



Getting off to a good start

How you can help young people [Wiseup2work](#)

In the UK, an average of five under-19s are killed and 1,500 suffer serious injuries at work every year. Across Europe, young adults have 50 per cent more accidents than older workers. As part of the European Week for Safety and Health at Work, IOSH has launched [Wiseup2work](#), an interactive, web-based resource aimed at getting teenagers to think about health and safety. As a health and safety professional, you can do a lot to support our [Wiseup](#) campaign and help make the workplace safer for young adults.

At work

We can't even begin to expect young people to behave safely if we're not providing a safe environment. So, if you have young adults in the workplace, whether as full-time employees, trainees (say,

on an apprenticeship scheme) or as part of a work experience programme, a good starting point would be to audit your current arrangements for managing risks to young workers.

Consider:

- Do your risk assessments take account of the needs of young people?
- Do managers have robust systems for supervising young



Wiseup2work is an online resource offering you the right tools to grab young people's attention and bring health and safety alive.

Click on www.wiseup2work.co.uk for:

- jargon-free interactive exercises and games
- a chat forum
- lesson plans
- worksheets
- real-life stories and case studies.

- adults and monitoring their behaviour and health and safety learning?
- Is the induction and training programme for young people engaging them?
- Can they learn from role models who demonstrate good safety behaviour?

Your induction process should engage young workers, who often have a very different perception of risk. They're more likely to learn if it's fun, interactive and relevant to them. You can use some of the resources on the [Wiseup2work](http://www.wiseup2work.co.uk) site to make your induction more effective – try **HeadsUp** or **StyleUp** to get them thinking about the main issues. More details on the **HeadsUp** hazards and how to avoid them are in the learning tools section of the site. Have a look at our case studies, also in this section, to see how other companies have approached the induction and training of young people.

Young workers can be strongly influenced by the behaviour and attitudes of their peers or work colleagues. They may find it particularly difficult to speak up if they have a safety concern. You can help by:

- encouraging them to get involved in risk assessment – and taking account of their suggestions

- introducing a mentoring scheme:
 - o peer mentors – someone close to their own age they can talk to
 - o older mentors, independent of the line manager, who can provide a good role model and help teenagers and twenty-somethings develop their self-esteem
- promoting an email, text or phone helpline for reporting concerns
- suggesting a work forum, with health and safety as a regular discussion item
- recognising what makes them tick – young adults may be more concerned with how they look than the risk of hurting themselves from not wearing the right gear. Consider this when you buy protective clothes and other kit – many suppliers now sell products that will have a bit more appeal for younger people.

And remember you can get young adults to talk and think about the issues by entering our national SpeakUp competition – have a look at the [Wiseup2work](http://www.wiseup2work.co.uk) site for details.

If you're a health and safety consultant, you have an important part to play, especially if you work with small firms. Pay particular attention to how your clients manage young people, and point them in the direction of our Wiseup website and other sources of information.

In the wider community

You may already have contact with young adults either directly or indirectly through work you do in the community. You may, for instance, be a school governor, volunteer youth worker or a Scout or Guide leader. You may already use your skills to encourage young people to behave safely, or to promote good health and safety. Promoting or using resources

on the Wiseup site will help you continue your good work.

If you'd like to do more to support Wiseup2work, your skills and contribution would be greatly appreciated by those who work with young people. Before you take the plunge, though, have a look at the guidance in the box on the next page.

What could you do?

- Encourage your employer to form a partnership with a local school or youth service to help young people learn about work risks by visiting your business, talking to your team, or taking part in a work experience scheme. You may also be able to help teachers develop sessions based on the lesson plans on the Wiseup site.
- Encourage your employer to offer work experience or work-based training and support them in getting the health and safety bits right.
- Get involved with your local school governing body or PTA. Informal advice and helping to support activities such as school fêtes will help increase teachers' health and safety awareness.
- If you've got examples of good practice on encouraging young people to behave safely, let us know at wiseup@iosh.co.uk so that we can add it to the website.
- Promote Wiseup2work as widely as you can, particularly to those who work with young adults.

Need more info?

- For a wide range of activities and resources targeted at young people, visit www.wiseup2work.co.uk.
- You'll find more on managing risks to young people on the LSC's Safe Learner site at www.safelearner.info/employers, including a leaflet, 'Standards for health and safety', to help small businesses raise the standard of safety in work placements for young people.
- 'The right start' at www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg364.pdf gives help on work experience.
- The HSE's guidance booklet HSG165, 'Young people at work – a guide for employers', can be ordered from HSE Books, www.hsebooks.com.

Volunteering to help young adults: getting it right

- It takes special skills to engage the under 21s – having children of your own doesn't necessarily make you an expert! If you don't have those skills, you'd be better off targeting your support at adults who work with young people.
- If you do want to work directly with young adults, listen to the advice of people who've already notched up some experience.
- Be clear about what you want to achieve. Focus on the needs of the young adult. Don't get sidetracked into advising on employer health and safety issues – you may find yourself treading on the toes of the employer's safety adviser or becoming an unpaid consultant.
- If you want to run health and safety-related activities in schools or other local authority services, speak to the authority's safety adviser first. If you gain their support, they may be able to help you contact the right people.
- Be aware of child protection issues. You may need to have a Criminal Records Bureau check.
- We all give informal advice to friends, family and others, but there's a thin line between being helpful and becoming an unpaid consultant. It's one of the strengths of our profession that people are willing to go that extra mile for the greater good, but:
 - o ask yourself whether you know enough about the safety standards in an organisation to provide competent advice
 - o bear in mind that you'll be personally liable for the advice you give, unless your professional indemnity insurance covers giving advice in a voluntary capacity
 - o think about others – would you as a safety professional or consultant like it if you found you were competing with an unpaid volunteer in your workplace or area of expertise?

If you're asked to take on a substantial health and safety role, it would be better to point the employer in the direction of their own safety adviser or tell them about how to get advice on appointing a consultant – have a look at www.iosh.co.uk/consultancy.

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