



# RESPECT YOUR YOUTH!

## A CHARTER FOR YOUNG WORKERS IN WALES

Young workers are being disproportionately hit by the UK Government's unnecessary austerity policies. Young people's deteriorating prospects are due to a **TOXIC** combination of increased university tuition fees, unemployment, poorer job opportunities, lower pay and rapid house price inflation.

UNISON Young Members in Wales have developed **5 Key Demands** they believe will make a real difference to their quality of life:

- 1) **Pay the Real Living Wage\* Regardless of Age!** All workers, irrespective of age, deserve to be paid at least the foundation living wage of £8.45 per hour. This is the minimum pay rate required to allow workers a decent living standard.
- 2) **Apprenticeships** with a guarantee of a minimum of 12 months employment appropriate to the field of study and qualification gained. Quality training and quality work, not just a way of avoiding paying the correct wage for the job.
- 3) **Fair Employment** No zero hour or low hour contracts. No ongoing short term or temporary contracts. Trade union recognition.
- 4) **Equality in the Workplace** Zero tolerance of discrimination, with robust equality policies and training for all staff. Employers to have strategies to minimise 'gender segregation'.
- 5) **Development Opportunities** Invest in your staff of tomorrow and give training and development opportunities for young workers and retain career pathways.

**Our Charter doesn't just make sense for young people,  
it works for employers and government too**

## FAIR EMPLOYMENT AND FAIR PLAY

In Wales, figures show that one in 30 employees in Wales in March 2016 were on a zero hour contract, one of the highest proportions in the UK.

People on zero hour contracts are not guaranteed a minimum number of work hours but must be available for work. Such contracts are widely used by retailers, restaurants, leisure companies and hotels, and

especially in the care sector. But increasingly public sector employers like councils and the health service are getting on the bandwagon.

That's one in 30 workers in Wales with no job security, who are earning less than people in stable work and who, from week to week, do not know what they will have to live on.

When looking for work, people value a steady and reliable income as importantly as the level of take-home pay. Fluctuating rates of pay and work patterns lead to people struggling with debt and facing delays or problems with in-work benefits such as working tax credits and housing benefit.

Whilst some employers may think they're saving costs by employing young workers on poor conditions, they undoubtedly lead to low morale, higher staff turnover, and can be damaging to an employer's reputation. Offering fair employment to young workers has benefits for employers – fair working conditions and pay is rewarded with increased productivity and staff loyalty.

Employers who recognise trades unions have a happier and more productive workforce and those who are members of trades unions have better pay, conditions and prospects.



**“We are asking employers to offer fair employment to young workers in Wales, stop using zero hour contracts or unreasonable low hour contracts, to give young workers in Wales a chance to build a future.”**

**Tim Burke,  
UNISON Cymru/Wales Young Members Chairperson**



## APPRENTICESHIPS

A recent TUC report found that despite a range of measures to tackle poor quality provision, there remain too many low quality exploitative apprenticeships.



Poor quality learning experiences and poverty rates have led to more than 30% of apprentices being unable to complete their training. It is worth noting that 21% of apprentices have not received any formal training.

Apprenticeships must include quality “off the job” accredited training – a key requirement set out in the Skills Funding Agency’s funding rules. Employers must commit to the proper use of apprenticeship schemes and not abuse the opportunity to employ people, who are often are unaware of their employment rights, on low paid and insecure contracts.

Nearly one in five apprentices are not paid the Apprenticeship National Minimum Wage (NMW) rate and this is an increasing trend; data shows that 30% of 16-18 year olds receive below the Apprenticeship NMW, an increase of 5% since 2014.

**“UNISON Cymru/Wales Young Members is asking employers to pay the Real Living Wage - regardless of age. We’re sure that a commitment to respect young apprentices will be repaid in loyalty and better productivity from them for many years to come.”**

**Laura West, UNISON Cymru/Wales Young Members Secretary**



## DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Since the recession employers have cut back on training and development for workers generally, but this has a disproportionate impact on young workers entering the workforce. Many employers have systematically de-layered the workforce and in so doing, have closed career pathways for young workers. If young workers are to hope to get decent housing, raise families and feel part of our society, they need assurance that their continued commitment to a job will mean security and a chance to progress.

**“Our generation need to be given a stake in the future of their employers’ organisations. Invest in us and you are investing in the future of your business and in society as a whole.”**

**Martyn David, UNISON Cymru/Wales Young Members Forum**

# COMMITMENT TO EQUALITY

The TUC has raised concerns about falling completion rate – in 2014/15 just 61.9% of young black female apprentices successfully completed their apprenticeships – which indicates that too many apprenticeships are not of a decent quality and that workplace discrimination is preventing underrepresented groups achieve their qualifications. But discriminatory practices occur from the outset with the number of black and minority ethnic people who apply for apprenticeships being far higher than the proportion who actually start one. In 2011/12, around 25% of applications made were from BAME groups but only 10% of those actually started them.



From a gender perspective, although the ratio of male/female apprentices is nearly balanced, many young women are working in sectors synonymous with low pay and do not have as much opportunity to progress through apprenticeship frameworks and levels which that lead to increased career opportunities and higher pay. For example, only 3.62% of engineering apprenticeship starters are women.

**“We want employers to commit to having a strategy to end gender segregation in job roles- in the 21st century, women should be as likely to be a plumber or a civil engineer as a man.”**

**David Coleman, UNISON Cymru/Wales Young Members Vice Chair**

## How can we make Wales a better place for young people to live and work?

- Join a trade union - if you work in local government, healthcare, social care, whether public, private or voluntary sector - join UNISON online at [joinunison.org](http://joinunison.org)
- Ask your employer to sign up to UNISON Cymru/ Wales Charter for Young Workers in Wales - Respect Your Youth!
- Ask your council, health board, and the Welsh Government to require contracted employers to sign up to the five pledges in the Charter.
- Join the campaign - contact us to see how you can help: email [m.turner@unison.co.uk](mailto:m.turner@unison.co.uk)
- Follow us on Facebook and Twitter [#respectyouryouth](https://twitter.com/respectyouryouth)



For further information about **RESPECT YOUR YOUTH!**  
a Charter for Young Workers in Wales visit [cymru-wales.unison.org.uk](http://cymru-wales.unison.org.uk)