under the age of 18, the risk assessment should cover the workplace, physical, biological and chemical agents, work equipment and its use, work processes, operation and work organisation, and training. Additionally, restrictions to the working hours of young workers, rest periods, and work patterns (such as night work) should be considered by employers. Guidance by Construction Skills (2008), which is aimed at 14-16 year olds, advises employers that they can either revise an existing risk assessment to reflect the risks of having young people in the workplace (i.e. considering risk factors such as inexperience, lack of training, immaturity) or carry out an additional 'young persons' risk assessment.

The need for learning providers/colleges to carry out a workplace suitability assessment, to ensure that the work environment is safe for learners to work was discussed in three documents (National Work Experience Partnership Group, 2006; Construction Skills, 2008; Association of Colleges Eastern Region, 2012). This assessment should cover a number of areas, for example health and safety policy, risk assessments and control measures, emergency arrangements, supervision and training (Association of Colleges Eastern Region, 2012; Construction Skills, 2008; National Work Experience Partnership Group, 2006). It is also suggested that learning providers visit the workplace (before the young learner starts) in order to assess its suitability through observation and discussion with the employer. The Association of Colleges recommends that learning providers must adopt a pragmatic approach and use their judgment as to whether the workplace is suitable for learners to undertake work experience.

In addition to risk assessments and workplace suitability assessments, some documents suggest that schools/colleges should conduct an 'initial' monitoring visit soon after the learner commences the work placement, followed by visits at defined regular intervals (depending on the level of risk, the individual needs of the learner and the type of work activities being carried out) to ensure that health and safety standards are maintained (Association of Colleges Eastern Region, 2012; National Work Experience Partnership Group, 2006). It is recommended that colleges re-inspect workplaces every one, two or three years depending on whether work

placements are carried out in low, medium or high risk organisations (Association of Colleges Eastern Region, 2012).

The importance of young workers' receiving health and safety induction and/or training immediately when they start work was also discussed in a number of documents (Steemson, 2011; Construction Skills, 2008; European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, 2006a; Learning and Skills Council, 2006a, 2006b). These recommend that a health and safety induction should cover elements such as a tour of the premises, workplace and job-specific hazards and risk controls, supervision arrangements, accident/ill health reporting, emergency and first aid arrangements.

Finally, some documents discussed the need for young workers to be supervised more closely to ensure that they have the necessary competence for the job, as well as the skills and arrangements that should be in place for the effective supervision of young workers (e.g. Oxenforth, 2004; European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, 2006a; Learning and Skills Council, 2006a, 2006b; Steemson, 2011). In determining the level of supervision required, the Learning and Skills Council recommend that employers should consider the nature of the task, as well learners' skills, physical ability and maturity.

## **3.2 PART 2 FINDINGS FROM THE INTERVIEWS**

### **3.2.1 Perceptions**

#### **Perceptions about risk assessments**

A range of views were reported regarding completion of risk assessments for young people. Employers completed a generic risk assessment to cover all young people, or generic to each business site, unless a young person had specific requirements, or in instances where the employer perceived that it was in the interests of their business to complete a separate one for each young person (in terms of limiting risk and providing a more tailored experience for the young person which will help to retain them and reduce future recruitment costs).

In instances where a young person is aged under 16 there was a view from insurers that employers should complete a specific risk assessment and make this available to the parents / guardians. Insurers suggested that the misperception that a separate risk assessment should be completed for each individual young worker may be due to employers' interpretation of a young person's risk assessment being "every young person requires a risk assessment".

Schools, work placement organisers and insurers were all aware that it is a myth that a separate risk assessment is needed for each young person (unless they have specific needs). However, whilst work placement organisers held this view, they reported that in practice, they may risk assess the tasks that the young person will be carrying out and offer advice to employers about producing a risk assessment, if they perceive that the risk assessment which the employer has produced is insufficient, or if they do not have one.

#### **Perceptions about the difference that age makes**

Evidence from across all of the interviews indicated that age was believed to make a difference to the considerations that need to be made for young people in the workplace. This is because young people lack experience of (and exposure to) the workplace and to the "outside world" in general. Employers, schools and insurers believed that young people lack awareness and

appreciation of the risks, and are more willing to take risks. Insurers perceived that they have an “it will never happen to me attitude”.

Insurers commented that there is evidence from accident statistics that young people take more risks than other people, and they perceived that unlike older people who would consider risks and their consequences, “younger people may not be aware of the risk or will assess the risk after they have already taken it”. Insurers believed that young people were at greater risk from chemical exposure due to their “higher cell turnover”. They also believed that employers are “nervous” about taking on people below the minimum school leaving age of 16 as there is a perception that it could impact on their insurance, or that it feels uncomfortable to take on someone so young.

Employers and schools perceived that age was related to a lack of maturity (both physical and psychological). A school commented that young people lacked life-skills, common sense, self-awareness and had an un-willingness to ask questions (for fear of feeling stupid). However, there was an appreciation by employers that many factors are person, rather than age specific, and employers and insurers acknowledged that there will be risks in all environments if a person has no relevant experience of such environments.

There was a perception by employers that competence, ability, experience and attitude are more important than age when deciding to employ a young person: “if you are good enough, you are old enough”. It was believed that as long as the young person is supervised and has an awareness of the risks, then the risks should be no different than for other workers.

### **Perceptions about ‘who does what’ for young people in the workplace**

There was a shared perception amongst all categories that it was the employers’ responsibility to produce the risk assessment, to provide supervision and support for the young person, and that their role might also include providing an induction, training and mentoring.

Whilst work placement organisers believed that it is the role of the employer to complete a risk assessment, they reported that employers differ in the extent to which they understand their responsibilities for this. Therefore, the work placement organisers saw part of their role as advising employers about health and safety for young people. They commented that there is a “varied and patchy approach” to arranging work placements for young people and that the rules for work experience are “muddled”.

Schools believed that they are responsible for making employers aware of any particular needs that the young person has, and for risk assessing the suitability of the young person to be in the workplace (e.g. in terms of their behaviour). This view was also held by work placement organisers.

Schools/academies, work placement organisers and insurers were asked about responsibilities for checking the workplace and each believed work placement organisers to be responsible for this, ensuring that the work environment and tasks are suitable for a young person, and that young people are not put at risk. This includes checking that the employer has employers’ liability insurance. They agreed that the frequency of the checks will depend on the level of risk in the workplace (for example high risk work places such as garages and factories will be checked more frequently than offices).

There was evidence from interviews with work placement organisers that there are instances where both the work placement organiser and the school visit the same employer and carry out similar checks, and where both the employer and the work placement organiser risk assess the

tasks that the young person will be doing. This may be driven by concerns to ensure that a young person is not put at any risk.

### **Perceptions about regulation**

Employers who were interviewed believed that it was a legal requirement to complete a young person's risk assessment. In addition they mentioned legislation regarding the provision of support, hours of work and age limits on the activities a young person is permitted to do (such as driving or using high risk machinery).

