

Apprentices

1 . Employment rights

Apprenticeships are a way to get experience at work while training and studying for qualifications.

Apprentices have the same employment rights as those with the [legal status of employee](#). However, there is a separate National Minimum Wage rate for apprentices.

In Scotland, apprentices have extra rights around dismissal and redundancy.

Working hours

Apprentices have the same rights as other employees around [working hours and rest](#). These include:

- working a maximum of 48 hours a week on average, unless they choose to opt out
- the right to rest, including breaks

[People under 18](#) have additional rights around working hours. This includes not working more than:

- 8 hours a day
- 40 hours a week

Time spent doing work-related learning or training also counts as working hours.

Time spent learning or training

Employers must give apprentices time for learning or training. An apprentice should be learning or training for at least 20% of their normal working hours.

The employer might provide learning or training. Alternatively, a separate learning or training organisation might provide it – for example, a college.

Holiday entitlement

Apprentices have the same [holiday entitlement](#)? as those legally classed as employees.

Apprentices must continue to 'accrue' (build up) holiday for any time spent doing work-related learning or training. For example, days or hours they spend learning or training at college.

Written statements

Like other employees, apprentices have the right to a 'written statement of employment particulars'. A [written statement](#) summarises the main terms of employment, such as pay and working hours.

Protection against discrimination

Like other employees, apprentices are protected against discrimination at work.

[Find out more about discrimination at work](#)

Continuous employment

If an apprentice continues working for the same employer after their apprenticeship ends, this must count towards 'continuous employment'. Continuous employment is when an employee has worked for one employer without a break.

Apprentices should get the same benefits as other employees for continuous employment.

For example, Charlie works as an apprentice for 2 years. They continue to work for the same employer for 3 years after their apprenticeship finishes. At the end of the 3 years, the employer makes Charlie redundant. The employer should calculate Charlie's redundancy pay based on 5 years of service.

After the apprenticeship ends

Apprentices are not guaranteed a job after their apprenticeship ends.

Some employers might choose to offer apprentices a job at the end of their apprenticeships. However, they do not have to.

Problems with an apprenticeship

If someone has a problem with their apprenticeship, it's a good idea to raise this informally first. They can do this by [talking with their employer](#).

An apprentice could also speak to their apprenticeship provider or college.

The employer should take the apprentice seriously, and take steps to [deal with the problem](#).

If raising it informally does not resolve the problem, the apprentice can [raise a grievance](#). This is where they make a formal complaint to their employer.

Contact the Acas helpline

If you have any questions about the rights of apprentices, you can [contact the Acas helpline](#).

2. Pay

How much an apprentice gets paid depends on:

- their age
- which year of their apprenticeship they are in

The rates in this advice are the legal minimum an employer must pay. An employer can choose to pay more.

Apprentices aged under 19

The National Minimum Wage rate for apprentices is £7.55 per hour (£8 from 1 April 2026). Employers must pay at least this rate to all apprentices who are under 19.

Apprentices aged 19 or over

For an apprentice who's aged 19 or over, how much they get paid depends on the year of the apprenticeship they're in.

First year

When someone aged 19 or over is in the first year of their apprenticeship, their employer can choose to pay them either:

- the apprentice rate of £7.55 (£8 from 1 April 2026)
- more than the apprentice rate

This includes:

- during the first year after an apprentice has changed employer, even if it's part of the same apprenticeship
- during the first year of a new apprenticeship agreement, even if it's with the same employer

Second year or later

In the second year of an apprenticeship, their employer must pay at least the minimum wage for the apprentice's age.

This is:

- age 19 or 20 – £10 per hour (£10.85 from 1 April 2026)
- age 21 or over – £12.21 per hour (£12.71 from 1 April 2026)

If an apprenticeship lasts longer than 2 years, these rates also apply to later years.

Employers can choose to pay more.

Example of starting a new agreement

Ali is 19 and is doing a 2-year apprenticeship. The employer must pay Ali at least the apprentice rate of £7.55 during the first year.

