Work is a very important part of people's lives, whether it is paid or unpaid work. In the UK, everyone who does paid work is protected by statutory rights, that is, rights that are guaranteed by law. If you know about your rights, it will stop you from being treated unfairly or missing out on what you are entitled to.

This module consists of four sections, covering a wide range of topics related to rights and responsibilities at work:

1. An overview of rights and responsibilities at work in the UK
2. Claiming rights: Role of trade unions in the UK
3. Workplace issues - past and present:
   - Gender pay gap
   - Equal opportunities - discrimination at work
   - Health and safety at work
   - Paid annual leave
   - Maternity and paternity leave and pay
   - National minimum wage; living wage
   - Working hours
   - Home-based work
4. Workers’ rights in a globalised world

Objectives of Module

In studying this module ‘Rights and Responsibilities’ students will be able to:

- Explain the rights and responsibilities available within the workplace in the UK
- Analyse the history of trade unions and the role they have played in securing and defending workers’ rights in the UK
- Understand the history of some of the key workplace issues in the UK
- Compare and contrast workers’ rights on a global scale, particularly in relation to the impacts of globalisation.

1. Overview

Rights at Work

Article 23 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights recognises the importance of workers’ rights. It states that:

1. Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favorable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment.

2. Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work.

3. Everyone who works has the right to just and favourable remuneration ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection.

4. Everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests.
Watch the video: ‘What Are Human Rights’

Discuss what human rights are. Write your own definition of human rights:

human rights are...

Draw up a list of rights that you think should apply to the world of work:

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

Watch the video: ‘World at Work’

Discuss what the young people in the video say about entering the world of work.

Create a list of ‘Take Home Messages’ to help people starting paid work for the first time:
Answer the following questions:

1. What are your legal rights if you receive a notice of dismissal from an employer?

2. Where can you go to for help if you do not understand your rights?

3. What does E.U. legislation state about your right to take time off for holiday?

4. Do you think that Christopher was right in taking action against his former employer for dismissal from a paper round?

5. How have Christopher’s actions helped other young workers?

Design a poster which will help employees in understanding their responsibilities at work. You could illustrate your poster, use key words and colour. You should also draw upon ideas from the following text:

- Follow health and safety rules and guidelines
- Understand your job description
- Follow instructions
- Work to the best of your ability
- Be honest
- Be punctual
- Not waste time
- Follow company procedures
- Present yourself neatly and cleanly
- Treat others with respect
After undertaking these activities you should now be able to:

- Explain current entitlement to minimum salary or wages
- Compare and contrast the differences in working hours and restrictions for workers of different ages
- Understand the entitlements for paid annual leave, sick leave, maternity and paternity leave and pay
- Describe the legislation underpinning the termination of employment, notice period and the grounds for dismissal
- Define health and safety
- Explore the right to trade union membership
- Understand the responsibilities of workers and that of their employers.

2. Claiming Rights: Role of Trade Unions in the UK

**DEFINITE** 15 mins

**Watch the video: ‘Why Trade Unions?’**

What is a trade union? Write your own definition.

*Note: You could also explore Module 4 ‘Striking Out’ to further develop your understanding of trade unions.*

Trade union is...

**SUGGEST** 15 mins

**Watch the video: ‘Why Did The Trade Unions Come About?’**

Why were trade unions created?

What contribution did trade unions make to the struggle for workers’ rights?
Draw a flow chart diagram to show the legacy of the Tolpuddle Martyrs and their journey from ‘criminals’ to influencing the formation of the UK Labour Party.
Answer these two questions by filling each box with information taken from the film.

1. Why did each group take strike action?
2. What were the results of the three strikes?

Dock Workers

Match Makers

Gas Workers

Write a paragraph which explains the impact these three strikes had on the wider UK society?
Explore the data within the web site: How Union Membership Has Grown and Shrunk and the website: UK Union Membership Grows. They both present statistics on union membership in the UK over time.

1. What year was union membership at its highest?

2. When did union membership begin to shrink?

3. Evidence suggests that union membership is growing again since 2012.

4. Why do you think this is the case?

Exploring the information on the website: Trade Unions, analyse the factors which may have contributed to changing rates of trade union membership in different periods.

What potential issues exist for workers and unions in the future?

After undertaking these activities you should now be able to:

- Describe the history of trade unions in the UK from the 18th century to the 21st century
- Explain the activities undertaken by trade unions
- Discuss the law in the UK relating to the membership of trade unions
- Analyse the changes that the trade unions have undergone over the years and the factors which contributed to these changes
- Examine issues for the future of trade unions and factors influencing the historic fluctuations in the trade union membership rates.
3. Workplace Issues: Past and Present

The struggle for workers’ rights is constantly evolving, with new issues emerging as the nature of work changes. While some struggles such as the campaigns to restrict working hours date back to over two centuries, others, like the campaign for a living wage, are more recent. The history and the current law relating to some of these rights is outlined in this section.

EXAMINE 20 mins

1. List 5 causes of the gender pay gap.
2. Rank in order of importance. 1 being most important. 5 being least.
3. Rank these 5 causes in order of “difficulty to change”. 1 being most difficult and 5 being least difficult.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Causes</th>
<th>Importance</th>
<th>Difficulty to Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td></td>
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<td>3.</td>
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<td>4.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

How do these two rankings differ?

Discuss reasons why these two rankings are different. What solutions could be developed to tackle the most difficult causes of gender pay gap?
Using the information within this section, create your own timeline explaining the history of the struggle for equal pay in the UK.
Now undertake a role play exercise which examines the following types of discrimination:

- Race discrimination at work
- Disability discrimination at work
- Discrimination on the basis of gender
- Discrimination on the basis of sexuality
- Use the information within each section to help you write your role play script.