There was evidence from interviews with some employers and work placement organisers that health and safety is perceived to be a potential barrier for employers taking on young people. This was expressed in various ways and included an employer view that multiple requests are received for health and safety policies and risk assessments and a perception that employers may hide behind health and safety as a way of "protecting their backs". There was also the view from work placement organisers that employers perceive health and safety to involve lots of complicated paperwork, so they decide not to take on a young person as a way of "cutting out risk altogether".

### **Perceptions about financial drawbacks and costs relating to placing young people in the workplace (including insurance and civil liability issues)**

There was evidence from schools and work placement organisers that there is potential for duplication of effort in terms of completing risk assessments and carrying out workplace checks, which is primarily driven by a need to make money. For example, a school reported that work placement organisers / Education Business Partnerships (EBPs) can insist on a separate check for each young person (at a cost of £30 per young person), as opposed to one check for the workplace / task which will cover all young people who have the same placement (same workplace / same task). The school reported that it is their belief that according to legislation published in October 2013, they are no longer required to have checks done by the EBP for those young people aged over 16 if the school is happy that everything is in place.

Work placement organisers believed that due to schools having to pay if they wanted to use them to check workplaces, some schools were carrying out the checks themselves. The organisers and also insurers perceived that schools may lack the necessary skills and resources to undertake these checks, potentially putting young people at risk. An insurer commented that there may be a need to educate some schools about what they should be asking employers for when they assess the workplace.

It was the perception of insurers that employers are nervous and uncomfortable about taking on young people under the age of 16 as they believe it will have an impact on their insurance. If they are asked, insurers would inform employers that insurance policies are standard and cover all employees, including those on work experience.

Those interviewees who worked for larger employers generally had no experience of dealing with insurers themselves, as it was the responsibility of a health and safety manager or legal team, so they felt unable to comment about their role. However, employers generally perceived that insurers have no role in their decision to take on young people, although it was the view of one employer (with fewer than 50 employees) that insurance premiums may increase if a young person was employed in a high risk part of the business.

Whilst schools did not know if insurers had a role in employers' decision to take on a young person, there was evidence from the interviews that a school is advising employers to ring their

insurers before taking on a young person under the age of 16 (to tell them what the young person would be doing and to check with the insurer what tasks the young person could do).

Schools and insurers believed that employers may use insurance as an “excuse” for not taking on young people under the age of 16. In the view of a work placement organiser, the role of insurers is a “grey area” as insurance can be a reason for those aged under 16 not being taken on (e.g. by construction firms).

All of those who were interviewed were aware that employers are required to have employers’ liability insurance (ELCI) in order to take on a young person. However, certain businesses (sole traders and family businesses) are exempt from ELCI, and work placement organisers perceived that the cost of obtaining this was a barrier to taking on a young person. Costs were reported to be around £50 per week, which work placement organisers believed was a lot to ask and a reason why an otherwise suitable employer may not take on a young person. They felt that the Association of British Insurers could help by issuing guidance to its members about “having decent rates to cover people on work experience”.

There was a view from schools and employers that a young person has to be doing something useful for the business (and is also worthwhile for them to gain experience). If they have to be constantly supervised in order to achieve this (e.g. driving machinery) then it would be too much cost for a business and not worth the business employing them. An employer would not be prepared to take on a young person if they believed that doing so would be too onerous, that is if you “had to handle them very differently”. Therefore the completion of a risk assessment is just one factor in employers’ decision making about whether to take on a young person.

There was a perception by an employer that a “claims culture” and fear of being sued is something that puts employers off taking on young people. It was believed that “employees can exploit the employer by making financial claims if there is an accident. This makes employers risk adverse so they go over the top with health and safety to cover their backs with procedures because they feel vulnerable”.

### **3.2.2 Practices**

#### **What risks are assessed and how parties approach this (e.g. risk adverse or not)**

Employers reported that, whilst the level of risk in their industry may not influence their decisions to take on young people “as you can hide behind a high risk environment”, it is likely to influence where they place them in the business.

Whilst the service industry was generally believed to be low risk, employers highlighted that it does contain high risk areas such as cold stores and warehouses, and that they will not place a young person in these areas, even when they are supervised, trained and all the controls are in place.

Employers in the manufacturing, construction and agriculture sectors all agreed that these were high risk working environments. Comments included “it is a dangerous place to be” with “potential for a lot of accidents”. Whilst employers in these sectors would still take on young people, they would not permit them to do high risk work, for example high speed tasks requiring physical maturity.

Employers who were interviewed expressed a degree of concern and nervousness about keeping young people safe at work, and there was a view that people are more cautious when taking on a

young person. In instances where a separate risk assessment is carried out for each young person, the employer sees this as an investment which limits risk as well as looking after young people and “giving them the opportunity to flourish”.

Employers in all sectors will carry out a risk assessment of the task that the young person will be doing. The work placement organiser and school may also do this, either verbally with the employer or via documenting this as part of a young person’s job description. Schools perceived that employers react differently with respect to the health and safety of young people, including being “frightened” by it and “getting fed up” with it due to multiple checks from EBPs.

Insurers perceived that young people under the age of 18 are excluded from working in industries such as steel works, foundries and the nuclear sector due to the nature of activities they would be exposed to. In addition, there was a belief that young people should not work with radiation and carcinogens, and in the waste and recycling industry, due to the “bad accident rates”. They believed that schools and work placement organisers should check to ensure that employers are managing work related risks, which includes checking that there is a health and safety policy in place, training provisions and a positive safety culture.

Insurers commented on general insurance practices where most businesses will go to a broker who will provide advice to employers on all types of insurance, possibly send out a risk assessor, and arrange the insurance policy. When insurers described this process they did not mention young workers. The employer would probably not talk to the insurer directly, as it is the insurance broker who typically communicates with the employers. However, the broker may speak to the insurance company on behalf of the employer if there is a health and safety query. There was one belief that around 70% of employers would ring their broker to check about employing a young person.

### **Benefits of taking on a young person and completing a young persons’ risk assessment**

Employers reported that taking on a young person is beneficial to their business as it can mean that staff have the opportunity to improve their leadership skills (through supervising young people) and that the business is likely to retain the young person (thus reducing recruitment costs). Young people were perceived to be flexible employees, less expensive to employ than older workers, and to contribute positively to the diversity within the workplace.

One employer completed a separate risk assessment for those under the age of 18 (and also for those aged up to 24 in instances where they were deemed to be immature). The benefits of conducting separate risk assessments were that it enabled the employer to obtain a full understanding of the young person and to tailor their supervision and training. It also means that the risk assessment always reflects the work environment and the hazards, as these are constantly changing.

### **Young people’s attitudes in practice**

Employers perceived that the attitudes of a young person were particularly important when they were making a decision whether to take on a young person or not. Attitudes were assessed at the interview stage by asking the young person why they wanted to work for the employer / undertake a work placement with them. If a young person was not really interested in the employer or the job role, this had been found to have a negative influence on their behaviour whilst at work (for example by generally being disruptive). Whilst they were at work employers believed that attitude was important in terms of listening to what they were being told: “they must be prepared to listen, to do what you tell them and not think they know better”.

