

Apprentices: know your rights

Pay

Apprentices are legally entitled to at least the National Minimum Wage rate for apprentices.

There is one rate for apprentices aged 16 to 18, or over 19 but in the first year of apprenticeship.

There is a higher rate for apprentices aged 19 or over who have completed the first year of the apprenticeship. See the government's **National Minimum Wage** webpage for the current rates. These rates are the minimum you should be paid. UNISON encourages employers to pay more.

Working time and holiday

When it comes to working time, apprentices have the same rights as other workers. This means you have the right to:

- ▶ Annual leave: at least 20 days of paid holiday per year (if you're full time), plus 8 public and bank holidays.
- ▶ Maximum working week: you should not be asked to work more than an average of 48 hours per week (40 if you are under 18), and you are entitled to at least 24 hours off work each week (48 if you're under 18).
- ▶ Breaks: at least a 20 minute rest break if you are working 6 hours or more.

Learning

At least 20% of your time should be spent on off-the-job learning. This should happen in your normal working hours, and if it doesn't, you should be compensated, for example with time off in lieu. The learning may take place face-to-face, online, or a mixture of both.

In addition, your apprenticeship should offer you training in English and maths if you don't already have level 2 qualifications in these. This is called 'functional skills' training and does not form part of your off-the-job learning.

Apprenticeship agreement or contract of employment

You should be provided with an apprenticeship agreement or contract of employment, which is signed by you and your employer. This should set out:

- ▶ The employer's name and your job title.
- ▶ How long you will be employed.
- ▶ Your terms and conditions, such as pay, working hours and annual leave.
- ▶ Your learning plan and the apprenticeship framework or standard you will be working to.

Joining a union

Many unions offer reduced membership rates for apprentices; for example, **you can join UNISON for just £10 per year** if you are earning the minimum wage for apprentices and receive a range of benefits such as training, discounts and dedicated support at work.

You have the right to join the trade union of your choice – you should check the **TUC union finder** tool to find the best union for you.

Raising a problem

If any of the rights listed above aren't being met, you should speak to your trade union as soon as possible. Your union can talk you through your options and help you to raise the issue with your employer, probably informally at first. If raising the problem informally doesn't work, apprentices have the right to raise a grievance – this is a formal complaint to your employer.



**Not in
UNISON?**

Join at **join.unison.org.uk**
or call **0800 171 2193**