

Q

My 21 year old son has just started working as a waiter at a local cafe and I'm worried that he's not being paid a reasonable amount. How can I find out?

A

Your son should be being paid at least £5.93 an hour under National Minimum Wage rules. As of 1 October 2010 that's the new adult rate and the adult rate now starts when the worker is aged 21 years old instead of 22.

Also from 1 October, an apprenticeship rate of £2.50 an hour was introduced that should help many others your son's age. This means that an apprentice who is:-

- aged under 19 will be entitled to the new apprentice rate of the National Minimum Wage (£2.50 per hour)
- aged 19 or over in the first year of their apprenticeship will be entitled to the new apprentice rate of £2.50 per hour. After that, they are entitled to the normal rate of minimum wage for their age.

From 1 October, the rates are:

£5.93 if you're 21 or over

£4.92 if you're 18-20

£3.64 if you're 16-17.

You can get more information and support by visiting

www.direct.gov.uk/payandworkrights or calling the Pay and Work Rights Helpline on 0800 917 2368. Information on workplace rights can also be found on the Citizens Advice website adviceguide.org.uk , along with contact details for your nearest CAB.