

## Employment Fact Sheet: Children and employment

### Children and employment

This fact sheet applies to children and young people who are **under school leaving age**. Young people can leave school on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they are 16.

If you are over school leaving age, see further help at the end of this fact sheet for where you can find more information.

There are laws to protect the employment rights of children and young people. The laws concern your health and safety, what work you can do, when you can work and how many hours you can work. These laws are very strict, and an employer can be prosecuted for breaking them.

### What work can you do?

No one under the minimum school leaving age can be employed in work other than light work. You are not allowed to do work which is likely to be harmful to your safety, health, development, or work that will affect your attendance at school or participation in work experience. You are not allowed to work:-

- in a factory or in construction work
- in transport
- in a mine
- on a registered merchant ship.

The local council where you live may also have some extra rules, called **by-laws**, about the employment of children in your area. You should check with your local council if you want to find out what these are. By-laws authorising children to work in street trading must say which days, which hours, and the places where, they may work.

Employers who want to employ children under school leaving age are required to get a **permit** from their local council. The permit must be signed by both the employer and one of your parents.

Children under 14 There are some extra rules about the employment of children under 14. If you are under 14

## Health and safety at work

If you are under school leaving age, you can only be employed if the person you work for (your **employer**) has done an **assessment** of the **possible risks** to your health and safety. They must pay particular attention to your age, lack of experience, and other things that could be a risk to your health and safety.

Your employer must also tell one of your parents the results of the assessment. This must include any risks identified, and any measures put in place to protect your health and safety at work.

These rules do not apply when you are doing occasional work such as odd jobs for someone you know, or babysitting.

## Holidays

If you are under school leaving age, you are not legally entitled to paid holiday from work.

## Pay

If you are under school leaving age, there is no minimum wage that your employer must pay you.

## Babysitting

You can babysit at any age, whether you are paid or not. You are allowed to look after a child of any age. However, if the child you are babysitting is thought to be at risk because it is not being looked after properly, the child's parents could be prosecuted, or action could be taken to put their child into care.

**Further help Citizens Advice Bureau Citizens Advice Bureau**

**Contact Details:**

Citizens Advice, 46 Donegall Pass, Belfast, BT7 1BS

Telephone: (028) 9023 1120 Fax: (028) 9023 6522 E-mail: [info@citizensadvice.co.uk](mailto:info@citizensadvice.co.uk) Website: [www.citizensadvice.co.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.co.uk)