## **Supervision**

Employers acknowledged the need to provide additional supervision for a young person. However, they reported that this can be costly for them as it means taking other staff “off the job” in order to do the supervision and this can be a barrier to taking on young people. “Businesses are constantly striving to reduce costs and finding placements and spending time with the young person takes time away from the day job”. Managers can be reluctant to take on a young person because it has an implication on them “achieving their targets”. “People are more cautious when it is a young person under the age of 18 as they see them as an extra burden on the business as they feel obliged to provide support (per legislation and HSE guidance)”.

Work placement organisers had experience of employers struggling to provide staff to supervise young people (a rural area with mainly small businesses), and found that this is particularly an issue if employees have targets to meet, or staffing numbers are limited (which has become a particular issue recently).

### **3.2.3 Expertise and knowledge**

#### **Knowledge about tools and guidance on the employment of young people**

Knowledge about tools and guidance varied between the different groups, although HSE was generally perceived to be the best source of guidance on health and safety and the employment of young people.

Employers who were aware of guidance mentioned the work experience manager’s guide and guidance on working hours. They were likely to look at the management regulations, legal series, approved codes of practice and legislation. One large employer was aware of HSE’s revised guidance on young people and work experience and commented that “it was superb for small businesses” but that his requirements were for something more complex and in-depth.

Whilst both of the schools that took part in the interviews used the services of an EBP to organise the placements on their behalf, their knowledge of guidance varied. One reported that they work to legislation relating to young people and use the local education authority guidance, whilst the other had no knowledge of any guidance as they relied on the EBP to know this.

Work placement organisers had varying knowledge of tools and guidance. One was using HSE’s revised guidance on young people and work experience which they perceived to be good in terms of being short and easy to understand, with the checklists and information leaflet being particularly useful. The other work placement organiser was using the Learning and Skills Council guidance and the safety placement standards. There was a perception that it is difficult to identify the most up to date guidance.

#### **What the different groups do not know**

Overall, employers who were interviewed struggled to name specific health and safety guidance due to the fact that they had developed their own policies over many years and incorporated various sources of guidance into these. If the employer had a health and safety consultant then they would rely on them to have knowledge of the relevant guidance, and thus they were not aware of it themselves. Employers were more likely than the other groups to obtain advice from a range of sources (HSE, EBPs, networks and peers, local authorities, schools, health and safety advisers/managers/consultants, insurance managers, and human resource managers).

Employers were not aware of HSE's revised guidance on young people and work experience. This may be because it was outside of their role to keep up to date with guidance, or because their policies were last updated before the revised guidance was published.

### **3.2.4 Improvements identified by those who were interviewed**

#### **The relationship between the school and employer**

Across all groups that were interviewed, there was a belief that the relationship between schools and employers is an important one. Insurers expected schools to build up relationships with local businesses and to know the business risks and hazards. There was evidence from the school and employer interviews that this is happening. Schools have a desire to match the young person to the employer, and employers want to take on a young person who will gain good experience, and at the same time contribute "something useful" to their business.

Work placement organisers and insurers felt that there was room for improvement in the communication between schools and employers, and also in schools' capabilities to carry out the workplace assessments. Schools noted that the information they are able to provide to employers is limited by data protection issues. In addition, they rely on information provided to them by parents, which may not always be an accurate picture of the young person.

#### **Targeted publicity on guidance**

There were mixed views from those who were able to comment on the guidance for young people (employers and work placement organisers) regarding whether it tells employers all they need to know. One employer believed that there is still a "need to adapt the guidance to the reality of the business you are in" and another suggested that the inclusion of templates and examples as part of the guidance would be helpful for employers, along with checklists of what you need to do "for statutory reasons". A school believed that "things you need to consider when placing students" would be beneficial for schools.

There was evidence from employer interviews of a general concern that reference is being made to guidance that is out of date. It was felt that employers want to know when new or revised guidance is issued and to have this brought to their attention, as at present they perceive that they may overlook changes that are made to guidance (e.g. if they miss the publicity or do not become aware of revisions until they are updating their health and safety policies).

#### **Clarification on insurance requirements**

Insurers suggested that employers may hide behind saying they are not insured to take on a young person, when this is not the case. They perceived that the real reason employers do not take on young people may be that they "do not want to be exposed to an increased level of risk, to have an increased duty of care, or to have the bother setting up the work placement or doing the associated paperwork / risk assessment".

## **4. CONCLUSIONS AND LIMITATIONS**

### **4.1 CONCLUSIONS**

Perceptions about the age range covered by the term ‘young worker’ differ, and can include those aged up to 24/25.

There is limited documented evidence regarding young workers and health and safety. However, a number of sectors (including construction, manufacturing and agriculture) are documented as being high risk environments for young workers and this was also the perception identified from the interviews.

No documented studies were found that examined employers’ views about young workers and health and safety. The data collected in the interviews provides evidence of employers’ perceptions about young workers and indicates that there are misperceptions about the considerations that need to be made when young people enter the workforce.

The evidence from the interviews includes a concern that young people can lack awareness of the workplace and could take more risks than older workers. This may be the result of lack experience of the workplace, ability, immaturity or an inappropriate attitude.

Employers who participated in the interviews are aware of their responsibility to provide supervision for young people. However, this can be seen as a burden and a cost to the business.

In instances where employers perceive there are benefits to completing a separate risk assessment for each young person, there was evidence from the interviews that they will go above and beyond what is recommended in the guidance about the requirements that need to be made for young people in the workplace.

### **4.2 LIMITATIONS**

The findings from the review of the documents need to be considered in light of the limitations of the documents which were reviewed, and of the literature on the health and safety of young workers more broadly. Specifically, there appears to be a lack of consensus regarding the definition of young workers and there is a lack of research regarding potential barriers as well as enablers to the employment of young workers. There was also a lack of consensus from those who were interviewed regarding the definition of a young worker.

The sample for the interviews was selected purposively to contain a number of categories of participants and therefore to reflect a range of views. However, it consisted of those who agreed to participate, and the employer perspective was obtained predominantly from large organisations (although the views of a medium sized employer were also included).

The sample size was intentionally small, as the aim was to gather data to provide insight and improve understanding, rather than to produce numerical statistics. In qualitative research sample sizes typically range from 3 to 30 people, with the final number being selected according to past experience, judgement and availability of resources. For this study, a carefully selected sample of 14 people was believed to be sufficient to obtain a range of view-points and gain a better understanding about perceptions of the health and safety and employment of young people.

