



# Young Workers Guidance:

## Guidance and Advice

Empowering Clubs, Elevating Coaches, Inspiring Gymnasts.

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# 1.Introduction

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IGA is committed to ensuring that young workers within our community are treated fairly, work in a safe environment, and are supported in balancing their employment with their education and well-being. This guidance outlines the legal working conditions for young people in the UK and additional considerations that IGA members must follow.

## 2. Employment Restrictions Based on Age

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### Children Aged 14

- Must not work before **7:00 am** or after **7:00 pm** on any day.
- Must not work during school hours.
- Maximum **2 hours per day** on school days.
- Maximum **5 hours on Saturdays** or weekdays during school holidays.
- Maximum **2 hours on Sundays**.
- Must not work for more than **4 hours without a break of at least 1 hour**.
- Total work hours must not exceed **12 hours per school week**.
- During school holidays, maximum **25 hours per week**.

### Children Aged 15-16 (Under 16s)

- Cannot work more than **2 hours on a school day** or **Sunday**.
- Cannot work more than **8 hours on a Saturday**.
- Cannot work more than **12 hours per week** during term time.
- Cannot work more than **35 hours per week** during school holidays.
- Allowed to work only between **8:30 am and 7:00 pm**.
- Maximum **5 days per week**.
- For shifts exceeding **4 hours (on Saturdays or school holidays)**, a **1-hour break** is required.

### Young Workers Aged 16-17

- Cannot work more than **8 hours per day**.
- Cannot work more than **40 hours per week**.
- Work must take place between **8:30 am and 10:00 pm**.
- When a shift exceeds **4.5 hours**, a **30-minute break** is required.
- Night work is **prohibited between 10:00 pm and 6:00 am**, except in specific industries where exemptions apply.

**Please Note:** Employers must check with their local council to ensure compliance with any additional restrictions.

# 3. Employer Responsibilities

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- Employers play a key role in ensuring that young workers are treated fairly, work in a safe and supportive environment, and have the opportunity to grow and develop in their roles. It is essential that employers comply with all legal requirements and take proactive steps to ensure the well-being of young workers.

### **Key Responsibilities:**

- **Provide a Written Contract:** Employers must ensure that all young workers are given a clear written contract of employment. This contract should outline key information, such as working hours, pay rates, job responsibilities, and expectations. This helps avoid misunderstandings and ensures transparency for both parties.
- **Comply with Legal Working Hours and Wage Regulations:** Employers must strictly adhere to the legal working hours and wage regulations. Young workers cannot be asked to exceed the maximum working hours or work in unsafe or inappropriate conditions, as outlined in previous sections of this document.
- **Avoid Excessive or Hazardous Duties:** Employers must ensure that the tasks given to young workers are age-appropriate and not hazardous. For example, they should not be asked to perform physically demanding work, use dangerous machinery, or engage in activities that could pose a health or safety risk.
- **Provide Training and Supervision:** Employers must offer proper training and guidance to young workers, helping them understand their responsibilities and how to perform their tasks safely. Adequate supervision should be provided, especially for younger workers who are still gaining experience and confidence in the workplace.
- **Insurance:** Businesses must have appropriate insurance that covers young workers. This ensures that if any accidents or injuries occur, both the employer and the young worker are adequately protected. It's crucial for employers to check that their insurance policies are valid and comprehensive.
- **Support Work-Life Balance:** Employers should be flexible with the schedules of young workers, particularly when school or college commitments interfere with work hours. This flexibility should be built into work schedules and contracts to ensure that young workers are not overwhelmed by their responsibilities.



## 4.Types of Work Allowed & Prohibited



Employers must ensure that young workers only take on appropriate work that complies with the law and is safe for their age and maturity level. The types of work that young people are allowed to do are generally lighter and less physically demanding than those available to adults.

### Allowed Work:

- **Light Duties:** Young workers can take on light, non-hazardous tasks, such as assisting in coaching (e.g., helping with gymnastic routines), managing front desk operations, or performing general administrative tasks. These types of tasks are suitable for young people, as they allow them to gain valuable experience without compromising their health or safety.
- **Maintenance Tasks:** Young workers can be involved in basic maintenance duties such as tidying up, maintaining equipment (as long as it is not dangerous), or cleaning duties that do not require the use of hazardous chemicals or heavy machinery.

