

When increases are paid

There are times when workers will become entitled to a higher minimum wage rate. For example, when:

- the government increases the rates (usually in April each year)
- a worker turns 18 or 21
- an apprentice turns 19, and they've already finished the first year of their current apprenticeship
- an apprentice who is already 19 finishes the first year of their current apprenticeship

The higher rate starts to apply from the next 'pay reference period' after the increase. This means someone's pay might not go up straight away.

Pay reference period

The 'pay reference period' is the period of time the pay covers. For example:

- if paid daily, the pay reference period is 1 day
- if paid weekly, the pay reference period is 1 week
- if paid monthly, the pay reference period is 1 month

The pay reference period cannot be longer than a month.

Example of pay not going up straight away

There's a minimum wage rate increase on 1 April.

Sam's pay reference period is 1 month. Each pay reference period starts on the 16th of one month and ends on the 15th of the following month. The old rate will apply until Sam's next pay reference period, which starts on 16 April.

As a minimum, Sam should get paid:

- the old rate for 1 April to 15 April
- the new rate for 16 April to 15 May