

Hours of work for young people

Introduction

The working hours for young people are regulated by the Protection of Young Persons (Employment) Act 1996. The Act sets maximum working hours, rest intervals and prohibits the employment of young people aged under 18 in late night work.

Rules

The Act in general applies to young people under 18 years of age. It defines children as being aged under 16 and young persons refers to those aged 16 and 17. The Act does not apply to children or young people who are employed by a close relative.

Children

Under the Act, employers cannot employ children under 16 in regular full-time jobs. They may employ children aged 14 and 15 years on light work as follows:

- Children aged 14 or over may do light work during the school holidays where the hours do not exceed 7 in any day or 35 in any week.
- Children over 15 but under 16 may do light work up to 8 hours a week during school term time.
- Children under 16 may work up to 8 hours a day and 40 hours a week if they are on an approved work experience or educational programme where the work is not harmful to their health, safety or development. Approved work experience or educational programmes for people under 16 are work experience, training or educational programmes approved by the Minister for Education and Skills, the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation or by SOLAS
- Children under 16 must have at least 21 days off work during the summer holidays.
- Children can be employed in film, cultural, advertising work or sport under licences issued by the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation.

Maximum weekly working hours for children under 16

Age	14 years of age	15 years of age
School term-time	Nil	8 hours
Holidays	35 hours	35 hours

Age	14 years of age	15 years of age
Work experience	40 hours	40 hours

Time off and rest breaks for children under 16

Half hour rest break	after 4 hours work
Daily rest break	14 consecutive hours off
Weekly rest break	2 days off, to be consecutive as far as is practicable

Limits on night and early morning work

Employers may not require children to work before 8am in the morning or after 8pm at night.

Young people

The Act sets the following limits to the working hours of young people aged 16 and 17. If a young person aged under 18 works for more than one employer, the combined daily or weekly hours of work cannot exceed the maximum number of hours allowed.

Working hours, time off and rest breaks for young people aged 16 and 17

Maximum working day	8 hours
Maximum working week	40 hours
Half hour rest break	after 4 1/2 hours work
Daily rest break	12 consecutive hours off
Weekly rest break	2 days off, to be consecutive as far as is practicable

Limits on night work and early morning work

In general, young people aged 16 and 17 are not allowed to work before 6am in the morning or after 10pm at night. Any exceptions to this rule must be provided by regulation.

The Protection of Young Persons Act 1996 (Employment in Licensed Premises) Regulations 2001 (SI 350/2001) permits young people employed on *general duties* in a licensed premises to be required to work up to 11 pm on a day that does not immediately precede a school day during a school term where the young person is attending school. The Regulations state that the definition of general duties "does not include supplying intoxicating liquor from behind the bar

counter in licensed premises or supplying it for consumption off those premises”.

Duties of employer

Employers must see a copy of the young person's birth certificate or other evidence of his or her age before employing that person. If the young person is aged under 16, the employer must get the written permission of the person's parent or guardian.

Employers must keep records for every employee aged under 18 including details of the employee's starting and finishing times for work.

You can read more information about the [employment rights of young people](#).

How to apply

Complaints in relation to infringements of the Protection of Young Persons (Employment) Act 1996 may be referred to the [Inspection Services of the Workplace Relations Commission](#) - see 'Complaints below.

If a child or a young person thinks they have been penalised for refusing to co-operate with an employer in breaching the Act (for example, by refusing to work prohibited hours) then a parent or guardian may make a complaint to the [Workplace Relations Commission \(WRC\)](#) within 6 months of such penalisation - see 'Complaints below. This period may be extended by a further 6 months if the Workplace Relations Commission is satisfied that a reasonable cause prevented the presentation of the complaint within the first 6 months.

Complaints:

Complaints should be made using the online complaint form available on workplacerelations.ie.

For further information on the Protection of Young Persons (Employment) Act 1996 contact WRC [Information and Customer Service](#) - see 'Where to apply' below.

Where to apply

Workplace Relations Commission

Information and Customer Service

O'Brien Road

Carlow

R93 W7W2

Ireland

Tel: (059) 917 8990

Locall: 1890 80 80 90

Fax: (059) 917 8909

Homepage: <https://www.workplacerelations.ie/en/>