

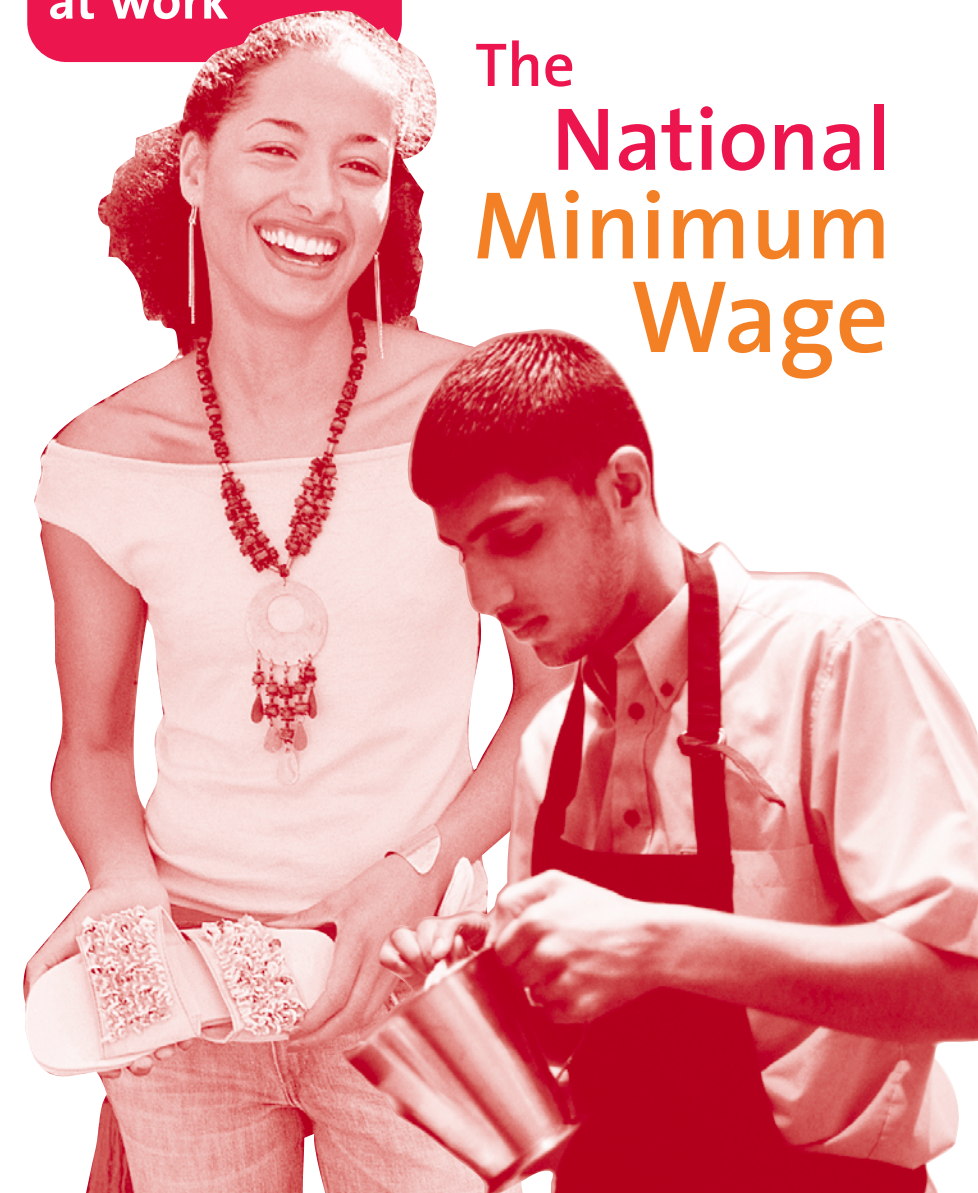
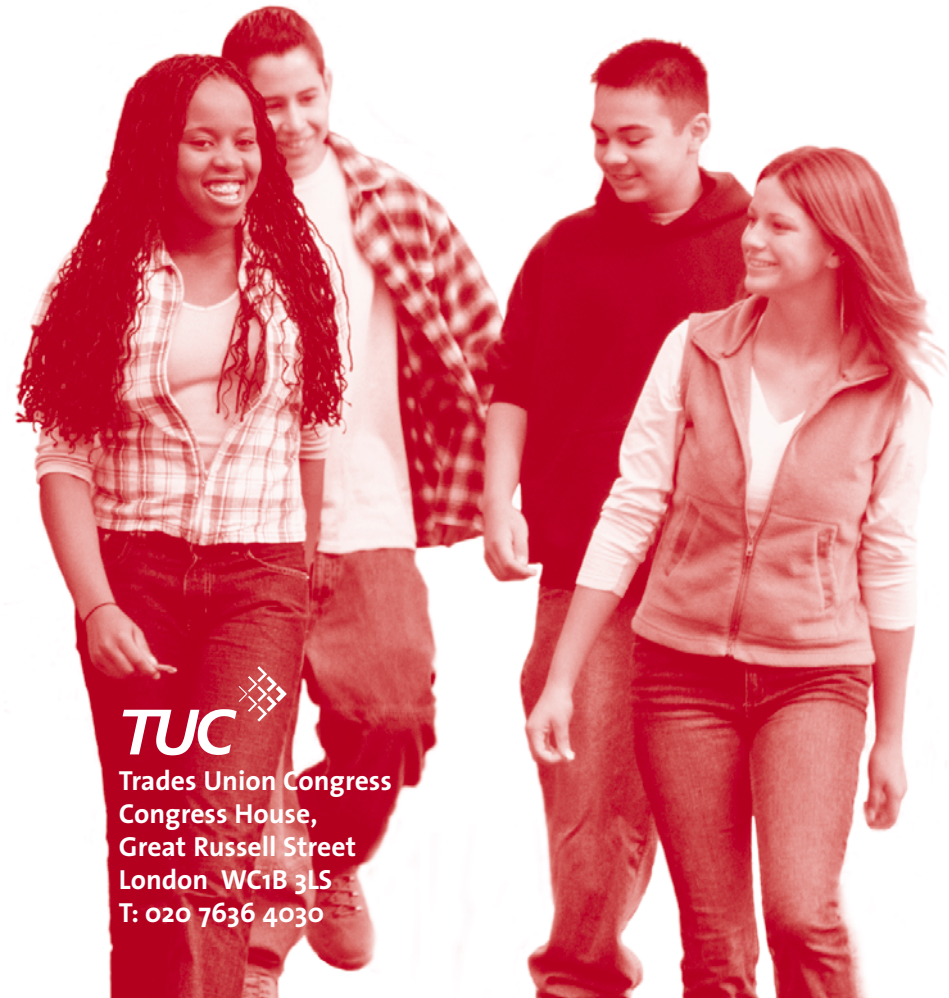