### Prohibited Work:

- **Hazardous Work:** Young workers are prohibited from engaging in any work that may involve exposure to hazardous conditions or risks, such as handling dangerous chemicals, operating heavy machinery, or performing tasks at dangerous heights.
- **Heavy Lifting:** Lifting heavy objects is prohibited for young workers, as it can pose serious physical risks, such as muscle strain or injury. Employers must ensure that tasks involving heavy lifting are either avoided or assigned to more experienced adult workers.
- **Work in Dangerous Environments:** Work environments that present significant risks to young workers, such as construction sites, factories, or environments involving extreme temperatures, should be off-limits for workers under 18.
- **Certain Industries:** Specific industries, including those related to selling alcohol, tobacco, or working in betting shops, are off-limits to young workers under the age of 18. Similarly, young workers cannot be employed in certain areas of industrial work that require specialised training and safety measures.

**It is critical that employers fully understand the restrictions placed on young workers and ensure that all job roles comply with legal requirements for age and safety.**

## **5.Work Permits & Local Authority Approval**

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In some cases, especially for younger workers (those under the age of 16), a work permit may be required before employment can begin. This ensures that the young person is legally allowed to work and that their rights are being protected.

### **Key Considerations:**

- **Work Permits:** A work permit may be necessary for anyone under the age of 16. In many cases, the local council (or local authority) will issue these permits to confirm that the young worker is permitted to work in the area and that the employer complies with local child employment laws.
- **Local Authority Approval:** Employers must check with the local council before hiring young workers to ensure compliance with any local regulations or additional restrictions. This could include specific guidelines regarding the number of hours a child can work, permitted working hours, or specific types of work that are suitable.
- **Permit Conditions:** Even after a permit is issued, the conditions set forth by the local council must be strictly followed. These conditions may include time limits on working hours, the types of work allowed, and other age-specific restrictions that must be respected at all times.
- **Record Keeping:** Employers should ensure they maintain proper records of work permits and any corresponding documentation for young workers. This provides a clear trail of compliance and ensures that, if necessary, employers can prove they are adhering to legal obligations.
- **Local Regulations:** Local authorities may have additional rules that differ from national standards, so it is important for employers to always confirm the rules in their local area. Employers who fail to adhere to local by-laws can face penalties and legal action.



## 6.Zero-Hours Contracts & Flexible Work

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Zero-hours contracts and flexible working arrangements can be beneficial for young workers, but employers must ensure they are used fairly and legally. These types of contracts allow young workers to balance work with their education, but there are specific rules that must be followed.

### Key Considerations:

- **Zero-Hours Contracts:** Zero-hours contracts, where workers are not guaranteed a set number of hours each week, can offer flexibility, but employers must ensure that these contracts are fair. Young workers on zero-hours contracts should not be penalized for refusing shifts, and they must be provided with sufficient notice for any shift changes.
  - **Fair Compensation:** Young workers on zero-hours contracts are still entitled to the National Minimum Wage for hours worked, and they must also receive statutory holiday pay.
  - **Right to Decline Shifts:** Employers cannot force young workers to accept shifts, and they must ensure that workers have the right to decline without facing negative consequences.
- **Flexible Working Arrangements:** Flexible work arrangements, such as part-time roles or variable shifts, are ideal for young workers, especially those balancing their education with work. These arrangements help young workers manage their time effectively without compromising their well-being or education.
  - **Support Education:** Employers should ensure that flexible work arrangements align with the young worker's school or college schedule. The flexibility of hours should not interfere with their educational commitments.
  - **Work-Life Balance:** Flexible work arrangements should also take into account the need for a balanced lifestyle. Employers should ensure that young workers do not feel overworked or overwhelmed by their schedules.
- **Sufficient Notice for Shift Changes:** If shifts need to be altered or canceled, employers must provide young workers with reasonable notice and compensate them appropriately if shifts are canceled without sufficient notice. Last-minute changes or cancellations should not be common practice.

- **Minimum Wage and Holiday Pay:** Even though the work may vary from week to week, young workers on flexible or zero-hours contracts are still entitled to the statutory minimum wage for the hours worked. They must also receive holiday pay, which must be calculated in line with the hours worked.

**In summary, employers must ensure that young workers on zero-hours contracts or flexible work arrangements have a fair and transparent agreement that supports their well-being, education, and rights as workers.**

## 7. Handling Workplace Disputes

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- If a young worker faces **unfair treatment, discrimination, or unsafe working conditions**, they should:
  - Speak with their employer or manager first to try and resolve the issue informally.
  - Keep a record of any incidents, including dates, times, and any communications related to the dispute.
  - Seek advice from **ACAS (Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service)** or their local authority for guidance on workplace rights and next steps.
  - If necessary, report concerns to **Health and Safety Executive (HSE)** for safety-related matters or the **UK Employment Tribunal** for legal disputes related to unfair treatment or discrimination.
  - If the issue involves unpaid wages or contractual violations, young workers can also contact **Citizens Advice** or the **HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) Pay and Work Rights Helpline** for assistance.
- Employers should have a clear **grievance procedure** in place to handle disputes professionally and fairly.
- Young workers should never feel pressured to accept unfair treatment and are encouraged to seek external support if internal resolution is not effective.

