

Protecting Young Workers: Guidance for Managers

Introduction

The purpose of this guidance document is to work alongside the [UoR Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk Policy](#) to ensure that the university is meeting legal requirements and ensuring safeguarding is in place for young workers employed at University of Reading.

This document provides guidance for managers who employ or may recruit young workers - a 'young worker' is an employee who has reached school leaving age but is under 18, such as 16-17 year old apprentices or Campus Jobs workers.

Apprentices

Apprentices are staff employed at the university, normally full time, completing work-based learning. Apprentices must be at least 16 years old at the start of an apprenticeship, therefore they may be 16-17 years old while working at University of Reading. Managers must be aware when recruiting for Intermediate or Advanced apprenticeships (Level 2 or Level 3), applicants as young as 16 years may be eligible because the normal entry criteria for these apprenticeships is GCSE level.

Pay

Young workers must be paid at least the [National Minimum Wage](#) for their age.

Any workers employed through Campus Jobs must given the correct rate of pay based on the work they are completing, as per the [Temporary Worker Framework](#).

Apprentices at the university of Reading are paid at the appropriate grade on the salary scale, according to the duties and responsibilities of the role. Contact your HR Advisor for advice when deciding the appropriate salary for a new apprentice role.

Discrimination

Age is a protected characteristic by law under the Equality Act 2010. This means it's against the law to treat someone less favourably because of either:

- their age
- the age they appear to be

To avoid discrimination when recruiting apprentices, all staff should not allow any bias or stereotypical thinking about age to influence the assessment or decision-making at any stage of the recruitment process. The [Acas guide on age discrimination](#) provides some helpful steps to take to avoid discrimination when recruiting.

Working Hours

Young workers have different employment rights from adult workers and are protected in relation to the hours they can work. By law, young workers must not work more than:

- 8 hours a day
- 40 hours a week

Managers must ensure that their young workers do not exceed their maximum working hours each day or week, and must keep a record of all of their working hours. Young workers are also entitled to rest breaks each day/week, and there are restrictions on the times that young workers can work at night.

Rest Breaks

Young workers must have, as a minimum:

- a 30-minute break if their working day is longer than 4.5 hours
- 12 hours' rest in any 24-hour period in which they work
- 48 hours' rest taken together, each week
 - or, if there is a good business reason why this is not possible, at least 36 hours' rest, with the remaining 12 hours taken as soon as possible afterwards

Night Working

Young workers must not work during the 'restricted period'. The restricted period is:

- between 10pm and 6am if their contract does not say
- between 11pm and 7am if their contract allows for them to work after 10pm

They can work until midnight or from 4am onwards if it's necessary in certain types of work, for example catering or hotel/restaurant work. But this is only if there are no adult workers available to do the work, and working those hours will not have a negative effect on the young person's education or training.

It's against the law for anyone aged under 18 to work between midnight and 4am, even if they do one of the jobs above.

If they do need to work after 10pm or before 7am, the employer must make sure the young worker:

- is supervised by one or more adult workers where necessary for their protection
- has enough rest at another time if they need to work during their normal rest breaks or rest periods

Keeping Records

By law, employers must keep records of any young worker's:

- working hours – to make sure they're not working more than 8 hours a day and 40 hours a week
- night work, if they do any – to show they're not working during restricted hours
- health assessments offered before starting any night work and throughout their employment

These records must be kept for 2 years from the date they were made.

Health & Safety

Employers have specific duties for young people under the [Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations](#). Managers must ensure that any young people they employ are not exposed to risk because of:

- lack of experience
- being unaware of existing or potential risks
- lack of maturity

Young workers are likely to be new to the workplace and so are at more risk of injury in the first six months of a job, as they may be less aware of risks. They will often be vulnerable, as they may not have reached physical maturity, they may be eager to impress people they work with and be unaware of how to raise concerns.

Therefore managers must ensure that suitable risk assessments, induction, training and supervision are planned and in place from the young worker's first day at work.

