

## What if I am not being paid the national minimum wage?

The Government takes non-compliance with the minimum wage seriously and has set up an enforcement body to deal with all complaints. So if you are not being paid what you are entitled to, call the helpline on **0845 6000 678** (calls are charged at local rates).

Alternatively, you can consult a Citizen's Advice Bureau, trade union, low pay unit or other advice centre, who will advise you about taking your case to an employment tribunal.

However, in most cases, we advise you to call our helpline direct. You don't have to give your name but if you want our officers to try to obtain your underpayments, giving them your name and contact details will help them. They may have to name you to your employer at a later stage in the enforcement process (e.g. when attending an employment tribunal on your behalf) but they will not do this without asking you first.

## How can I find out more?

Contact the minimum wage helpline on **0845 6000 678** to ask questions, seek confidential advice or to report underpayment. The helpline is run by the Inland Revenue on behalf of the DTI.

To order a copy of more detailed guidance, call the minimum wage information line on **0845 8450 360** and ask for your free copy of *A detailed guide to the national minimum wage*. Calls will be charged at local rates. To help us improve the quality of our service, your call may be monitored or recorded. This is for internal training purposes only.

Alternatively, you can write to minimum wage enquiries, Freepost PHQ1, Newcastle upon Tyne NE98 1ZH or visit the DTI minimum wage website at <http://www.dti.gov.uk/er/nmw>

This leaflet is also available in large print, Braille and on audio cassette on demand. Call **0845 602 4027**, or write to DTI National Minimum Wage, Freepost SE2693, London SE5 7XU.

For copies of the National Minimum Wage Act 1998 and the National Minimum Wage Regulations 1999, call the Stationery Office Parliamentary hotline **0845 7023 474**.

**The information contained in this leaflet is intended to provide general guidance only. It should not be regarded as a complete and authoritative statement of the law.**

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NATIONAL MINIMUM WAGE

A short guide for young workers

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**0845 6000 678**

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We champion UK business at home and abroad. We invest heavily in world-class science and technology. We protect the rights of working people and consumers. And we stand up for fair and open markets in the UK, Europe and the world.

## If you're 18–21 (inclusive) and working, then £3.80 per hour is the least you can expect.

### What is the national minimum wage?

The minimum wage is the minimum level of pay to which almost all workers in the UK have a legal right. It became law on 1 April 1999.

On **1 October 2003** the minimum hourly rate for 18–21 year olds (inclusive) was raised to £3.80 an hour, from £3.60 an hour.

Your employer will be breaking the law if he or she does not pay you the amount you are entitled to.

### Why is there a lower rate for young people?

The Government has taken advice from an independent body called the Low Pay Commission (LPC) on the level of pay rates. The LPC found that in countries where all workers, regardless of age, are entitled to the same minimum rate, youth unemployment tends to be higher. This is because employers tend to recruit older, fully trained or more experienced workers if there is no lower minimum for people below a certain age.

Remember that the rate for young people is only the legal minimum. Employers can and often do pay more than the minimum wage.

## What about people under 18?

The minimum wage does not presently apply to the under-18s. The Government has however agreed that this issue merits further consideration and has asked the LPC to report on the possible advantages and disadvantages of a minimum wage for 16–17 year olds by February 2004.

### Does the national minimum wage apply to trainees?

The minimum wage applies to workers. This means people who work under a contract for an employer. If you are a trainee who does no work at all, you do not count as a worker and therefore are not entitled to the minimum wage. However, there are many kinds of trainees who work under a contract for an employer. Different rules apply depending on the type of trainee (e.g. Government trainees, sandwich course students, apprentices). Check the rules by consulting the *Detailed Guide to the National Minimum Wage* (phone up the information line on **0845 8450 360** to order the guide) or you can talk to someone on the helpline on **0845 6000 678** or visit our website at [www.dti.gov.uk/er/nmw](http://www.dti.gov.uk/er/nmw)

## What if my employer wants me to work for less than the national minimum wage?

If you are entitled to the minimum wage, then your employer must pay it. If he does not, he is breaking the law.

### What if my employer says I'm not entitled to the national minimum wage because I work part time?

It makes no difference whether you work part time or full time. The law applies to almost all workers, including those taken on casually without written contracts, those who work from home and those who are paid by commission. Check your entitlement to the minimum wage by ringing the helpline on **0845 6000 678**.

### What if my employer says he will make up the rest of my pay with 'benefits in kind'?

There are strict rules about benefits in kind and the minimum wage. Some jobs provide benefits as well as payment in wages, such as free meals and accommodation or discounts off company products. The only benefit that an employer can count against the minimum wage is accommodation. There are special rules for calculating the value of your accommodation which counts towards the minimum wage.