## 8. Health, Safety, and Welfare

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Employers must conduct risk assessments for young workers and ensure their safety at work.

Adequate training and supervision must be provided.

Young workers should not perform hazardous tasks or work in unsafe environments.

Employers must ensure that young workers' health and safety are prioritised by following these key steps:

- **Risk Assessments:** Employers must conduct thorough risk assessments specifically for young workers. These assessments should identify any potential risks or hazards that could impact their health and safety at work. Factors like the nature of the tasks, equipment used, and working conditions must all be evaluated.
- **Appropriate Training:** Young workers should receive tailored training that focuses on safe working practices, particularly those that are age-appropriate. This training should include proper instruction on how to perform tasks safely, use equipment correctly, and handle emergencies. The training must also be ongoing to address any evolving safety concerns.
- **Supervision:** Adequate supervision must be provided for young workers, especially when they are performing unfamiliar tasks. Employers are responsible for ensuring that young workers are not left unsupervised in potentially dangerous environments or when handling complex tasks that they may not yet be qualified to do.
- **Restricted Tasks:** Certain tasks that are deemed hazardous, such as working with dangerous machinery, lifting heavy objects, or working at heights, are prohibited for young workers. Employers must ensure that young workers are assigned age-appropriate and non-hazardous tasks to avoid exposing them to unnecessary risks.
- **Health & Safety Training:** Beyond just job-specific training, young workers should be educated about basic health and safety rights. This includes understanding what to do in case



of an emergency, how to report unsafe conditions, and the importance of taking breaks and maintaining good physical and mental health.

- **Welfare Provisions:** Employers must also ensure that the general welfare of young workers is supported. This includes providing adequate breaks, access to drinking water, and ensuring that they have appropriate facilities for rest. Employers should also check in with young workers regularly to ensure their well-being, especially if they are under high-pressure or long working hours.

## 9. Local By-laws and Additional Restrictions



Local authorities may have additional rules regarding young employment. Employers and workers should check local council regulations for any extra restrictions or permit requirements.

In addition to national regulations, local councils may implement additional rules and restrictions regarding the employment of young workers. Employers and workers should be aware of these local variations to ensure full compliance with the law:

- **Local Authority Regulations:** Local authorities may set their own specific rules concerning the hours young workers can work, the types of work they can perform, and the processes for issuing work permits. Employers must check with the local council to confirm any specific local by-laws or additional restrictions before hiring a young worker. These rules can vary depending on the region, and non-compliance may lead to penalties or legal action.
- **Work Permits for Under-16s:** In many areas, young people under the age of 16 are required to have a work permit, which is issued by the local council. Employers must ensure they apply for the necessary permits before employing young workers in these age groups. The permits ensure that the work is appropriate, the hours are compliant with local rules, and that the young worker's safety is considered.

- **Additional Local Restrictions:** Some areas may impose restrictions on the types of work young people can undertake beyond the standard national rules. For example, certain local authorities may have stricter limits on evening or weekend work, particularly during school terms. Employers should also check if there are specific restrictions on certain industries or sectors, such as retail or hospitality, that may be more stringent in particular areas.
- **Regular Reviews and Compliance:** Employers should regularly review the regulations set by their local authority, especially if there are changes in employment laws or local by-laws. This ensures that both the business and young workers remain compliant with all legal requirements.

## 10. Pay and National Minimum Wage

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As of April 2025, the minimum wage rates are as follows:

- **Ages 16-17:** £7.55 per hour
- **Ages 18-20:** £9.00 per hour
- **Ages 21+:** £11.44 per hour
- **Apprentices under 19 or in their first year of an apprenticeship:** £6.40 per hour

The National Minimum Wage (NMW) is the legal minimum pay that employers must provide to their workers based on their age. It is designed to ensure that all employees, including young workers, are paid fairly for the work they perform. It's important for both employers and employees to understand these wage requirements and ensure that they are adhered to.

