

National Minimum Wage

What is the minimum wage

By law, an employer must pay a minimum amount on average for the hours you work. This is called the:

- National Living Wage (NLW) for anyone aged 21 or over
- National Minimum Wage (NMW) for anyone aged under 21 or an apprentice

Employers can choose to pay more than the minimum wage.

Current rates

Wage band	Current rate (from 1 April 2025)
Age 21 or over (National Living Wage)	£12.21
Age 18 to 20	£10
Under 18	£7.55
Apprentice	£7.55

The government reviews minimum wage rates every year and they're usually updated in April. [Check when rate increases must be paid.](#)

Rates from 1 April 2026

Wage band	Rate from 1 April 2026
Age 21 or over (National Living Wage)	£12.71

Wage band	Rate from 1 April 2026
Age 18 to 20	£10.85
Under 18	£8
Apprentice	£8

Who gets the apprentice rate

An [apprentice](#) is entitled to be paid at least the apprentice rate if they're either:

- under 19
- 19 or over, and in the first year of their current apprenticeship agreement

If they're 19 or over and have completed the first year of their current apprenticeship, they're entitled to be paid at least the minimum wage for their age.