

# Citizens Advice Scotland briefing

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## Do the Rights Thing: Make Work Fair for Young People

November 2019

## Summary

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- Across the Citizens Advice Bureaux network, the current landscape that clients are navigating is particularly difficult. Wages don't correspond with the cost of living which is increasing; this can leave people vulnerable and with a lack of resilience to cope with demands on finances. Young people (aged 25 and under) navigate this turbulent landscape often in employment on zero hours contracts, living on national minimum wage - or less - and can pay inflated or unaffordable rents.
- Both our face-to-face and online advice provision tell us that young people are seeking support on their employment rights, from pay and entitlements through to parental and carers' rights. Our recent research tells us that young people are twice as likely to be in insecure employment, this could potentially expose them to vulnerability in the workplace. This is compounded with the knowledge that young people are less likely to be confident around their employment rights, leading to a sense of dis-empowerment.
- Our campaign outputs will feed into our longer term engagement on young people's rights at work, seeking to get a fair deal for young people. We want to gather the experience of young people and raise awareness of their rights at work, empowering them to take action on issues and increasing their public confidence and awareness.

# Do the Rights Thing: Make work fair for young people

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Citizens Advice Scotland data - from Citizens Advice Bureaux across the country, our online public advice site, and our nationally representative tracker survey - show that it's tough to be young at work.

The data we have from 2018/19 show that young people contacting a Citizens Advice Bureau were almost twice as likely than older people to be seeking advice on employment, with those in full time work three times as likely to be seeking help with issues at work.

Of all the employment advice we give, the most common is advice related to “pay and entitlements” and “terms and conditions”. Within each of these categories, “wages and deductions and payslips” and “contract/terms and conditions” are the most common.

Analysis of case studies shows a common theme of young people being treated

unfairly, and in many cases illegally, by employers, leaving young people not getting what they're owed in wages, or rights.

This Citizens Advice Scotland campaign has two aims:

**> to raise awareness amongst young people of their rights at work, making sure they get what they're owed.**

**> collect evidence of bad experiences at work that young people have.**

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**Both our face-to-face and online advice provision tell us that young people are seeking support on their employment rights.**

# The issue

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Young people often have to navigate difficult environments in relation to employment. Whether it's being paid less than the minimum wage or living with an insecure work contract, which can lead to increased vulnerability and reduced resilience.

The case studies below are just two examples of how young people in Scotland are being exploited at work.

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“A 21 year old CAB client was paid £5.90 an hour when she started her part time bar job. When she raised the issue of minimum wage with her employer, her hourly rate was raised to £6.96. She's entitled to £7.38 an hour.”

“Three students aged 20, 21 and 22 had been working at a restaurant where they'd been given contracts to sign but never provided with a copy to keep. They worked shifts for up to 80 hours a week and offered a salary of £150 in return, meaning the employer was breaking the law on minimum wage rates and the Working Time Directive. If any of the students didn't want to work, the employer would get angry and complain to them, threatening their job safety.”

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> **20,000 views** of our 'Young People and Employment' page in the last year, making it the most popular work page on our advice site

> **1 in 10** young people don't know the minimum wage is a legal requirement

> **x2** young people are almost twice as likely than older workers to be in precarious employment

Wages don't correspond with the cost of living which is increasing; this can leave young people vulnerable and with a lack of resilience to cope with demands on finances.



## How to get involved

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As part of this campaign, we will be working with organisations across Scotland to raise awareness amongst young people of their rights at work.

We want to ensure that young people feel empowered to exercise their rights and get what they are due.

If you would like to take part in the campaign - whether it's sharing social media content, writing a blog or distributing assets to your members - we will be providing tools to support your activity.

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### Resources:

At the end of October, we will disseminate a digital campaign toolkit, to promote the campaign cross-channel. It will include:

- > Social media GIFs and graphics
- > Social media cover photos
- > A4 poster template
- > A6 postcard
- > Wallet card

## Timeline of activity

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The campaign will launch on **Monday 4th November**.

It will run for two weeks at a national level supported by Citizens Advice Bureaux across Scotland.

We will be using a number of online and offline channels to promote our campaign messages to young people. Our focus will be on promoting routes to advice on rights at work and encouraging young people to share their poor experiences of life at work.

For information on the **Do the Rights Thing** campaign or to order a campaign toolkit, please contact:  
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