



## **SAFETY POCKET GUIDE**

### **What is a younger worker?**

When people think of a younger worker they will often imagine somebody fresh out of school. While this can certainly be true, many organisations have found it useful to classify a younger worker as someone:

- 1. entering employment for the first time, or**
- 2. entering their chosen profession/career for the first time after longer education studies**

Typically, this means a younger worker may be categorised as anyone up to the age of 24 years old. However, some employers might find it advantageous to extend the age range beyond this when identifying who might benefit from a 'new to work' induction. So as a CWU member we recognise you as a young worker up to the age of 30.

We believe No-one should be made ill, injured, bullied, sexually harassed, assaulted or killed by work!

There are many laws which employers and others have a duty to comply with in the workplace. These ensure that workers are not treated unfairly or subjected to conditions which will detrimentally affect our health. Laws like The Equality Act, The Health and Safety at Work Act, and various health and safety regulations.

### **Workers who are 18 yrs. and over:**

#### **Employee, worker or self-employed:**

Most employment rights depend on your employment status: whether you are an employee, a worker or self-employed.

**Employees:** Employees have more employment rights, are entitled to a written statement of employment within 8 weeks of starting employment and it must include specific information. There is always a contract of employment between an employee and an employer and it includes expressed and implied terms. Things like pay, hours of work, holiday pay, sick pay, redundancy pay etc.

#### **Young Workers (16-17 years):**

There are many employment rights all workers have when they start a job, but young workers – those under 18 years old – usually have a few additional or different rights to protect them at work.

### **Workers under 18 years of age:**

Young workers, under 18 years old cannot usually be made to work more than eight hours a day or 40 hours a week and are commonly entitled to 30-minute rest break if they work more than 4.5 hours. 12 hours of daily rest. 48 hours of weekly rest.

## **WORKPLACE STRESS**

Under the Health and Safety at Work Act the employer has a legal duty to ensure the health, safety and welfare of employees. This is the same for mental and physical health.

Many Young workers often experience stress in work which can lead to poor mental health. If you are experiencing occupational stress ask your safety rep or Mental Health First Aider to carry out or get the employer to carry out a stress RA or agreed 'guided conversation' or 'toolbox talk' The HSE have developed a set of Management Standards to support employers with conducting a stress RA.

[www.hse.gov.uk/stress/standards](http://www.hse.gov.uk/stress/standards)

## **WORKING TIME REGULATIONS**

A worker should not work more than 48 hours a week over a period of time calculated at a normal reference period of 17 weeks. This means you can work more than 48 hours one week, as long as the average over 17 weeks is less than 48 hours a week. If anyone opts out of this, it **MUST** be entirely voluntary and in writing and workers can opt back in at any time.

Workers are entitled to an uninterrupted rest break away from their work station of at least 20 minutes after 6 hours.

Workers are entitled to a daily rest period of at least 11 consecutive hours between shifts/periods of work

Workers should have a weekly rest of not less than 24 hours. (only modified by collective agreement)

**All workers are entitled to a minimum of 5.6 weeks paid holiday a year (28 days for someone who works 5 days a week) this includes public holidays**

## **NIGHT WORK LIMITS**

In general workers should not work more than 8 hours a night averaged over 4 months and employers must provide free health assessments.

Workers under 18 are not usually allowed to work at night, however, exceptions can apply in some circumstances.

**HEALTH & SAFETY  
IT'S IN OUR DNA!  
IT'S PART OF OUR HISTORY  
– IT'S PART OF OUR FUTURE**

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY**

Employers have a duty to ensure the safety, health and welfare of their employees. Many young workers will be unfamiliar with risks and the behaviours expected of them. They may need additional help and training to allow them to carry out their work without putting themselves and others at risk. Therefore, age limits are in place on using some equipment and machinery.

Employers have a duty to control the health and safety risks in their workplace by assessing risks and then eliminating or controlling them. They do this by deciding who and how people could be harmed by their activities and where possible the risks should be removed at source. If this is not possible then workers need to be isolated from dangerous work, work should be adapted to people, dangerous practices should be replaced by something less dangerous and collective protective measures prioritised.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) should only be used as a last resort to control any residual risk.

