

WHAT MAKES WORK DECENT?

Teachers' guide

What makes work decent? supports learners to consider ideas about work and what decent work means to them. In the second session, learners explore case studies of some groups and organisations that are influencing issues relating to decent work such as fair pay and employee happiness.

What is decent work?

Decent work means different things to different people. This resource aims to support learners to think critically about what decent work is. What it means to them and what it might mean to others.

Based on a review of recent literature relating to decent work, Oxfam proposes a definition that has five core dimensions: namely pay, intrinsic characteristics of work, terms of employment, health and safety and work-life balance issues. These are the five dimensions which learners explore through this resource. As part of their learning, learners could decide on their own core dimensions.

Poverty in Wales

In Great Britain, the richest 1% has as much wealth as the poorest 55% of the population¹. In Wales, 23% of households live in relative poverty². Half of these households have at least one person in employment which indicates that work isn't always a route out of poverty. The use of Trussell Trust foodbanks in Wales is disproportionately high compared to other regions in the UK. In 2014-15, 85 875 Welsh people, including 30 136 children were given three days of emergency food³.

¹ ONS (2014) "Wealth and income, 2010-12" http://ons.gov.uk/ons/dcp171778_368612

² ONS (2015) "House below average income" via Welsh Government <http://gov.wales/statistics-and-research/households-below-average-income/?lang=en>

³ Trussell Trust Statistics <http://www.trusselltrust.org/stats>

Unpaid work?

Not all work is paid. Many people care for children, elderly parents, relatives or friends with disabilities; sometimes providing care 24 hours per day. The care provided by Wales' unpaid carers is worth an estimated £8.1 billion a year⁴. *Carers Wales* suggests that without carers' support, the health and social care system would collapse. Unpaid work can also take the form of work experience to provide a person with experience in a particular job or industry, or time spent volunteering for a not-for-profit organisation.

⁴ <http://www.carersuk.org/wales/news/vale-of-unpaid-care-in-wales>

What is the difference between the Living Wage and the National Living Wage?

The Living Wage is worked out annually by the Living Wage Foundation and is calculated according to the basic cost of living in the UK. The current UK Living Wage is £8.25 an hour. In London the Living Wage is £9.40 an hour. Businesses can sign up voluntarily to be a Living Wage employer. Find out more about the Living Wage: <http://www.livingwage.org.uk/what-living-wage>

In July 2015 it was announced that the UK Government would introduce a mandatory National Living Wage for workers aged 25 and above from April 2016. This was initially set at £7.20. The National Minimum Wage of £6.70 will continue to apply to those aged 21 to 24. The National Minimum Wage is £5.30 for ages 18 to 20 and £3.87 for ages 16 and 17. Find out more about the National Living Wage and National Minimum Wage rates:

- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-living-wage-nlw>
- <https://www.gov.uk/national-minimum-wage-rates>

Useful websites:

- Careers Wales: <http://www.careerswales.com>
- Careers Wales jobs trends: <http://www.careerswales.com/en/tools-and-resources/job-trends/>
- Ted Talk- Dan Ariely: What makes us feel good about our work?
https://www.ted.com/talks/dan_ariely_what_makes_us_feel_good_about_our_work?language=en
- Fair Trade Wales: <http://fairtradewales.com/resources/teaching-learning>
- The Guardian- the future of work:
<http://www.theguardian.com/society/series/the-future-of-work>