

There are statutory safeguards in place regarding employment for everyone in the UK. If you are under 18, you have the right to extra protections and, as full-time students, cannot be asked to work the same hours as an older employee.

The information in this document is based on the guidance of The Citizens Advice Bureau who offer face to face, online and telephone support.

Legislation for Workers Under-18

Working hours

- You shouldn't usually be asked to work more than 40 hours a week or 8 hours a day where you are working full-time.
- At present, these 40 hours include your hours as a full-time student. 25-30 hours per week of your time is taken up with study during term time, **leaving 10-15 hours for paid work.**
- Despite schools closing, you are still full-time students who will need to spend 8.40am to 3.05pm (with breaks) in study.
- You can work longer hours during school holidays.
- Your employer shouldn't expect you to work when you're supposed to be learning, for example when you're (usually) at college or school, full time or part time.
- **Your employer is allowed to ask you to work for longer in exceptional circumstances. They can only ask this if:**
 - **no one who's 18 or over is available to do the work**
 - **they need you because it's suddenly busy or to keep the service running**
 - **your education or training won't be affected by the work**

This might be, for example, if you work in a care home and there's extra work because several residents are ill. If the adults who'd normally cover a shift are also ill, you can be asked to work. **HOWEVER**, there is a limit of 48 hours in a working week for nearly all adults. See the ACAS guidance (link below) for details.

Times of day you can work

- In most jobs, you can't normally be asked to work between 10pm and 6am.
- If your contract says you have to work until 11pm, that's alright but you shouldn't start work before 7am the next morning.
- You can be asked to work at other times in exceptional circumstances. This might be, for example, as a result of the ongoing national crisis.
- If you work in some jobs (see below), your employer can ask you to work at night if all the following apply:
 - no one 18 or over is available to do the work
 - it's suddenly busy or you're needed to keep the service running
 - **your education or training won't be affected by the work.**
 - you're supervised by an adult - if it's necessary for your safety
 - you're given time to rest to make up for it - [find out more about compensatory rest on GOV.UK](#)
- Clearly, if you were to work at night during term time, this would affect your education. This is something that should be requested of young people only during school holidays and only in exceptional circumstances.

- The hours you can be asked to work depend on the job:

Times you can work	Type of job
Between 10pm and 6am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hospital • Pharmacy
Up to midnight or from 4am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Catering • Bakery • Agriculture • Postal Deliveries

Example

Dan works in a hospital and is asked to work until midnight because the adult who usually covers that shift is ill. There are more patients than usual at the moment so the department's very busy. Dan is allowed to do this work because there's no adult available and there's more work than normal.

Breaks

- You're allowed a 30-minute break if you work 4 and a half hours or more in a shift - you and your employer can decide when you have it. You might not be paid for your break - check with your employer.
- You should have 48 hours off in one go each week.
- You must have at least 12 hours off between each working day - unless your working day is split into short periods of work.

Example

Holly works in a supermarket two days a week from 8-11am in the morning and 5-9pm at night. She doesn't need 12 hours off overnight because she had a break in the afternoon.

Your employer can ask you to have shorter breaks or less than 12 hours off between days if:

- no one 18 or over is available to do the work
 - it's temporary
 - the work needs doing straight away and can't wait
 - something unexpected has happened
 - you're given time to rest to make up for it - [find out more about compensatory rest](#) on GOV.UK
- For example, your employer could ask you to shorten your break if you work in a canteen and there is a sudden rush and other colleagues have called in sick and there's no one else to do the work.

Work you are permitted to do

You shouldn't be asked to do work that:

- you're not physically and mentally able to do
- is a risk to your health because of extreme cold, heat or vibration - for example by working with a drill or in a freezer
- You can't do work where you might be in contact with chemicals, toxic material or radiation unless:
- you're supervised by an experienced person
- your employer keeps you as safe as possible

What to do if you have questions

If you have questions about your employment rights, please see the following resources for more advice:

- <https://www.acas.org.uk/young-workers-apprentices-and-work-experience>
- <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/work/check-your-rights-at-work-if-youre-under-18/>

For those of you who are already 18, standard employment rights are in place. Please see the following for advice on employment rights for adults:

- <https://www.acas.org.uk/checking-your-employment-rights>
- <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/work/rights-at-work/>
- speak to your employer directly to get their advice
- speak to a member of the sixth form team. If necessary, we can take your query to East Sussex County Council for advice.