Workers should know what is in the risk assessments (RA) and be **trained in the safe system of work**. RA must be carried out for work involving: working at height, electricity, gas, fire safety, manual handling and lifting operations and equipment, noise, asbestos and hazardous substances, confined spaces, vibrations, working in compressed air, display screens, etc.

**There is also a duty on employees to take reasonable care to ensure they don't endanger themselves or others.**

Employers must provide the right **workplace facilities** for everyone: including toilets, hand-basins and washing products, drinking water, clothes storage and if necessary somewhere to rest and eat meals.

## DIGNITY & RESPECT AT WORK

During the start of a younger worker's employment, your line manager should be clear to you and your colleagues how team workloads and performance may be affected. They should also remind the team that behaviours, such as banter, should never discriminate against younger workers, even where this is unintentional.

This will often allay unwarranted concerns, reduce the potential for conflict and encourage colleagues to be more supportive. As a young worker we believe that you and every employee has the right to be treated with dignity and respect in the workplace. You can always ask your CWU Rep to share your employers Dignity at Work Policies and Charters if you believe you have been subjected to unwanted & unfair behaviour.

## PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE INDUCTION

Training a younger worker will usually require more planning and flexibility than older workers. When newly starting in a workplace, or being assigned to a new workplace, many younger workers have a limited understanding of what their working day will require and what their employer's expectations of them are. It is important your employer does not assume what tasks you know and never assume you know how to perform them.

An employer should plan a younger worker's induction that includes what, when and who will be involved in the younger worker's induction, and in what order this will be done. How long an induction should be will vary on the work of the organisation and the younger worker's role. Some inductions may only be for a day or a week, while others may last several months to ensure that the younger worker is fully supported as they learn the role.

## WORKING WITH YOUR UNION

Your employer should discuss plans to manage and develop younger workers with recognised trade unions in the workplace. This offers a mutual benefit as it allows trade unions to support current or potential members and helps employers to draw upon a considerable amount of extra experience in learning and development.

Trade union representatives themselves are often trained in skills that make them particularly valuable as mentors. These include awareness of the wider organisation, how issues arising have been successfully dealt with in the past and a wide variety of communication skills.

Remember Trade union representatives can also offer an alternative and confidential source of support and advice for a younger worker when problems or concerns arise in the workplace.

## THE 2010 EQUALITY ACT

All workers including job applicants and former employees have the right not to be discriminated against on the grounds of: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion and belief, sex, sexual orientation and pregnancy and maternity.

Unlawful acts include direct and indirect discrimination, victimisation and harassment. If you believe you may have a protected characteristic talk to us, you may be entitled to reasonable adjustments at work or a person specific risk assessment.

## LET'S TALK MENTAL HEALTH...

Your Mental Health is just as important as your physical health. If you are a young worker in need of support, **CONTACT** your local Safety Rep, Mental Health first Aider or advocate. The CWU has 600 plus trained people, we **CAN** and **WILL** support you. Peer to Peer support is available.

Signs that you or someone you know someone may need support:

- Feeling restless and agitated
- Feeling tearful
- Not wanting to talk to or be with people
- Not wanting to do things you usually enjoy
- Using alcohol or drugs to cope with feelings
- Finding it hard to cope with everyday things
- Not replying to messages or being distant
- New patterns of unexplained lateness or absences
- Recent inability to concentrate on work or in meetings
- Recent inability to cope with workloads

You might not always be able to spot these signs, and these emotions show up differently in everyone.

If you yourself as a young worker are supporting someone in the workplace you can suggest they talk with their CWU representative or Mental Health First Aider, Employee Assistance Programme, HR representative, occupational health department, or another health professional, such as their GP. You can also signpost the person to confidential helplines if they are not comfortable talking to someone they know.

**Samaritans: 116 123** The Samaritans offer a safe place for you to talk any time you like, in your own way – about whatever's getting to you. 24/7 support for people who are in despair or suicidal

**Prevention of Young Suicide (Papyrus): 0800 068 41 41** Papyrus provide confidential help and advice to young people, and anyone worried about a young person. Their **HOPE Line** UK service is staffed by trained professionals who give non-judgemental support, practical advice and information to; children, teenagers and people up to the age of 35. They can be contacted on **0800 068 41 41**, by email: [pat@papyrus-uk.org](mailto:pat@papyrus-uk.org) or SMS **07786 209697**

**HOPELINE247**  
**0800 068 41 41**



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