## 5. APPENDICES

### 5.1 APPENDIX 1. SUMMARY OF PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS INCLUDED IN THE REVIEW

Author, title and year	Type of paper	Definition of young workers	<b>RQ 1.3: Are accident rates higher amongst young workers in certain sectors? If so what types of accidents occur and why?</b>	<b>RQ 1.4: Do particular work activities/sectors create higher risks for young workers?</b>	<b>RQ 1.5: What do proportionate risk management arrangements look like for schools, placement providers and employers?</b>
Oxenforth, A. (2004). Look after the young at work. Cabinet Maker.	Trade journal paper	Not defined	<p>Risk factors include lack of experience, awareness of occupational risks and possible lack of maturity.</p> <p>Common types of accidents among young workers include: i) being struck by a moving vehicle, ii) being injured by machinery, iii) injury due to incorrect manual handling procedures, iv) slips, trips or falls-related injuries, v) injury due to exposure to harmful chemicals, vi) injury from electrical equipment</p>	No information	<p>It is recommended that employers must take into account young workers' lack of experience, awareness and possible immaturity when conducting RAs. These must take place before a young worker starts work. Parents/guardians of school age children must be informed of the RA and control measures to reduce risks.</p> <p>Young people (especially those under the school leaving age) must be supervised by persons that have an adequate understanding of risks, and the skills needed to mentor the young person. If students are on a work experience placement employers need to liaise with the placement organiser to report any accidents/ill health/absences.</p>
Salminen, S. (2004). Have young workers more injuries than older ones? An international literature review. Journal of Safety Research, 35, 513-521	Journal paper	Under the age of 25	The review showed that, consistent with previous reviews, young workers have a higher injury rate than older workers (56% of the nonfatal studies reviewed), whilst they have a lower fatality rate compared to older workers (65% of the studies on fatal occupational injuries). The review did not examine particular types of accidents or injuries that young workers may experience and whether injury and accident rates may be higher in certain sectors compared to others.	No information	No information

Author, title and year	Type of paper	Definition of young workers	<b>RQ 1.3: Are accident rates higher amongst young workers in certain sectors? If so what types of accidents occur and why?</b>	<b>RQ 1.4: Do particular work activities/sectors create higher risks for young workers?</b>	<b>RQ 1.5: What do proportionate risk management arrangements look like for schools, placement providers and employers?</b>
Miller, L., Ballard, J., Suff, P., Bates, P., Hurstfield, J., and Akroyd, K. (2005). Review of the reporting of accidents and incidents involving learners. Institute for Employment Studies.	Report	Under the age of 25	Construction has the highest number of major accidents (MAs) among apprentices followed by manufacturing, and distribution, hotels and restaurants (2004 Labour Force Survey). Construction is particularly hazardous for learners with over one third of reported incidents involving work-based learners coming from this sector (2004 data from the LSC Learner Incident Record). The majority of fatalities occurred in the motor industry and engineering manufacture sectors followed by construction and then hospitality (2003-2004 Individuals Learner Record database). The number of deaths involving 16-18 year olds were highest (55/91 deaths in 2003-2004) compared to 19-20 year olds (33). However, when looking at the total number of learners, the percentage death rate for 16-18 year olds is slightly lower than that of 19-20 year olds. In all cases, the death rate among 21-24 year olds was the lowest. No information on the cause or location of death was provided (i.e. death may not be work-related).	No information	No information
European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (2006a). Factsheet 61 - Young worker safety: Advice for employers.	Factsheet/ guidance	Under the age of 25	Lack of training, inadequate supervision and using dangerous machinery or substances are the most common causes of injury among young workers.	No information	Employers must identify hazards and carry out a RA to determine the particular risks for young people and the preventive measures needed. RAs should cover: 1. Tasks that young people must not do (e.g. prohibitions on use of specific equipment) 2. Information, instruction and training needs and supervisory arrangements 3. Informing parents/guardians of risks and control measures 4. Liaison with work experience placement and vocational training organisers 5. Consultation with worker representatives and young workers themselves over arrangements for young workers  Supervisory arrangements should include: 1. How young people will be supervised and the

Author, title and year	Type of paper	Definition of young workers	<i>RQ 1.3: Are accident rates higher amongst young workers in certain sectors? If so what types of accidents occur and why?</i>	<i>RQ 1.4: Do particular work activities/sectors create higher risks for young workers?</i>	<b>RQ 1.5: What do proportionate risk management arrangements look like for schools, placement providers and employers?</b>
					<p>level of supervision required for different tasks.            2. Competencies required to supervise young workers (e.g. supervisors must be adequately trained about risks and control measures connected with the work of young people )            3. Reporting arrangements in place to enable supervisors to notify any problems about young workers' safety</p> <p>Young workers must receive H&amp;S training before they start work. It should include: workplace hazards and specific job hazards, control measures, actions in response to unsafe situations and emergencies.</p>
European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (2006b). Factsheet 62 - Young worker safety - advice for supervisors.	Factsheet/ guidance	Under the age of 25	No information	No information	<p>Employers should provide supervisors that are in charge of young workers with training about H&amp;S problems, the risks and control measures connected with the work of young people.            Examples of specific supervisory responsibilities in relation to young workers include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Assessing young workers' capabilities/competence, and allocating tasks accordingly</li> <li>2. Assessing hazards that could potentially injure young people and putting in place effective controls to prevent injury (e.g. guards, inspections)</li> <li>3. Checking young workers' understanding of correct procedures</li> <li>4. Observing their performance and involving them in RAs</li> <li>5. Ensuring that they are aware of emergency procedures</li> <li>6. Motivating and guiding young workers, and</li> <li>7. Controlling and disciplining if necessary.</li> </ol> <p>Supervisors also need to be aware of tasks that under 18 year olds should not be allowed to perform (e.g. tasks that expose them to substances that could cause cancer, radiation, extreme heat/noise/vibration).</p>

Author, title and year	Type of paper	Definition of young workers	<b>RQ 1.3: Are accident rates higher amongst young workers in certain sectors? If so what types of accidents occur and why?</b>	<b>RQ 1.4: Do particular work activities/sectors create higher risks for young workers?</b>	<b>RQ 1.5: What do proportionate risk management arrangements look like for schools, placement providers and employers?</b>
European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (2006c). Factsheet 64: Protection for young people in the workplace.	Factsheet/guidance	Under the age of 18	No information	No information	<p>For workers under 18, a RA must be conducted before the young worker commences work. It should cover the workplace, physical, biological and chemical agents, work equipment and its use, work processes, operation and work organisation, and training.</p> <p>As a general rule, under 18s must not do work that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Exceeds their physical or mental capacities</li> <li>2. Exposes them to radiation or substances that are toxic or can cause cancer</li> <li>3. Involves extreme hear, noise or vibration</li> <li>4. Involves risks that they are unlikely to recognise because of lack of experience or training</li> </ol> <p>There are also restrictions to the working hours of young workers. They are also allowed more generous rest periods and are not allowed to work nights.</p>
European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (2006d). Factsheet 70: Young workers - facts and figures: Exposure to risks and health effects	Factsheet	15-24 years of age	<p>National and European data suggest that young workers are at greater risk of having an occupational accident - the incident rate of non-fatal accidents at work is more than 40% higher among 18-24 year olds (young males are particularly at risk).According to EU figures, young workers have lower overall fatal accident rates.</p> <p>Possible reasons for higher occupational accident rates include young workers' lack of experience, potential physical and/or psychological immaturity, and lack of H&amp;S awareness. Additionally failure of employers to allow for these factors through providing training, supervision and safeguards and by placing young people in situations that are appropriate to them.</p>	<p>Fatal accident rates among young workers can be considerable in some sectors. Agriculture has the highest incidence, followed by: construction, transport and communication, and manufacturing. Construction is the sector with the highest number of young worker fatalities.</p> <p>Young people working in hotels and restaurants, and construction are especially exposed to loud noise. Exposure to heat is common to outdoor occupations (agriculture or construction), industry, hotels and restaurants.</p> <p>Dangerous substances appear in various occupational settings where young workers are employed and include agriculture, construction,</p>	No information