Contact the [Health and Safety Coordinator](#) for your School/Function for advice to ensure a safe working environment for young workers in your team.

H&S Induction

Managers must ensure all new staff are taken through the Health and Safety Induction Checklist - the checklist can be found on the [Health & Safety Services](#) page.

- The Emergency Procedures must be covered on their first day.
- The induction must be fully completed within their first two weeks of starting work.
- They must also complete the [UoR Health & Safety Induction E-Learning](#) on UoRLearn as part of their mandatory new start training.

Managers must ensure that young workers are aware of how to raise H&S concerns, and are comfortable and confident in doing so.

Risk Assessments

Managers must ensure risk assessments are in place for all activities the young worker will be doing as part of their role. Before starting work, review these risk assessments (with the help of your H&S Coordinator) to include any specific considerations for young workers.

Risk assessments should consider carefully the training needs of young workers - taking into account their inexperience, lack of awareness of potential risks and their immaturity, to determine whether they should undertake certain work activities.

Young workers may need additional support to allow them to carry out their work without putting themselves and others at risk, such as tailored training or closer supervision. Regularly checking a young person's progress will help identify where any additional adjustments may be needed.

HSE provides some useful information to consider about [risks to young people at work](#).

High-Risk Environments

If recruiting a young worker for a role in a high-risk environment, there are specific factors that must be managed for young people, including exposure to:

- radiation

- noise and vibration
- toxic substances
- extreme temperatures

A young worker may only complete work including exposure to the above, where all of the following conditions are met:

- it is necessary for their training;
- they will be supervised by a competent person; and
- any risk will be reduced to the lowest level that is reasonably practicable.

Employers should already have control measures in place for high-risk environments. Managers should consider if exposure to high-risk environments has long-term health effects on a still-developing young body. Managers should be aware of the substances they might come into contact with, consider exposure levels and ensure legal limits are met.

Also consider legally required age limits on the use of some equipment and machinery (for example forklift trucks and some woodworking machinery).

Safeguarding

The University expects all staff to promote good practice by being an excellent role model, contributing to discussions about safeguarding, being mindful of circumstances that may lead to themselves or others being made vulnerable and positively involving people in developing safe practices.

Training for staff

All staff regardless of role will be made aware of, and be familiar with, the [UoR Safeguarding students, children and vulnerable adults policy](#) through the Staff Induction process.

All staff that regularly work closely with the young worker, for example managers, colleagues and supervisors, must have access to safeguarding information and be aware of child protection issues and the procedures in place to respond to suspected or confirmed cases of abuse. Managers must ensure they complete the following training:

- [Safeguarding Essentials](#)
- [Prevent Module 1](#)
- [Prevent Module 2](#)

How to report concerns

Any safeguarding concerns must be reported to a university Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) – all DSLs are listed within the [UoR Safeguarding students, children and vulnerable adults policy](#).

Concerns that staff or students may be at risk of being drawn into terrorism should be raised under the [The University's Prevent policy statement](#). This means that concerns should be raised with the Security Services Manager (or, in their absence, the Director of Campus Services) or by emailing prevent@reading.ac.uk.

Managers must ensure staff and young workers are aware of how to report safeguarding and Prevent concerns and are comfortable doing so.

DBS checks

DBS checks for staff working with Young Workers are not required. Any activities with a person under 18 years old that are in relation to their paid/unpaid employment are not regulated activities if the child is at least 16 years old.

[DBS guidance leaflets - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) – Regulated activity with children in England

References

[UoR Safeguarding students, children and vulnerable adults policy](#)

[The University's Prevent policy statement](#)

[National Minimum Wage and National Living Wage rates - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[Acas guide on age discrimination](#)

[Rules on working hours for people under 18: Young workers, apprentices and work experience - Acas](#)

[Young people at work - Risks - HSE](#)

[Health & Safety Services](#)