In your role plays there must be one character who is discriminating and one character who is being discriminated against. You could also include characters who witness this discrimination, intervene or offer solutions to the discrimination being experienced in the play.

Discuss the impact that legislation has had in tackling discrimination in the UK. Use examples such as The Equal Pay Acts and The Equality Act 2010 to enhance the point being made.

TIP: Remember the PEE rule: Point * Evidence * Explanation

Health & Safety at Work

Why do we need health and safety legislation?
Think about the period before such laws existed to put together your arguments.

Identify changes that have occurred over time to employee fatalities in the workplace since 1900.
In recent years, some sections of the media have mocked inappropriate uses of health and safety legislation, with newspaper reports on bans on children playing with conkers, or bureaucratic obstacles to school trips.

1. Do you think health and safety has 'gone too far'?

2. What would happen if there was no health and safety legislation?

Use examples to enhance your answers.

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**Pay Leave**

Suggest the reasons which led to the international recognition of, and support for paid leave in the E.U.

**Watch the video: ‘David Lazarus: paid time off?’**

Compare the differences between workers in EU (including the UK) and the USA in relation to paid leave in the work place.
Create a **GIANT Word Wall** examining the subject of working hours. You can write any words but these must be connected to the subject of working hours and the information contained within this section.

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**DISCUSS** 20 mins

**Watch the video: ‘Do Couples Want Split Parental Leave’**

Answer the following 2 questions:

1. What do members of the public make of the planned changes to maternity and paternity leave and pay?

2. Do you think they will make use of the opportunity to change their working and childcare arrangements? Why/why not?

3. What do you think are the advantages and disadvantages of a more equitable sharing of childcare and of maternity and paternity leave among parents...

   ...for parents?

   ...for society?

   ...for employers?

   ...for children?
**National Minimum Wage and the Living Wage**

What does the law specify in relation to a minimum wage in the UK?

What is a living wage?

How is it different to the national minimum wage?

What are the gaps in the existing law on the national minimum wage and how effective is this law in protecting all workers?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issues</th>
<th>National Minimum wage</th>
<th>Living Wage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Definition</td>
<td>The national minimum wage is the least that an employer can legally pay a worker, per hour, for any work they do for them.</td>
<td>The living wage is an informal benchmark, not a legally enforceable minimum level of pay, like the national minimum wage.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| What was it in 2012 | For 2012, the national minimum was:  
Aged 21 or over: £6.19/hour  
Aged 18-20: £4.98/hour  
Aged 16-17: £3.68/hour. Apprentices under 19 or aged 19 or over in their first year: £2.65/hour | For 2012, the national minimum was set at £8.55/hour in London and £7.45/hour in the rest of the UK. |
| What happens if an employer pays below this rate? | They are breaking the law. The worker has the right to take them to court and claim backdated wages. | Campaigners can use social sanctions against employers who pay low wages. |
| How many employers pay this? | Compliance remains high, but particular sectors and particular categories of workers are exploited by employers. | 80% of workers are paid above this rate. |

Read the BBC article: ‘All London Underground Cleaners Get London Living Wage’

Use this table to answer the following questions:

1. What is a living wage?
2. How is it different to the national minimum wage?
Home-Based Work

1. What kinds of home-based work are carried out in the UK?

2. How does home-based work differ from employment based outside the home?

1. What are the advantages of home-based work for the worker?

2. What are the advantages for their employer?

3. What are the disadvantages of home-based work for the worker?

After undertaking these activities you should now be able to:

- Explain the history of the gender pay gap and the struggle for equal pay, over time
- Describe the inequalities and discrimination that can take place at work
- Understand the legislation which maintains the practice of health and safety at work
- Describe the history of the struggle for paid leave, its limitations and the outlook for the future
- Understand the law on working hours in the UK
- Evaluate the origin, growth and demand for maternity and paternity leave and pay
- Describe the timeline of the struggle for a statutory national minimum wage and living wage
- Explain the law and its limitations in securing home-based workers’ rights.
4. Workers Rights in a Globalised World

Supply Chain Pressures Create Precarious Employment

Shareholder pressure for high returns

Consumer expectations of low prices

Retailers and Brand Owners
...offload costs and risks down the supply chain...

Retailers and brand owners push for:
- lower prices from producers
- fast and flexible production
- high technical and quality standards
- better labour conditions but without a long-term commitment

Producers - Farms and Factories
...pass the pressures on to workers...

Producers, as employers:
- hire women and migrants
- use short-term contracts and evade benefits
- put workers under excessive pressure
- undermine organising
- hide labour rights violations

Sub-Contractors

Precariously employed workers, mostly women and migrants, are:
- insecure on contracts with few benefits
- exhausted by long hours and high targets
- undermined in organising for their rights

Employees

Sub-contracted and home-based workers

1. What are supply chains?

2. What does the flow diagram show us about the vulnerability of workers involved in global supply chains?
3. What kind of measures can be introduced to support the workers at each stage of the supply chain?

4. What role can we, as consumers, play to support the rights of these workers?

**Describe** 20 mins

**Watch the video: ‘Cambodia: Rights of Home Based Women Workers’**

Describe the ways these (informal) home-based women workers in Cambodia have been supported in gaining workers’ rights.

**Define** 5 mins

What is globalisation?

Globalisation is...

After undertaking these activities you should now be able to:

- Define globalisation
- Explain issues relating to workers’ rights in countries where goods are being manufactured for UK consumers
- Understand how the pressures created by global supply chains can result in the exploitation of workers
- Evaluate the role of consumers in influencing the rights of workers in other parts of the world.