

**Want to know  
more about  
your rights at  
work?**

**You have  
a powerful  
friend**



# Find out about your rights on:

- **National minimum wage**
- **Working hours**
- **Working for an agency**
- **Working in agriculture**
- **Working for gangmasters**



This leaflet sets out certain employment rights for everyone who works in the UK. If your employer does not follow these rules they are breaking the law.

There is now a Pay and Work Rights Helpline you can call to find out more about these rights. You can get advice and help on what to do. The helpline can help you get what you are entitled to.

The rules on pay and working hours apply to all workers (see pages 3 and 4). There are also special rules for some kinds of work. These are explained in the rest of the leaflet.

Your employer must also give you other employment rights, like paid holiday and rest breaks, and look after your health and safety at work. If you have concerns about these, or other employment rights not covered here, call Acas for advice on **08457 47 47 47**, or visit **[www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk)**

For health and safety queries, contact HSE on **0845 345 0055**.

# The rules on national minimum wage pay

- If you are 22 or over you must be paid at least £5.80 an hour. This is the national minimum wage
- Almost everyone has a right to the national minimum wage. This includes temporary, part-time and casual workers, homeworkers, pieceworkers, and people from other countries
- From 1 October 2009, any tips you are paid must be extra, on top of the minimum wage
- Your employer cannot take money for things like equipment, protective clothing or uniforms out of your pay if that makes it less than the national minimum wage

The amount of the national minimum wage may change each year, in October.

## Young workers

The amounts for people under 22 are:

- £4.83 an hour if they are aged 18 to 21
- £3.57 an hour if they are between school leaving age and 18

## Some exceptions

- Some people do not have to be paid the national minimum wage, for instance some apprentices and students on work placements
- Your employer can take up to £31.57 a week out of your national minimum wage pay for accommodation. This is called the 'accommodation offset'
- If you are in any kind of agricultural work, there are different minimum wage rates (see page 6)

## Are you getting the national minimum wage?

You should get a payslip showing what you are paid. It should also show how much is taken out, for example for tax.

But it may not be clear if you are getting the minimum wage. Some money does not count – such as expenses. Or you may not get a set amount each hour.

To find out more, call the helpline free on **0800 917 2368**, or visit **[www.direct.gov.uk/payandworkrights](http://www.direct.gov.uk/payandworkrights)**

# The rules on working hours

- You do not have to work more than an average of 48 hours each week
- This applies to almost everyone working in the UK
- If you are over 18, you can choose to work longer if you want to – but your employer cannot make you. You must sign a written agreement about this

## Working out how many hours you work

Some time you spend on top of your normal work counts as part of your 48 hours, such as:

- training for the job
- travelling time if it is part of the job
- paid overtime

You cannot count in your working hours:

- lunch breaks
- travel to and from work
- unpaid overtime that you choose to do

## Young workers

Young people (from school leaving age up to 18) can only work up to eight hours a day, and up to 40 hours a week.

## Some jobs are not always covered

There are some jobs where longer hours are allowed under certain circumstances. These include:

- some work in the armed forces, police, fire and ambulance services
- working on seagoing fishing boats, or merchant ships on lakes and inland waters
- servants in private houses

To find out more, call the helpline free on **0800 917 2368**, or visit **[www.direct.gov.uk/payandworkrights](http://www.direct.gov.uk/payandworkrights)**

# If you work for an agency

- The agency must pay you for every hour you work
- They must not ask for money to find you work
- The agency must tell you in writing how much they are paying you, your terms and conditions and what type of work they will find for you
- The agency cannot take money out of your pay for things like equipment, protective clothing or uniforms unless they tell you and you agree
- They can charge for extra services, but cannot make you use these services as a condition for finding you work

There are different rules for entertainment or modelling agencies. Check with your agency, or look on **[www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk)**

The Employment Agency Standards Inspectorate makes sure agencies keep to the law. They investigate complaints against employment agencies.

## Other employment rights

You also have a right to things like paid holiday and rest breaks.

To find out more, call the helpline free on **0800 917 2368**, or visit **[www.direct.gov.uk/payandworkrights](http://www.direct.gov.uk/payandworkrights)**



# If you work in agriculture

There are some special rules for people working in agriculture.

Agriculture includes livestock farming, any kind of food production on a farm, horticulture, market gardening or nursery work, food packaging and orchard or woodland management.

- You must be paid at least £5.81 an hour
- You have a right to this, even if you do part-time, seasonal, casual or piecework
- You should normally still be paid the same amount if you are sick or injured at work
- If your home is provided by your employer, they can take some money for this. They can only take up to £31.57 a week
- You can ask to see your pay records, and your employer must show them to you. Then you can check what you are being paid

If you work for a gangmaster, please also look at page 7.

To find out more, call the helpline free on **0800 917 2368**, or visit **[www.direct.gov.uk/payandworkrights](http://www.direct.gov.uk/payandworkrights)**



# If you work for a gangmaster

Gangmasters are businesses that provide workers for certain industries. These include agriculture, market gardening, collecting shellfish, and processing and packaging food and drink.

- You have the same rights to pay and working hours as other workers
- Your employer must not stop you taking another job, take away your passport or other documents, make you pay to leave the job, or threaten you in any way
- Your employer cannot take money out of your pay for things like equipment, protective clothing or uniforms
- You do not have to stay in a home your employer provides. If your employer provides your home, it must be safe

The Gangmasters Licensing Authority was set up to protect people who work for gangmasters. It can stop a gangmaster trading if they do not treat workers fairly.

## Other employment rights

You also have a right to things like paid holiday, sick pay and training.

If you work for an agency, please also look at page 5.

To find out more, call the helpline free on **0800 917 2368**, or visit **[www.direct.gov.uk/payandworkrights](http://www.direct.gov.uk/payandworkrights)**



# How to find out more



Calls from some mobile phones will be free and others may vary. Check with your mobile phone provider for more information.

## Call the helpline if:

- you want more help or advice
- you think you are not being paid the right amount, or the rules on your pay and work rights are being broken
- you want to find out if you are getting the minimum wage

Calls to the helpline are free and in confidence. You can get help and advice in over 100 different languages. If you want to make a complaint, you do not have to say who you are.

There is also a lot of helpful information on **[www.direct.gov.uk/payandworkrights](http://www.direct.gov.uk/payandworkrights)** or you may find it helpful to talk to your employer.

For all other employment rights issues not covered here, talk to Acas for advice on **08457 47 47 47**, or visit **[www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk)**

Alternatively you can visit your local Citizens Advice Bureau. To find your nearest office see your local phone book or visit **[www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk)**

