

Rights in the workplace

This leaflet explains your legal rights when you are at work, including what your employer must (must not) do for you.

Do I need a contract?

A written contract of employment is useful to have because it sets out what you can expect from your job and from your employer. There are laws to protect workers, whether or not they have a written contract.

Every worker has the right to be paid and to enjoy a reasonably safe place of work. You also have certain legal rights, such as the right not to be discriminated against at work because of your sex, race or disability.

What can I do if I don't have a written contract?

Every employer has a legal right to receive a written statement which sets out your terms of employment. You should get this within eight weeks of starting your job. The terms include basic things like the name of your employer and where you will be working, the date you started work, how much you will earn and when you will be paid. It will also include terms about your hours of work, your holiday entitlement and any benefits, such as holiday and sickness pay and pensions. It should also state the length of notice you both have to give, as well as any disciplinary rules.

In many cases, employers don't do all of this. They either give employees a short offer letter or nothing at all. This is partly because an employer can't be fined for not giving you a proper contract.

If you want a contract, but your employer won't give you one, all you can do is apply to an employment tribunal for a list of what should be included in your written statement.

Questions 8 – 13

Do the following statements agree with the information given in the extract above?

In boxes 8 – 13 on your answer sheet write

TRUE if the statement agree with the information

FALSE if the statement contradicts with the information

NOT GIVEN if there is no information on this

- 8 Employers have to provide written contracts for their employees.
- 9 There are laws to ensure that people are treated equally at work.
- 10 A written statement has the same value as a contract.
- 11 Employers should give written terms of employment to employees in the two months of the job.
- 12 Employers must contribute towards their employees' pensions.
- 13 An employment tribunal can force employers to issue contracts.