Supporting Young Workers

Your Rights At Work

What You Need To Know

USDAW
YOUNG WORKERS

The Bare Minimum – Know Your Rights

It's important to know your rights at work – your employer is legally obliged to make sure you benefit from these rights.

Most people have the following statutory minimum rights:

- 28 days paid holiday a year (pro-rata for part-time workers).
- 20 minutes unpaid break when working longer than six hours.
- 11 hours rest between working days.
- 24 hours rest twice every fortnight.
- 48-hour maximum average working week.

16 and 17-year-old workers are also entitled to:

- 30 minutes rest break when working more than 4.5 hours.
- 12 hours rest between working days.
- Two days rest every week.
- 40-hour maximum working week.
- 8-hour maximum working day.
- A ban on working at night.

It's All About the Money

Are you getting what you're owed? All employers have to pay you at least the National Minimum Wage. From April 2026, the hourly rates of pay are:

Under 18	18-20	21+	Apprentice*
£8.00	£10.85	£12.71	£8.00

*This rate is for apprentices aged 16-18 and those aged 19 or over who are in their first year. All other apprentices are entitled to the National Minimum Wage for their age.

National Living Wage

In April 2026, the so-called National Living Wage increased to £12.71 per hour for people aged 21 and over. Like the Minimum Wage, it is illegal to pay any worker aged 21 and over less than this amount, per hour.

Usdaw believes if you do the same job as your older colleagues you should get the same pay, regardless of age. This is a campaigning priority for the Union.

Negotiating for Young Workers

Usdaw has negotiated the removal of youth rates in big companies such as Tesco, the Co-operative, Sainsbury's, Morrisons and Argos. Many employers we deal with now pay the adult rate to all employees, irrespective of age.

Usdaw – The Union for Young Retail Workers

Working Hours

Do you work part-time? Part-time workers must not be treated less favourably than full-time workers. This includes pay, holidays and parental leave.

Your employer can't make unreasonable changes to your contracted hours of work without your permission. Usdaw can help negotiate any proposed changes to get the best deal for you.

Problems at Work

Anyone can experience problems at work. These can be related to a range of situations – for example, sickness absence or having your contracted hours changed. Whether you're planning on making a career in retail or not, you still need to be protected at work.

As a Union, we always stand up for our members, providing advice, support and representation when problems arise.

Respect at Work

Do you get stuck with all the rubbish jobs in the workplace? Heavy lifting, unsocial shifts, bullying in the workplace?

Usdaw believes in fairness at work – we will stand up for you.

Student Support

Need time off to study? Usdaw has negotiated time off to study for exams in many of our workplaces – even if there isn't a formal agreement, Usdaw reps can still help you get the best possible deal to suit you.

At College or University?

Usdaw has also helped many young members get a transfer, so they could keep their summer job in retail when they went back to college or university.

Get Involved – Be Part of Something!

Being a member of Usdaw (the trade union for retail workers) means that you have good advice and protection for your rights at work, but we also offer a lot more than you might think.

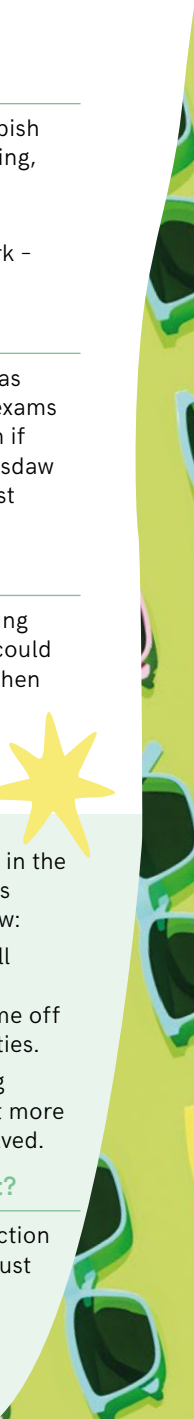
Even if you work part-time, or only plan to work for a short time, it's important to be protected at work – and there are other benefits, such as free legal advice on any issue (for example, if your landlord tries to rip you off) and money off at cinemas and theme parks. If you want more than just our fantastic benefits and protection in the workplace – there are lots of ways for you to get involved with Usdaw:

- Become an Usdaw rep – we will provide full training and your employer will give you paid time off to train and carry out your duties.
- Each region has its own Young Workers' Committee. Find out more about how you could get involved.

How Much Does All This Cost?

It doesn't cost much to get protection at work. You can join Usdaw for just **£2.98* per week**.

*rate correct at 28 June 2026



More Information

Usdaw Nationwide

Wherever you work, an Usdaw rep or official (Area Organiser) is not far away. For further information or assistance, contact your Usdaw rep or local Usdaw office. Alternatively, you can phone our Freephone Helpline 0800 030 80 30 to connect you to your regional office or visit our website www.usdaw.org.uk You can also write to the Union's Head Office. Just write **FREEPOST USDAW** on the envelope and put it in the post.

Join Usdaw

You can join online at www.usdaw.org.uk/JoinUs

Scan to join today

What Happens Next

Once we process your application, you will receive a membership card with our Helpline telephone number and a New Member's Pack giving details of all the benefits and professional services available to you.

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Stock photography, posed by a model

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