Young people
at work



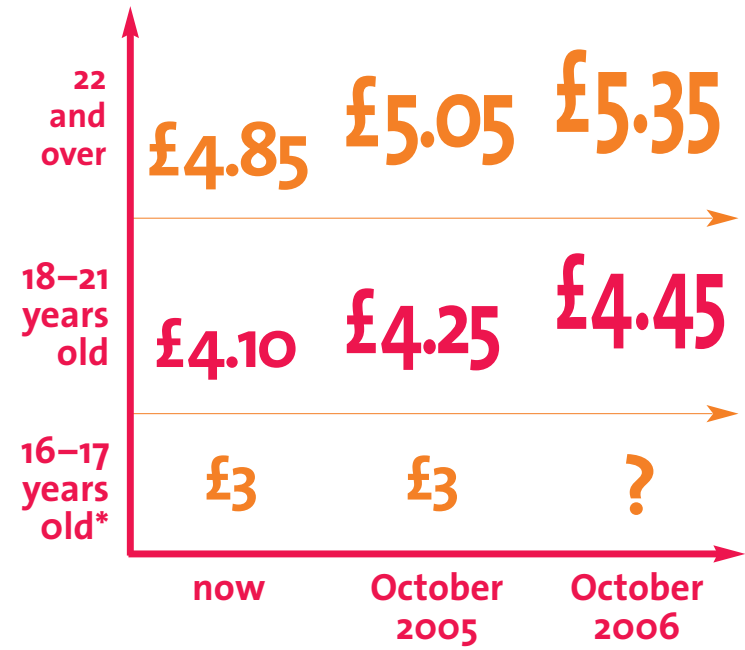
The National Minimum Wage

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Are you being paid enough?

The different rates of the National Minimum Wage for young people in 2005 and the planned increases:



*16-year-olds must have passed the school leaving age

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For years governments resisted calls for a National Minimum Wage. But now, thanks to trade union campaigning, the minimum wage is part of British life.



Most people at work, except for apprentices and those doing training, now have the right to be paid at least the minimum, and unions generally negotiate pay rates well above that.

So what are the basic rates?

- If you are aged 22 or over you are entitled to £4.85 per hour. This will increase to £5.05 in October 2005 with a further increase to £5.35 in October 2006.
- If you are aged 18-21 then you are entitled to a lower rate of £4.10 per hour. This will rise to £4.25 in October 2005 and £4.45 in October 2006
- If you are aged 16 or 17 then you are entitled to a rate of £3.00 per hour (likely to be increased in October 2006). Sixteen-year-olds must have passed the school leaving age.

The TUC supports the minimum wage, but believes it could go further. It is campaigning for:

- further increases in the adult rate
- the adult rate to apply at the age of 18
- a big increase in the rate for 16- and 17-year-olds

Trade unions believe that it's the job that matters, not your age. For example, if an 18-year-old can do their job as well as a 22-year-old, there is no justification for paying the 18-year-old less.

Who enforces it?

Most people are paid more than the minimum wage. But the minimum wage is essential to stop some employers exploiting their workers through very low pay rates.

The minimum wage is enforced by the Inland Revenue. You can call them on their helpline number 0845 6000 678 (calls are charged at local rates).

How can a union help?

Unions, too, keep a watch on pay rates and campaign for employers to pay fair wages. They also campaign for equal treatment in the workplace and tackle discrimination based on age, race, gender, sexuality or disability.

Everyone has the right to join a union.

It costs less than you think and your employer doesn't need to know you are thinking of joining up.