



## How safe are Children who Work?

Ryan Pettigrew was a fun loving teenage boy who was killed whilst doing his paper round on a road with a 60 mile an hour speed limit.

Ryan, like many children, was keen to start work and earn his own money. Unfortunately the shop he was working for failed to apply for a work permit for Ryan or undertake a risk assessment and share the findings with his parents.

A paper round is still the most commonly held job, with about half the children who work undertaking this type of work. It is also probably one of the most dangerous jobs a child can do, working alone on dark winter roads.

During Child Employment Fortnight 2010 Local Authorities across the country sent letters and information to employers and carried out visits to many more. 3326 employers were visited and out of 1092 children found working, 374 of these were being employed illegally, mostly without the necessary work permit. A total of 322 employers were re-visited.

Most of the employers were unaware of the legislation regarding the employment of school-aged children and the legal requirement of a work permit. The work permit is one way in which the local authority can be aware of children being employed and, therefore, able to monitor the hours that they work and the occupation in which they are employed.

### **CHILD EMPLOYMENT FORTNIGHT 2011 28 March - 8 April 2011**

#### **What and when**

The NNCEE is running a national initiative 'Child Employment Fortnight' from 28 March to 8 April 2011. This year the focus is on ensuring that children who do work are doing so safely. It is an opportunity for employers, young people and the public to speak to Local Authority Officers who can give advice about working whilst at school. The event will involve staff from this local authority and many others across England and Wales.

#### **Why**

Many young people benefit from part-time working and Child Employment laws exist to safeguard the education, health and welfare of compulsory school age employees. There are concerns that a

lack of awareness and understanding of the law is leaving young people vulnerable to exploitation and injury. The aim of this initiative is to increase awareness of the law and thus ensure more young people are working safely and legally.

### **Who is the NNCEE**

The National Network for Children in Employment and Entertainment (NNCEE), is an organisation made up of people working within child employment and entertainment legislation. They are working voluntarily with the NNCEE to promote safeguarding of children in employment and entertainment industry.

### **What does the law say?**

The law allows a young person to be employed from 14, but Local Authorities can permit a young person to be employed from 13. The Law specifies the permitted hours, types of employment and makes it essential for employers to obtain a work permit for school age employees. It includes the rights of the employee and the responsibilities of the employer. Children working without a permit may not be covered by any form of insurance, regardless of the policies that the employer has in force. Employers who breach this legislation are risking the safety of young people and can face fines of up to £1000.

### **For further information**

To find out more about Child Employment Fortnight in **(add your Local Authority)** or about Child Employment Law please contact **(add your contact details)** or you can visit the NNCEE visit website <http://www.bucksinfo.net/nncee/> (or 'Put NNCEE in a search engine').

### **Other facts and related information:**

#### **Previous Years - Child Employment Week 2008, 2009 & 2010**

Year on year more and more Local Authorities are taking part. During these years the number of children found being employed illegally has fallen from 42% to 34% due to local awareness raising initiatives. However these illegally employed young workers are almost certainly not covered by any form of insurance, regardless of the policies that the employer has in force. These school age employees were either working; without a work permit, too many hours; outside of the permitted times or working in banned occupations.

#### **The Association of British Insurers has confirmed to the NNCEE:-**

"that, where an employer breaks a law or Regulation, any incident would normally invalidate the insurance policy. Employers must ensure that they have carried out all obligations in law and also are aware of any risks and other necessary safety procedures before they employ a child".

Therefore, any contravention of any Statute Law or Regulation governing the employment of school-aged children (and there are over 200 such laws or Regulations) could invalidate the insurance policies the employer may have.

**Injuries in the work place:**

The number of children and young people injured per year in the work place goes largely unreported, especially if they are injured whilst being employed illegally. In recent years there have been cases of a 15-year-old boy losing the fingers of his hand in a sausage mincer, a 14 year old girl lost the tips of her fingers on her hand in a vegetable slicer, a 13 year old boy was killed whilst doing his newspaper round and a 16 year old boy had his hand mangled in an industrial printing press

**Hours of Work:**

Children aged 15 and 16 years have been found working until 2 am and 3am (collecting glasses in a nightclub and working in a fast food chain). Many children have been found starting work between 5.30am and 6.30am (delivering newspapers). Working at these hours will affect the child's education and is illegal.

**Rates of Pay:**

Young People of compulsory school age are not entitled to the minimum wage and it is therefore important they are paid fairly.

Recent research by the Halifax shows that the average weekly wage for children is £18.52 however some children are working for wages as low as £1.98 per hour.

**What are popular jobs?**

According to the Halifax research

"a paper round is the most popular job for almost half the children (43%), followed by working in a shop (18%)"

Other popular jobs are:

Waiting on tables and/or washing up in cafes and restaurants

Working in a hairdressers

**What kinds of jobs are children not able to do?**

Working in a kitchen

Working in a garage

Working on a building site

Working in a factory

Unsupervised sale of alcohol

In telephone sales

**There are around 200 Acts and Regulations, which govern employment of children.**

Some of which are nearly 100 years old. Employers who breach the regulations can be prosecuted and fined.

A list of these regulations can be found on the NNCEE website [www.bucksinfo.net/nncee/](http://www.bucksinfo.net/nncee/) (or put NNCEE into a search engine)