



## **WELCOME TO THE LABOUR RELATIONS AGENCY HOW WE CAN HELP YOU**

### **HELPLINE AND INFORMATION SERVICE**

This service provides advice/information on a wide range of employment related matters with the purpose of preventing disputes occurring or escalating. Requests for advice/information may be made by telephone, fax or in person. The Helpline number is 028 9032 1442. If you require the services of an interpreter, this can be arranged, on request. When you contact our Helpline you may be requested to leave a contact telephone number and your call will be returned.

In addition, the Agency publishes an extensive series of Advisory Guides and Information Notes giving practical guidance and advice on a wide range of employment matters and employment legislation. A list of publications with information on how to obtain copies is available on request from the Agency, or can be viewed on the Agency's website [www.lra.org.uk](http://www.lra.org.uk)

### **SOME INFORMATION ON THE RIGHTS OF WORKERS IN NORTHERN IRELAND**

#### **• THE NATIONAL MINIMUM WAGE AND NATIONAL LIVING WAGE RATES**

The following rates are for the National Minimum Wage and the new National Living Wage from 1 April 2016.

The new National Living Wage is £7.20 per hour for workers aged 25 years old and over. The National Minimum Wage still applies for workers aged 21 to 24 years of age.

#### **Current rates**

- 25 years old and over - £7.20 per hour
- 21 to 24 years old - £6.70 per hour
- 18 to 20 years old - £5.30 per hour
- Under 18 years old and above school leaving age - £3.87 per hour
- Apprentices under the age of 19 years old or aged 19 years old or over and in the first year of their apprenticeship - £3.30 per hour

All other apprentices are entitled to the minimum wage for their age.

If you think that you are not being paid the minimum wage you can make a complaint to HMRC. You can also seek further advice from your union if you are a member or from an advice agency such as a Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB).

If you are working in the agricultural sector, you will be covered by the Agricultural Wages Board. This sets rates of pay (which may be higher than the National Minimum Wage), as well as hours, holidays and overtime rates. For more information, phone the Agricultural Wages Helpline on 028 9052 4873 or visit their website at <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/awb-agricultural-rates-pay-orders-and-reports>

## **HOURS OF WORK, DAILY AND WEEKLY REST, BREAKS AND PAID ANNUAL LEAVE**

If you are an adult the maximum working week is 48 hours (averaged over a reference period). A young worker (under 18) has a maximum working day of 8 hours and a maximum working week of 40 hours (subject to some exceptions).

Adult workers are entitled to 11 hours uninterrupted rest between each working day and one whole day off each week (or two whole days off every two weeks). Young workers are entitled to 12 hours uninterrupted rest between each working day and two whole days off each week.

You have the right to a rest break of 20 minutes where your working day is longer than six hours. If you are under 18, however, you are entitled to a 30-minute break after working four and a half hours.

You are also entitled to receive 5.6 weeks' paid leave every year and if you are leaving employment you have the right to be paid for the leave you are due but have not taken.

### **• HEALTH AND SAFETY**

#### **You have the right:**

- To work in places where all the risks to your health and safety are properly controlled.
- To stop working and leave the area if you think you are in danger.
- To inform your employer about health and safety issues or concerns.
- To contact Health and Safety Executive if you still have health and safety concerns and not get into trouble with your employer.

#### **You must:**

- Take care of your own health and safety and that of people who may be affected by what you do (or do not do). This means you will be required to follow any rules your employer has.
- Co-operate with others on health and safety, and not interfere with, or misuse, anything provided for your health, safety or welfare

#### **What to do if you are concerned about your health and safety:**

- Phone the Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland (HSENI) Helpline 0800 0320 121 for advice or to complain.

### **• RIGHT TO JOIN A UNION IN NORTHERN IRELAND**

All workers in Northern Ireland are allowed to join a union, and you cannot be discriminated against for being a union member. You do not have to tell your employer if you are a member. You can contact the Northern Ireland Committee of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions to see which union is relevant to you. Their address is 4-6 Donegal Street Place, Belfast, telephone 028 9024 7940.

- **DISCRIMINATION**

Employment law provides protection for workers against discrimination at work on the grounds of sex, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, religion or belief, political opinion, race, disability and the membership or non-membership of a trade union. This legislation is aimed at achieving equality in the workplace by eliminating less favourable treatment on the grounds of gender, ethnicity etc. For advice on discrimination contact the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland on 028 9050 0600 or at their website at [www.equalityni.org](http://www.equalityni.org)

- **STATUTORY SICK PAY**

Employers are responsible for the payment of Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) for periods of illness of four days or more up to a total of 28 weeks' absence in any one period of incapacity for work. The weekly rate of sick pay is reviewed every year at the beginning of April. The current rate of SSP is £88.45 per week from 27th April 2015 for employees with average weekly earnings of £112.00 or more. For advice on this or any other statutory benefit that you feel you may be entitled to contact, such as Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP), contact HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) at their website [www.hmrc.gov.uk](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk)

- **FURTHER ADVICE AND INFORMATION ON RIGHTS OF WORKERS AND EMPLOYEES IN NORTHERN IRELAND**

If you require further advice or information on the rights of workers or employees in Northern Ireland please contact the **Labour Relations Agency at the addresses and telephone numbers below:**

**HEAD OFFICE**

**2-8 Gordon Street,**

**Belfast**

**BT1 2LG**

**Tel: 028 9032 1442**

**Fax: 028 9033 0827**

**TDD (Textphone): 028 9023 8411**

**REGIONAL OFFICE**

**1-3 Guildhall Street,**

**Londonderry**

**BT48 6BJ**

**Tel: 028 7126 9639**

**Fax: 028 7126 7729**

**e-mail: <mailto:info@lra.org.uk> website: [www.lra.org.uk](http://www.lra.org.uk)**