

Do you work in a hotel or restaurant?

It seems that almost every week someone who works in a hotel or restaurant comes to us for advice about a problem they have with their employer.

We must point out that most hotel and restaurant employers in York behave very well towards their employees!

Many of the problems seem to have come about because there is such a high turnover of restaurant and hotel staff. People are able to move in and out of this kind of work very quickly and easily. It is popular work with students and other people who are only thinking of short term employment. This means that when they have a problem they are more likely to put up with it, because they are thinking of leaving soon anyway. On the other hand, they may simply leave the job, perhaps even without giving notice.

At the same time, hotel and restaurant managers know that if they have a vacancy they can quickly fill it. The temptation for some managers then is not to worry too much if they are not doing everything that the law requires as far as employment regulations are concerned.

It's not a good situation, all round, and people can be made very unhappy. Employees have rights and responsibilities, and so do employers. Ideally, if everyone behaved perfectly there wouldn't be any problems. But life isn't like that!

The best thing to do is to be aware of your rights as an employee, and then, if there are problems, to talk quietly and privately to your line manager and ask for things to be put right. If that doesn't work, come to the Bureau for advice as soon as you can. See our opening hours page for details of when to come to the Bureau.

What rights do you have?

Well, quite a lot, actually! You are entitled to a minimum rate of pay; maximum working hours per week; at least 11 hours between shifts; 20 minutes break for every 6 hours that you work. That break must be taken away from your work station, so you can't be required to look after the phone while having your lunch, for example. There is legislation that protects you from several types of discrimination, and you are protected if you report on a situation where the law is being broken. You are entitled to pay instead of notice and holiday pay. If you have worked for a company for less than two years you have fewer rights in some respects but it's always worth checking with the CAB if you're not certain about something.