In the second year, Ali is 20. The employer must pay Ali at least the minimum wage rate for their age. This is currently £10.

At the end of the apprenticeship, Ali starts a higher level apprenticeship with the same employer. This lasts 2 years.

The employer must pay Ali at least the apprentice rate of £7.55 during the first year of the higher level apprenticeship. They must pay Ali at least the minimum wage rate for their age during the second year. Ali is now over 21, so this is currently £12.21.

Example of changing employer

Mo is 19 and is doing a 2-year apprenticeship. In the first year, the employer must pay Mo at least the apprenticeship rate of £7.55.

After 6 months, they move to a different part of the country. They complete the final 18 months of their apprenticeship with a different employer.

The new employer must pay Mo at least the apprenticeship rate for the first 12 months.

For the final 6 months, the new employer must pay Mo at least the minimum wage rate for their age.

Pay for learning or training

Employers must pay apprentices for any time they spend doing work-related learning or training.

This includes learning or training outside their normal working hours or away from their usual workplace. For example, online learning or training at home.

Check an apprentice is being paid the legal minimum

Apprentices can use the [National Minimum Wage and Living Wage calculator on GOV.UK](#).

Problems with pay

If an apprentice believes they have not been paid properly, they can raise this with their employer.

If this does not resolve the problem, the apprentice can start a formal process for non-payment of minimum wage.

[Find out what to do if an employer pays less than the minimum wage](#)

Contact the Acas helpline

If you have any questions about apprentices and pay, you can [contact the Acas helpline](#).

Related content

[/national-minimum-wage-entitlement](#)

3. Dismissal and redundancy

Apprentices have most of the same employment rights as those with the [legal status of employee](#). But the law on dismissal and redundancy for apprentices depends on where they work.

England and Wales

In England and Wales, employers should follow certain procedures to dismiss apprentices or make them redundant. These procedures are the same as for other employees.

Dismissals

For a dismissal to be fair, the employer must:

- believe they have a valid reason

- make a decision that's balanced, consistent and as fair as possible

The employer should follow a fair procedure. This should be in line with the Acas Code of Practice on disciplinary and grievance procedures.

[Find out more about dismissals](#)

Redundancy

Employers must follow a fair redundancy process, including consulting with staff.

[Find out more about redundancy](#)

More advice about apprenticeships in England and Wales

Find out more about apprenticeships in:

- England – [apprenticeships guidance on GOV.UK](#)
- Wales – [Welsh Government apprenticeships guidance](#)

Scotland

In Scotland, employers can only dismiss or make apprentices redundant in very limited circumstances.

Dismissals

An employer can only dismiss an apprentice for serious conduct or capability issues.

Conduct

In Scotland, an employer cannot dismiss an apprentice for general misconduct issues.

An apprentice can be dismissed for [gross misconduct](#). This is only if they have done something very serious or that has very serious effects.

Capability

An employer can dismiss an apprentice who does not have the ability to do their apprenticeship. For example, because of ill health.

The employer should only dismiss an apprentice if they can show the capability issue is preventing them from teaching the apprentice.

Following a fair procedure

For a dismissal to be fair, the employer must:

- believe they have a valid reason
- make a decision that's balanced, consistent and as fair as possible

The employer should follow a fair procedure. This should be in line with the Acas Code of Practice on disciplinary and grievance procedures.

[Find out more about dismissals](#)

Redundancy

By law, an employer in Scotland can only make an apprentice redundant if there's a written clause in the contract that allows them to.

If there is a clause allowing redundancy for an apprentice, the employer must follow a fair process. This includes consulting with staff.

Find out more about:

- [redundancy](#)
- [fair working conditions for apprentices in Scotland on Apprenticeships.scot](#)

Claiming compensation

If an employer from Scotland incorrectly dismisses an apprentice or makes them redundant, the apprentice could claim compensation.

This could include:

- loss of training
- loss of wages
- impact on future earnings

Contact the Acas helpline

If you have any questions about dismissal and redundancy for apprentices, you can [contact the Acas helpline](#).