

SUPPORT@WORK

E Bulletin. Winter 2007 c/o ETUC, 26 Albany Street, EH1 3QH info@etuc.org.uk

DID YOU KNOW?... YOU HAVE RIGHTS EVEN BEFORE YOU START WORK

Many of you are in a position where you are supporting people while they get themselves into jobs; preparing CVs and writing job applications, it can be difficult sometimes to know what to put down and what to leave out.

How do you best describe a period of years at home bringing up children or a long period of illness which you feel a prospective employer may not want to hear about? Can you ask to see the reference you have been given by a previous employer? What can they say about you?

It can be a minefield, particularly with the new Incapacity Benefit regulations coming on stream. Support@work has designed a briefing session for those involved in pre employment projects supporting clients through these difficult decisions- what to disclose and when to disclose it.

Come along and share experiences with others and look at the range of issues facing those going back to work and how they can be

presented when applying for jobs. The session will be run with expert legal advice

**Tuesday 27 February
10 am - 12 noon
Capital City Partnership
1/3 Canon Street
EDINBURGH, EH3 5HE**

To book a place please contact Karen on 0131-556-3006 or email info@etuc.org.uk

Support@Work

Making the transition into work is a complex journey for most people with many finding they are venturing into a new world where they don't know the rules of engagement or their rights. We can sometimes take for granted that people know how to stand up for themselves in the sometimes challenging new circumstances they find themselves in on starting a new job – this can be a tall order for those building their confidence.

The Support@work project was set up to help address some of these challenges. It is a trade union based project which provides advice, support and representation on all aspects of trade union membership and employment rights.

Their specialist team includes Des Loughney an employment lawyer and trade unionist with over thirty years experience, Terry Anderson an STUC development officer and health and safety expert, Sandra Macaskill an experienced trade unionist who is responsible for the strategic development of the project and training and Karen Rennie who provides administrative backup.

We offer a free telephone helpline, advice, support and representation, information sessions for those preparing for work, training and support to staff and links to trade unions

If you are planning your training programme or wish to discuss any issues regarding employment rights and/or trade unions please contact one of the Support@Work Team on: [0131 556 7318](tel:01315567318) or at info@etuc.org.uk

National Minimum Wage

Support@Work has acted on complaints from clients that they are not being paid the National Minimum Wage (NMW) and for some who did not receive the increase which came into effect on 1 October 2006. Most of the complaints were from BME or migrant workers many of whom were working in restaurants or cafes. Not paying the NMW is often coupled with threats that people will be sacked and lose their permits if they complain officially.

The project helps workers raise these issues with their employers by providing access to official government leaflets or handbooks. Once aware of their statutory obligations, many employers comply resulting recognition of the workers rights.

However, if it becomes apparent that the non payment of the NMW has been ongoing for some time we are obliged to advise workers that they have the right to apply for back dated payments; in one case this was over £1,000. Employers are not happy to be faced with this kind of bill for every worker!

WHAT SHOULD WORKERS BE PAID?

Employers must pay their workers a minimum amount as defined by law. This amount is reviewed each year, usually taking effect from the beginning of October. There are three levels of minimum wage depending what age you are:

22 years and over - [£5.35 per hour](#)
18–21 years [£4.45 per hour](#)
16 and 17 year olds [£3.30 per hour](#)

While most workers are entitled to the NMW including homeworkers and agency staff, there are a few exceptions among them genuinely self employed, some apprentices and trainees and those living within a family.

If you feel you or someone you know is not being paid the NMW and you don't want to speak to your employer directly you can contact us and we can take up your case if necessary contact the Support@work helpline on:

[0800 0283 280](tel:08000283280)