Do You Know Your Basic Employee Rights?

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As a UK citizen, you should know your rights, to avoid getting taken advantage of in the workplace. When employment positions are few and far between, you don’t want to take any chances with your livelihood. Your company can’t remove any statutory rights from you in your employment contract…even if you signed it. Let’s review what you’re entitled to, as a full-time employee.

Pay

The main reason for going to work: paying the bills. As a full-time worker, you should receive the basic, minimum wage, at least. You can work out if you’re being paid enough, when you receive an itemised pay slip (usually monthly). There should be no illegal pay deductions on this document and you should be able to clearly understand why any legal deductions are present.

Holidays

Full-time workers are entitled to 28 paid days of holiday a year (if you get bank holidays off, these are often deducted from your available holidays). If you’re a trade union member, you’re also allowed to take time off work to join in trade union activities. Parents who have worked at the company for over a year can take unpaid leave to deal with any emergencies caused by their children or dependents.

If you are about to have a baby, both mothers and fathers are entitled to paid time off work to deliver the child safely and take care of the newborn. Expectant parents are allowed to take ante natal leave for any necessary pregnancy care.

The Working Week

The maximum amount of hours you can be expected to work is 48 in a week. Employees are entitled to weekly and daily rest periods, depending on the hours you work. Every week, you should have at least 24 hours of uninterrupted rest. Young workers are entitled to greater periods of rest; as are night workers.

Behaviour in the Office

The law is on your side, when it comes to discrimination at work. What is classed as ‘protected characteristic’?

- Age
- Transsexuality
- Marriage or civil partnership
- Being pregnant or a parent
- Disability
- Race
- Religion (or lack of)
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

So if you find that you’re dealing with sexism or racism at work (for example), you’re within your rights to complain and be protected, under the Equality Act 2010. If you feel like you’re being
unfairly discriminated against at work, you can talk to your employer to settle the matter. If things can’t be sorted out to your satisfaction within the company, you can take your claim to court.

Dismissal

After you’ve worked at the business for one month, you are allowed to demand a written note of dismissal and you should be provided with notice, to leave you time to find new work. Those who’ve been made redundant, and worked at their company for more than two years, are entitled to paid time off work to find a new job.