

USEFUL EMPLOYMENT ADVICE FROM CITIZENS ADVICE NEW FOREST

Advice for people starting a new job in the UK

Our top tips would be to make sure that you understand your employment status and have paperwork supporting your employment. At the very least a contract of employment, job description and to make sure that you get proper payslips.

Of course making the transition from employment in one country to another can be tough but most employers want to have employees they can keep. Unfortunately, people do not fall into a perfect job straight away so give it time! Most good employers understand the difficulties and it's in their interest to give people time to settle in.

However, your employment status will dictate what employment rights you have and, in the UK many rights only accrue after two years service. So, if things don't work out the way you hope – think before acting and get advice! If you have problems with your hours of work, payments (including tips), rest breaks, holidays, health and safety or the way you are being treated, do not resign - seek advice first - leaving can affect what help you could get from the government. Citizens Advice have advisers that can help with both employment as well as benefit problems so please get in touch first.

There is also a lot of publicly available information on websites like ACAS, GOV.UK, and our own Citizens Advice website where you can find information on employment status, employment rights, disciplinary and grievance procedures and the relevant laws.

TEL : **0808 278 7860** (New Forest Citizen's Advice – on Mondays we have a Ukrainian translator available)

The employment contract

Make sure your contract of employment, and any other supporting documentation for the job, gives the same information you were offered at interview. It is a legal requirement for the contract or "principal statement" to include at least:

- the employer's name
- Your name, job title, or a description of work, and start date
- how much and how often you will get paid
- hours and days of work and if and how they may vary (also if you will have to work Sundays, nights or overtime)
- Your holiday entitlement (and if that includes public holidays)
- Where you will be working and whether you might have to relocate.
- If you work in different places, where these will be and what the employer's address is.
- how long a job is expected to last (& the end date is if it's a fixed-term contract)
- how long any probation period is and what its conditions are
- any other benefits (for example, childcare vouchers and lunch)
- obligatory training, whether or not this is paid for by the employer

Other information the employer must give on day one

On the first day of employment the employer must also provide you with information about: sick pay and procedures; other paid leave (for example, maternity leave and paternity leave) and notice periods. It is worth noting that the employer can choose whether to include this information in the contract of employment as their "principal statement" or provide it in a separate document. If they provide it in a separate document, this must be something that you have reasonable and immediate access to, such as on the employer's intranet or a handbook.

The wider written statement

Employers must give you a wider written statement within 2 months of the start of your employment. This must include information about: pensions and pension schemes; any collective agreements that are in place; any other right to non-compulsory training provided by the employer and disciplinary and grievance procedures

Issues with contracts of employment

Employers usually offer a contract that matches the work they are offering. So, the contract may be for a permanent job, a fixed term contract for a defined period – often one year, with the option to extend it each year. The contract may also be “zero hours” where there is no obligation for the employer to provide work and the hours / days of work are agreed between the employee and employer on a regular basis. Finally, the employer may be an agency who places you in work with different clients.

Each type of contract has advantages and disadvantages and it is important that you seek advice if you are in any doubt about what the contract means and the employment rights you have.

Working from home.

If the job requires you to work from home we recommend that you ensure that your work area is safe to work in, uninterrupted, and think about the following - is the equipment provided? Are the costs of the electricity & printer supplies etc covered by the employer? Do you fully understand what working from home in the long term actually entails? For some there may be issues with a working partner, children and schooling, access to activities such as team meetings and training. Does the job require regular hours and peace and quiet? If these are not easily achieved problems may arise either with the employer or with other people in your household.

Employment rights.

It is worth mentioning again that employees with less than 2 years service have less employment rights and are therefore at greater risk if they lose their job during this period.

However, employees and workers have a number of rights from the first day of their employment. Three that are worth mentioning are the right to be paid the National Minimum Wage, the right not to have unauthorised deductions from your wages and the protection given under the Equality Act. The first two are self explanatory whereas protection under the Equality Act means that if the real reason for an employee having problems at work, or is dismissed because of a “protected characteristic” then that is discrimination.

The characteristics are age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, pregnancy, marriage or civil partnership. If problems at work are caused by one or more of these characteristics then it is potential discrimination and it is important that you seek help immediately. In many cases problems can be resolved if dealt with early, so please contact Citizens Advice - our service is free, confidential and impartial.

Citizens Advice New Forest
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