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				chemicals, cleaning products, petrol, solvents and hairdressing products.  Drawing from survey results from the EU and national sources – young workers are more exposed to physically demanding factors compared to the average workforce such as working in awkward positions, handling heavy loads, and repetitive work.	
Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (2006). Getting off to a good start: How you can help young people wiseup2work.	Information leaflet	Not defined			RAs should account for the needs of young workers. Young workers should be encouraged to be involved in RAs and make suggestions as they are less likely to speak up if they have safety concerns. Employers should have effective supervisory arrangements and training and induction programmes in place; these should be interactive to promote young worker engagement. Employers could also consider buying PPE that are likely to appeal to young workers (and hence are more likely to be used).
Learning and Skills Council (2006a). Guidance for employers - safe behaviour is sound business.	Information leaflet	Not defined	No information	No information	The leaflet presents a series of issues that companies could consider including: 1) getting the right learner for the job/placement focusing on learners' skills/aptitudes and any medical conditions or learning difficulties 2) making sure learners understand the job description/duties, 3) individual learning plans (e.g. giving learners tasks to help them develop their skills), 4) induction which should take place before learners start work), 5) RAs should consider the person and the physical hazards/ supervisors should take into account learners' skills, physical ability and maturity in determining the level of supervision required, 6) training and teamwork 7) working environment (e.g. PPE should be provided and learners should be clear about how it is tested, used and stored; 8) accident control (e.g. reporting and investigating accidents).

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					It is emphasised that H&S induction is vital and should take place promptly It should cover: tour of premises and introduction to key staff, company's and learner's legal responsibilities and duty of care, company's H&S policy, supervision arrangements, significant risks and controls, emergency, fire and first aid arrangements, accident, ill health and incident reporting and investigating.
Learning and Skills Council (2006b). A pocket guide to supervising.	Information booklet	Under the age of 18	No information	Construction, engineering, motor vehicle repairs, agriculture and catering are mentioned as higher risk occupations, which require stricter control measures to prevent accidents and ill health.	<p>Supervisors should act as a mentor and role model for young workers.</p> <p>Supervisors (and employers more generally) also need to liaise closely with learning providers (e.g. accidents and absences need to be reported to the learning provider who will in turn liaise with the Learning Skills Council).</p> <p>RAs need to be carried out before the learner starts work and should include measures to prevent injury. Young workers under the age of 18 should be prohibited from carrying out certain tasks (e.g. work that involves exposure to toxic or carcinogenic agents, radiation, exposure to extreme heat/noise/vibration). These tasks can be carried out by young people over the minimum school leaving age only if the work is necessary for their training, they are properly supervised, and the risks are reduced to the lowest level as far as is reasonably practicable.</p> <p>Young learners' induction to the organisation should include: emergency procedures, prohibitions and restrictions, introduction to key staff, tour of the premises, hazards, risks and precautions, how to report accidents, location of H&amp;S policy, learners' H&amp;S duties.</p>

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National Work Experience Partnership Group (2006). Health and safety assessment for work experience placements - a good practice guide.	Guidance	Not defined	No information	No information	<p>The guidance covers the H&amp;S requirements for work placements and the responsibilities for work placement organisers, schools and work placement employers.</p> <p><b>Work experience placement assessments</b> should consider: Basic H&amp;S requirements (e.g. employer keeping up to date with H&amp;S law), H&amp;S policy, RA and control (e.g. assessments should take into account specific requirements for young learners including their age, inexperience, immaturity, and lack of risk awareness), accidents/incidents/first aid, supervision, and training, work equipment and machinery, PPE and clothing, fire and emergencies.</p> <p>Employers are responsible for conducting a RA. Other issues such as learning difficulties, or health conditions should also be recorded if they pose additional risks for young learners.</p> <p><b>Before organising work experience</b>, schools must put in place a formal RA process. Control measures must be taken to reduce the risks to vulnerable children (e.g. support the learner in placement with an ancillary member of staff and/or friend, learner and his parents or member of school staff must meet the placement provider, set up a more frequent monitoring regime that would be the case in a normal placement).</p> <p>In addition to the need for on-site work placement visits for short term work experience programmes, learners on longer term programmes should be regularly monitored. An 'initial' monitoring visit should take place soon after the learner commences the placement, followed by visits at defined regular intervals (depending on the level of risk, and the</p>

Author, title and year	Type of paper	Definition of young workers	<i>RQ 1.3: Are accident rates higher amongst young workers in certain sectors? If so what types of accidents occur and why?</i>	<i>RQ 1.4: Do particular work activities/sectors create higher risks for young workers?</i>	<b>RQ 1.5: What do proportionate risk management arrangements look like for schools, placement providers and employers?</b>
					<p>individual needs of the learner).</p> <p>During <b>monitoring visits</b>, the following aspects should be reviewed by observation and / or discussions with learners and the relevant work placement supervisory personnel:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Outstanding actions or other matters identified during the original suitability assessment of the work placement, or from previous monitoring visits, should be checked.</li> <li>2. Sufficient H&amp;S information and training is given.</li> <li>3. Learner should be aware of procedures for reporting incidents, first aid arrangements and emergency procedures</li> <li>4. PPE provision to learners</li> <li>5. H&amp;S standards in working environment are maintained.</li> </ol>
<p>Trades Union Congress (2006). Young workers: A guide for safety representatives.</p>	<p>Guidance</p>	<p>Not defined</p>	<p>No information</p>	<p>No information</p>	<p>Employers have a duty to conduct a specific risk assessment for workers under the age of 18 taking into account factors, such as their inexperience, lack of risk awareness and immaturity and put in place the necessary control measures. Young workers cannot engage in tasks that expose them to toxic substances, harmful levels of radiation or to environments that pose a health risk due to exposure to cold, heat, vibration or noise. There are also restrictions regarding the number of hours that young people are allowed to work. For under 16s, employers are required to inform parents/guardians of the RA and control measures in place.</p> <p>Safety representatives can help protect young workers in various ways such as:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ensuring that the H&amp;S of young workers is part of the agenda on safety committees</li> <li>2. Tasks that young workers should not be allowed to undertake are included in the H&amp;S policy</li> </ol>