### Understanding the National Minimum Wage

- **Ages 16-17:** Workers aged 16 or 17 are entitled to a minimum of £7.55 per hour. This is a lower rate compared to adult workers, recognizing the fact that young workers are still learning, typically have fewer responsibilities, and may work fewer hours. However, this rate ensures that young workers are compensated fairly for their time and effort.



- **Ages 18-20:** At 18 years old, workers are entitled to £9.00 per hour. The NMW increases for workers in this age group, recognizing the increased maturity and experience gained from the age of 18 and above. This wage applies to workers who are either still studying or have entered the workforce full-time.
- **Ages 21+:** For workers aged 21 and above, the National Minimum Wage increases again to £11.44 per hour. This reflects the expectation that individuals in this age group are likely to have more experience and higher levels of responsibility in their jobs.
- **Apprentices:** Apprentices under 19, or those in their first year of apprenticeship, are entitled to a lower hourly wage, currently set at £6.40 per hour. Apprenticeships combine work with learning, and the lower wage reflects the time spent in training and the gradual development of skills over the course of the apprenticeship. However, apprentices are still entitled to the same rights as other workers, including the right to a fair wage, holiday pay, and a safe working environment.

## Important Considerations for Employers

- **Paying Below the Legal Minimum:** It is illegal for employers to pay young workers below the National Minimum Wage. Employers found in violation of this law may face legal action, including fines or penalties. Young workers have the right to report underpayment, and employers must ensure that their payroll systems are accurate and compliant with the law.
- **Holiday Pay:** In addition to the hourly wage, young workers are entitled to statutory holiday pay, which is based on the number of hours worked. This must be paid in full, regardless of age. Employers should keep track of holiday entitlement and ensure workers can take their entitled time off. For part-time workers, holiday pay is typically calculated as a proportion of their hours worked.
- **Deductions:** Employers must not make unlawful deductions from young workers' pay, unless the deduction is for tax, National Insurance contributions, or any other legal requirement. Other deductions, such as for uniforms, equipment, or accidental damage, must be clearly communicated in advance and be agreed upon by the worker.
- **Pay Slips:** Employers are required to provide young workers with a pay slip that outlines the hours worked, the rate of pay, and any deductions made. This ensures transparency and helps the young worker track their earnings, which is important for financial education and for resolving any disputes.
- **Fair Pay Practices:** In addition to paying the statutory minimum wage, employers should aim to provide fair compensation based on the young worker's experience, responsibilities, and performance. It's also important to treat young workers equally in terms of pay, ensuring that they are not paid less than others doing the same job solely based on their age.
- **Overtime Pay:** If young workers are asked to work overtime, they must be paid for those extra hours at the same or higher rate as their regular wage, in line with the applicable legal minimum wage rates. Employers should have clear policies in place regarding overtime hours, ensuring that young workers are not pressured to work beyond their contracted hours without appropriate compensation.
- **Benefits:** In addition to their hourly wage, young workers may be entitled to other employment benefits depending on their employment contract, such as pension contributions, sick pay, and other company-specific benefits. Employers should ensure that these benefits are provided in accordance with the law and the terms of the worker's contract.

## Rights to Equal Pay

- **Equal Pay for Equal Work:** Young workers have the right to receive equal pay for equal work under UK employment law. Employers cannot pay a younger worker less for performing the same tasks as an older worker simply because of their age. This principle of equal pay ensures that workers are paid fairly and that younger employees are not discriminated against in the workplace.
- **Pay Transparency:** Employers should be transparent about pay structures and ensure that all workers, regardless of their age, understand how their pay is determined. This can help avoid misunderstandings and create a more supportive working environment for young workers.

## Monitoring and Enforcement

- **HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC):** HMRC is responsible for ensuring that employers comply with the National Minimum Wage regulations. HMRC can investigate employers suspected of underpaying workers and may take action, including imposing fines or requiring employers to repay any back pay owed to the young workers.
- **Reporting Pay Violations:** Young workers who believe they are being paid less than the legal minimum can report this to HMRC. There are also third-party organizations like Citizens Advice that can provide additional support if workers are unsure about their pay or need help understanding their rights.
- **National Minimum Wage Rates Update:** The National Minimum Wage rates are reviewed and updated annually by the UK government to ensure they reflect the cost of living and the needs of workers. Young workers and employers should stay informed about any changes to the rates and adjust their practices accordingly.

## 11. Contact and Further Information



For further guidance, visit:

- **GOV.UK - Child Employment**
- **Health and Safety Executive - Young Workers**
- **ACAS - Young Workers Rights**

IGA is committed to supporting young workers in gaining valuable experience while ensuring compliance with the law and safeguarding their well-being.