

#### **HELPING YOU READ BETWEEN THE LINES:**

### workers' rights

Empower yourself in the workplace with this introduction to workers' rights, developed with Thompsons Solicitors, the NUJ's dedicated legal partner. Different rules and regulations can apply depending on your employment status, but NUJ members working in the UK can expect some fundamental workers' rights – even when on temporary or freelance contracts. Read on to learn more about your rights, and what to do if you think an employer is breaching them.





# Your rights at work

Various laws exist to protect workers – such as those listed below – however the best protection offered to workers comes via membership of a professional trade union, such as the NUJ.

- Equality Act 2010
- Working Time Regulations 1998
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.

# Workers are guaranteed the right to:



- Paid annual leave per year
- A maximum average 48 hours a week working limit
- A limit of eight hours (average) work in a 24 hour period for night workers
- 11 hours rest in a 24 hour period
- National minimum wage
- Rest breaks if you work longer than six hours.

## Spotlight on contracts



Getting to grips with your employment status is really important when it comes to understanding your contract of employment and associated workers' rights. Different rights and protections are afforded to different categories – workers, employees, freelancers and interns for example – knowing which category you fall into is the first step.

- Zero hours contracts on this type of contract, the employer is not required to offer a minimum number of hours, and the worker is under no obligation to accept work offered. While employers argue these contracts offer flexibility to both sides, they can result in wage uncertainty for the worker.
- Temporary contracts (sometimes known as fixed term contracts) these contracts should afford people with the same benefits and protections as permanent, full time colleagues, the only difference being that these contracts end on a specified date, or when a specific task has been accomplished.
- Internships people undertaking internships and work placements are not automatically afforded 'worker status' (unless they are offered the promise of a future contract of employment). The NUJ has long campaigned against the exploitation of interns including calls for fair payment and employment rights.



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All workers on permanent contracts are entitled to 5.6 weeks of paid annual leave every year. If you work 5 days a week, you should get 28 days off (including Bank Holidays). If you work part-time, you should get 5.6 times your weekly working time.

The annual leave entitlement of people employed as interns or on zero hours or temporary contracts will vary – depending on the hours worked and the details of the contract, which you should check before signing.

### I'm worried my contract has been breached – what should I do?



If you think your contract has been breached, you should let the Mother or Father of your chapel know and ask them for advice. If the issue cannot be rectified, the NUJ Legal Service can advise on whether you may be able to bring a claim to an Employment Tribunal.

# Will I get sick pay?



All workers – including those on zero hours, temporary or internship-style contracts – are entitled to sick leave but not necessarily sick pay. Workers on permanent contracts are entitled to Statutory Sick Pay of £89.35 a week, for up to 28 weeks. It's important to check the detail of your contract before signing.

# What about holiday pay?

Your holiday pay entitlement will depend on your employment contract and the hours worked. Interns are not always eligible for holiday pay, which is often dependent on the duration of the internship and what is expected from the individual.

### **Employment law advice**



The NUJ Legal Service is available free to members and can offer advice on all aspects of employment law, providing legal support on contracts, dismissal and redundancy, discrimination, equal pay, bullying and harassment, TUPE, maternity leave/parental leave, whistle-blowing and settlement agreements.

### When bad news hits, the NUJ Legal Service is here for you.



Download more information about your rights from:

www.thompsonstradeunion.law/nuj-resources



Injured or involved in an accident? 100% free and 100% compensation guaranteed.

Start a claim, call 0800 587 7528.



Arrested while working? Members get legal assistance for work-related criminal matters.

Call the emergency helpline, on **0800 587 7530** – 24 hours.