Author, title and year	Type of paper	Definition of young workers	<b>RQ 1.3: Are accident rates higher amongst young workers in certain sectors? If so what types of accidents occur and why?</b>	<b>RQ 1.4: Do particular work activities/sectors create higher risks for young workers?</b>	<b>RQ 1.5: What do proportionate risk management arrangements look like for schools, placement providers and employers?</b>
					3. Making sure that tasks that require young workers being constantly supervised are identified and the necessary arrangements put in place (which could mean recruiting more supervisors) 4. Taking part in young workers' H&S induction training 5. Being consulted on the content of H&S training programmes for young workers
European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (2007). OSH in the figures: Young workers - Facts and Figures.	Report	15-24 years of age	<p>UK statistics show that the rate of workplace injury is substantially higher in young men aged 16-24 compared to men aged 45-54. Within the 16-24 age group, workplace injury is higher for young people aged 20-24 compared to those aged 16-19 (Labour Force survey 1996/97). Occupational accidents are highest in construction, agriculture and manufacturing.</p> <p>The rate of fatal injury is lowest in young men aged 16-24 (and 25-34) across all sectors (HSE H&amp;S statistics 2000/01).</p> <p>Agriculture has the highest incidence rate of fatal accidents among young workers followed by construction and transport and communication. The construction sector has the highest number of fatalities involving young workers up to the age of 24 followed by the manufacturing sector although incidence rates have been decreasing from 1995 to 2003. UK data show that the highest fatality rates are among 16-24 year olds (and over 65s) and that is mainly due to lack of experience.</p>	<p>According to the European Survey of Working Conditions (ESWC), young workers are more likely to be exposed to heat and cold, noise, vibrations, fumes and dangerous substances (ESWC, 2000). Noise is an important health risk in the hotels and restaurant sector which is one of the top three sectors employing young workers in the EU and the top sector in the UK according to the 2005 Labour Force Survey.</p> <p>UK data show that almost half of all fatal accidents in the construction sector occur in refurbishment/maintenance/repair projects (which tend to attract the smaller, less experienced contractors - source HSE, 2006).</p>	No information
Construction Skills (2008). Employers' extended guide to health and safety for young apprentice work placements in construction.	Guidance	14-16 years of age	No information	No information	<p>Key steps that employers need to follow to ensure a successful work experience for young apprentices include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Preparing the young apprentice by providing site-specific induction and training</li> <li>2. The school/college must make a capability assessment to ensure that the young apprentice</li> </ol>

Author, title and year	Type of paper	Definition of young workers	<i>RQ 1.3: Are accident rates higher amongst young workers in certain sectors? If so what types of accidents occur and why?</i>	<i>RQ 1.4: Do particular work activities/sectors create higher risks for young workers?</i>	<b>RQ 1.5: What do proportionate risk management arrangements look like for schools, placement providers and employers?</b>
					<p>is fit for work and identify any individual needs that must be addressed. The employer must ensure that a health and capability assessment has been carried out and the parents/guardian consulted</p> <p>3. An assessor will carry out a suitability assessment of the workplace before the work placement commences. The assessment is based on the LSC's H&amp;S standards and covers ten areas (e.g. H&amp;S policy, RAs and control measures, incident reporting and investigation, provision and maintenance of work equipment, availability and correct use of PPE, training and supervision arrangements, emergency arrangements, H&amp;S of the work environment including the suitability of welfare facilities for male and female 14-16 year olds, general H&amp;S management requirements, and the need for a young person's RA including controls, instructions, prohibitions, supervision and safeguards necessary for reasons of child protection)</p> <p>4. Employers should develop a work experience plan detailing the work activities and the learning outcomes to be met; it should be developed in conjunction with the school/college or young apprentice partnership (which will often include schools, colleges, training providers and the appropriate Sector Skills Council)</p> <p>5. Task-specific risk assessments: A sensible approach should be adopted recognising that it is not practicable to eliminate every risk. Task-specific RAs should address the risks of having 14-16 year olds in the workplace and consider factors such as inexperience, lack of training, immaturity, and lack of hazards awareness. Employers can either revise an existing RA or carry out additional 'young persons' RAs. Employers must also provide parents/guardians with information regarding risks to the child's H&amp;S and the preventive measures in place to</p>

Author, title and year	Type of paper	Definition of young workers	<i>RQ 1.3: Are accident rates higher amongst young workers in certain sectors? If so what types of accidents occur and why?</i>	<i>RQ 1.4: Do particular work activities/sectors create higher risks for young workers?</i>	<b>RQ 1.5: What do proportionate risk management arrangements look like for schools, placement providers and employers?</b>
					<p>reduce risks to an acceptable level.</p> <p>6. Tailored site induction training should be provided on the first day of the placement.</p> <p>7. Provide effective supervision to ensure that young apprentice's H&amp;S is maintained at all times and any changes to the work environment that may invalidate existing controls are monitored.</p> <p>8 Regular briefings which should encourage apprentices to raise H&amp;S concerns.</p> <p>9. Employers should review the work experience with the young apprentice.</p> <p>It is recommended that 1-5 should take place before the work placement, 6-8 during and 9 after the work placement.</p> <p>The guidance also includes a list of activities that are unsuitable for young apprentice work placements in construction, case study examples of good practice in H&amp;S management for young apprentices, and an employer's short guide to H&amp;S for young apprentice work placements in construction.</p>
European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (2009). Preventing risks to young workers: policy, programmes, and workplace practices.	Report	15-24 years of age	European statistics show that young workers have a high risk of experiencing occupational injuries compared to older workers (EUOSHA, 2007). High risk sectors identified include construction, agriculture, hotels and catering however specific statistics on the incident rates of young workers in these sectors and whether they are higher than those of the average working population are not presented .	No information	<p>A two-way strategy is required to address occupational H&amp;S risks for young workers through the workplace and through the education system.</p> <p>The report presents cases of successful actions and good practice implemented by organisations from different EU member states to prevent risks to young workers. Many cases focused on training and mentoring initiatives however these initiatives took place in organisations that already have good occupational safety and health (OSH) management in place to prevent young workers' exposure to hazards. Training and mentoring is only one part of their OSH management system (e.g. supervision, jobs that match their skills and capabilities).</p>

Author, title and year	Type of paper	Definition of young workers	<i>RQ 1.3: Are accident rates higher amongst young workers in certain sectors? If so what types of accidents occur and why?</i>	<i>RQ 1.4: Do particular work activities/sectors create higher risks for young workers?</i>	<b>RQ 1.5: What do proportionate risk management arrangements look like for schools, placement providers and employers?</b>
					<p>Success factors in preventing risks to young workers identified from the case studies presented in the report include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Training should be provided in the context of overall safety management to prevent workplace risks and ensure that young workers only carry out tasks within the mental and physical capabilities, under adequate supervision; training alone is not effective.</li> <li>2. Actions and interventions should be based on a risk assessment and ensuring that they are monitored and reviewed.</li> <li>3. Young workers should be encouraged to actively participate and should be consulted</li> <li>4. Using peers, such as more experienced younger workers as well as more experienced older workers as mentors.</li> <li>5. Occupational safety and health should be an integral part of doing the job - both in the workplace and in vocational training.</li> </ol>
British Safety Council (2010). Ensuring the health and safety of young workers.	Report	16-24 years of age	<p>Agriculture and construction account for 50% of the fatalities among 16-24 year old workers (EUOSHA, 2007). Between 2006-2008 these two sectors accounted for almost as many young worker fatalities as all other industries combined. The sectors' injury rates are also considerably higher.</p> <p>The factors that contribute to the higher degree of risk faced by young workers include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Lack of experience</li> <li>2. Lack of awareness and training</li> <li>3. Increased likelihood of undertaking physically demanding work</li> <li>4. High frequency of irregular working patterns.</li> </ol>		

Author, title and year	Type of paper	Definition of young workers	<b>RQ 1.3: Are accident rates higher amongst young workers in certain sectors? If so what types of accidents occur and why?</b>	<b>RQ 1.4: Do particular work activities/sectors create higher risks for young workers?</b>	<b>RQ 1.5: What do proportionate risk management arrangements look like for schools, placement providers and employers?</b>
Anderson, D., Hannif, Z., and Lamm, F. (2011). The good, the bad and the ugly: The health and safety of young workers. In R. Price, P. McDonald, J. Bailey, and B. Pini (Eds). Young people and work (pp. 87-104). Surrey, UK: Ashgate.	Book chapter	18-25 years of age	Young workers aged between 18-24 years of age are 50% more likely to sustain a work-related injury compared to more experienced/older workers (EUOSHA, 2006). Factors contributing to young workers' increased risk of injury include emotional and physical immaturity, lack of work experience and limited awareness of potential risks (Ehrlich et al., 2004).	Survey findings by the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labor across 26 developed and developing countries show that 70% of all work-related injuries and illness among young workers occur in the agriculture sector. Farm machinery, pesticides, caustics and other chemicals in use, and physically demanding work are some of the hazards characteristic of this sector (Manheimer, 2006).	No information
Belin et al. (2011). Occupational health and safety risks for the most vulnerable workers. European Parliament report	Report	15-24 years of age	The rate of non-fatal injuries/accidents between 1996 and 2003 was 40% higher among young workers compared to the average working population in all sectors. Young workers have a lower incidence rate of fatal accidents compared to the average working population. No information is provided regarding accident types in sectors or industries employing young workers.	Construction, agriculture and manufacturing are identified as high-risk sectors. Because of their young age and good physical health, young workers are more likely to be given the physically demanding work and are also more likely to work shifts, overtime which can impact on physical and mental fatigue increasing proneness to accidents.  Noise and vibration are two hazards particularly experienced by young workers because of the sectors they typically work in, including hotel, restaurants and the construction industry.	
Steemson, J. (2011). Safety Express, July/August, 10-11.	Trade journal paper	Not defined	No information	Agriculture is an industry that poses particular risks to young people.  Activities that are mentioned as carrying risks for young workers are: carriage of dangerous explosives/goods, ship building and repairing, power presses, woodworking machines, and mechanical lifting operations (including lift trucks)	Employers must conduct a risk assessment (RA) before a young worker (under age of 25) begins work. Parents must be informed about the RA if young worker is under school leaving age.  RAs for young people must consider: layout and particular site of workplace, nature of any physical, biological and chemical agents to which they will be exposed, for how long and to what extent, types of work equipment that will be used, how work and processes are organised, provision of H&S training, and risks from particular agents, processes and work.

Author, title and year	Type of paper	Definition of young workers	<i>RQ 1.3: Are accident rates higher amongst young workers in certain sectors? If so what types of accidents occur and why?</i>	<i>RQ 1.4: Do particular work activities/sectors create higher risks for young workers?</i>	<b>RQ 1.5: What do proportionate risk management arrangements look like for schools, placement providers and employers?</b>
					Young people require training immediately when they start the job, which should include an introduction to H&S (first aid, evacuation procedures) as well as the hazards and risks in the workplace and the control measures in place. Young workers also require more supervision.
Association of Colleges Eastern Region (2012). Health, safety and work placement checks, are you doing enough? A guide to helping providers meet their legal obligations and consider best practice.	Report	Not defined	No information	No information	<p>Where colleges are responsible for securing work experience with an external employer (as part of the learners' course), then colleges must seek assurance that the work environment is safe for learners to work. It is suggested as good practice that learning providers visit the workplace so that they can assess its suitability through observation and discussion with the employer. It is recommended that the Skill Funding Agency's Health and Safety Standards (HASS) assessment tool should be used to assess whether an employer is meeting his legal requirements in terms of providing a safe place of work for learners' work experience.</p> <p>The assessment should be completed before the learner commences his work experience. Learning providers must adopt a pragmatic approach as it is not advisable to lose employers that are willing to offer work placements if they have fallen slightly short of the HASS assessment. Assessors use their judgment as to whether the workplace is suitable for learners to undertake work experience. Learning providers can re-inspect workplaces every 1, 2 or 3 years depending on whether work placements are carried out in low, medium or high risk organisations respectively. Return visits may be required earlier than the above timeframes following: 1) a major re-organisation to ensure that the work environment is still suitable, 2) a student and/or worker injury/accident, 3) a student complaint, and 4) notification of an</p>

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					<p>enforcement action.</p> <p>Colleges are no longer legally required to carry out a H&amp;S assessment for students that are already in work; the responsibility lies with the employer and his duty of care under the Health and Safety at Work Act (HASWA). However it is recommended as good practice for learning providers to continue to engage with employers.</p>
<p>Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (2012). Managing safety in schools and colleges.</p>	<p>Guidance</p>	<p>Not defined</p>	<p>No information</p>	<p>No information</p>	<p>According to the legal framework (e.g. Health and Safety at Work Act, Management of Health and Safety Regulations) schools are required to conduct suitable risk assessments (for staff and students), have access to competent advice and train staff. Schools should take action that is proportionate to the level of risk. It is recommended that schools are 'risk led' focusing on their most significant risks and putting the necessary measures in place to control them.</p> <p>A starting point for the effective management of H&amp;S involves having a clear policy setting out the objectives, mission and values of the school, which should be understood by all key stakeholders including pupils. From the policy, a plan for action and improvement should be developed. Reviewing and learning (e.g. from incident trends) is another key element so that lessons learnt can directly inform the school's policy and further improvement actions.</p>

## 5.2 APPENDIX 2. INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR EMPLOYERS

### Introduction

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview.

**Background:** We are conducting research on behalf of the Health and Safety Executive exploring perceptions of, and potential barriers to, the employment of young people with regards to health and safety. As part of this work, we are carrying out a number of interviews with employers, schools/academies, work placement organisers and insurers.

**Aim of the interview:** The aim of the interview is to explore your views on:

- The considerations that should be made when taking on young people in the workplace with regards to health and safety
- How easy or difficult health and safety rules make it to take on young people in the workplace
- The tools or guidance available for employers and whether you find them helpful

There are no right or wrong answers. We are interested in your views and particular experience of taking on young people in the workplace.

**Anonymity – confidentiality:** The interview should last 45 minutes to one hour. All the information that you provide will be anonymised. The findings will be summarised across all interviews and will not be traceable to any individual.

**Voluntary:** This interview is voluntary and you can withdraw at any time without giving any justification. If there are questions that you do not wish to answer, it is fine, please let me know.

Do you have any questions about this research before we start?

**Permission to record the interview:** With your permission, I would like to record the interview to make sure that the analysis is done on accurate notes. Are you happy for me to record our conversation? At any point, feel free to ask me to stop recording if you wish to.

### Background questions

*I would first like to ask you a couple of background questions, which would help me put your answers into context...*

Q1 Can you tell me a little bit about your role, particularly in relation to taking on young people in your organisation? (e.g. responsibility for arranging work placements or carrying out risk assessments for young people)

Q2 Can you tell me a little bit about your organisation and its main activities?

### **Young people and health and safety**

I would now like to ask you some general questions about young people and health and safety in the workplace...

Q3 Under health and safety law, the employer must assess and manage significant risks in the workplace. As far as you're aware, is there anything different or additional that needs to be done for young people joining the workplace? (e.g. either for work experience or as an employee) **(Note to interviewer: Mention that we are using HSE's definition of young people as those under 18 years of age – make a note of participant's view if different)**

*Probe: If no, why is this? What do you think are the main reasons for not doing anything additional or different for managing risks for young people?*

*Probe: If yes, what additional considerations need to be made for young people and why?*

*Probe: How is this done? (e.g. separate young person's risk assessment). Are there any workplace risks that are different for young people? If yes, why do you think this is the case?*

Q4 There is a perception that a separate risk assessment needs to be completed for every young worker. Would you agree with this? Why/why not? **(Note to interviewer: Only ask this question if the participant has not already explicitly discussed whether a separate risk assessment is/is not needed for a young person, as part of question 3. Please ensure the 2 probes are covered)**

*Probe: If yes, what are the implications of this (i.e. carrying out a risk assessment for every young person) for employers?*

*Probe: If no, why do you think this is the case?*

### **Experience of taking on young people**

Now, I would like to find out about your experience of taking on young people into permanent employment or on temporary work experience...

Q5 Do you currently take on young people in your workplace?

*Probe: If yes, where do you place them in the organisation and what roles do they do?*

*Probe: If not, why? Have you done so in the past, but since stopped? If so, why?*

Q6 Would you consider your workplace to be a high or low risk health and safety environment? **(Note to interviewer: If the respondent is unsure: HSE considers construction, agriculture or manufacturing to be higher risk. Also, work involving**

**specific hazards, such as exposure to toxic substances, radiation, or extreme temperatures may be higher risk).**

Q7 Does this (i.e. whether work environment is high or low risk) influence whether you take on young people in your workplace (including for work placements)? **Note to interviewer: If the respondent believes their workplace is too 'high risk' for young workers, has the respondent considered the possibility that some work within a lower-risk 'enclave', e.g office work, could be acceptable?**

*Probe: If yes, in what way? (e.g. looking for whether a high/low risk environment may encourage/discourage taking on young people)*

*Probe: If no, what influences your decision to take on young people?*

### **Perceived ease of taking on young people in the workplace**

*I would like to ask you some questions about how easy or difficult it is to take on young people in the workplace, either for work experience, apprenticeships or for more permanent types of employment...*

Q8 In your opinion, are there any barriers to taking on young people in the workplace? (e.g. for work experience or as apprentices)

*Probe: If yes, what are they?*

*Probe: If not mentioned, probe for any health and safety barriers that may prevent employers from taking on young people*

*Probe: If yes, is there anything that could be done to remove or minimise these barriers?*

**Note to interviewer: Some barriers that employers may mention could include that young people can only do certain types of jobs, or can only work certain/limited number of hours, or that some jobs are perceived as gender specific e.g. in agriculture. Note that it is health and safety barriers that are needed, not others such as CRB checks, insurance, legislation etc – so the interviewer will need to keep the participant focused only on health and safety. However, please note briefly other concerns raised. Make a note of interviews where these concerns are raised and return to audio recording for more detailed notes.**

Q9 In your experience, what role do insurers play in your decision to take on a young person in the workplace (e.g. for work experience or as apprentices), if any?

*Probe: When you take on a young person, do you typically have a conversation with or consult your insurer?*

*Probe: Are there any specific demands (health and safety requirements) that insurers make when you take on young people? If so, what are they (e.g. specific risk assessments, repeated risk assessments required for each subsequent student, extra level of cover required)?*

*Probe: Have the H&S requirements placed by insurers influenced your approach to taking on young people in any way? If yes, in what way?*

## H&S advice on taking on young people

Next, I would like to find out what tools or guidance you have used and which you find helpful...

**Note to interviewer:** If participants mention HSG165 'Young people at work: a guide for employers' and HSG199 'Managing H&S on work experience: a guide for organisers' make them aware at the end of the interview that these are withdrawn and replaced by INDG364 'Young people and work experience: a brief guide to H&S for employers' and a link to the web guidance (<http://www.hse.gov.uk/youngpeople/index.htm>)

Q10 Do you get any health and safety advice on taking on young people? If yes, where do you get your health and safety advice from?

Q11 Are you aware of any tools or guidance available to assist employers with the health and safety aspects of taking on young people? If yes, what are they?

*Probe (if not mentioned): Have you heard of or used HSE's revised web guidance and/or booklet INDG364 published during the summer of 2013? If yes, how did you hear about it?*

*If yes, how useful did you find the guidance?*

Q12 In your opinion, do the tools/guidance that are available tell you all that you need to do?

*Probe: If yes, which tools/guidance have you found particularly useful?*

*Probe: If no, what else is needed in terms of health and safety?*

Final question...

Q13 That completes the questions. Before we finish, is there anything else we haven't touched on that you think is important in this area?

**Thank you for taking part**

### 5.3 APPENDIX 3. REFERENCES

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# Employers' perceptions of the health and safety of young workers

The aim was to investigate perceptions and attitudes about health and safety and the employment of young people. The work involved a review of published documents and interviews with 14 representatives from employer organisations, schools/academies, work placement organisers and insurers.

No documents were found that examined employers' views about young workers and health and safety. However, evidence was found within published documents that links increase of injury in young workers, and a lack of work experience and training, poor awareness of occupational risks, inadequate supervision, and possible lack of physical and/or psychological maturity. Interviewees perceived that all environments can present a risk if a worker lacks relevant experience or awareness of them.

When taking on a young person, interviewees considered age to be less important than experience and ability. Misperceptions were found to exist about the health and safety considerations that need to be made for young people when they enter the workforce. There were also some perceptions that employers may hide behind health and safety and insurance as excuses for not employing young people, when a more likely reason is that they perceive a young person to be a burden and an additional cost.

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