

About 40% of Year 10 pupils have a regular paid job.

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Working children: What, how long, and how much

Child employment in the UK is not just confined to paper boys and girls getting a bit of extra pocket money in the holidays and at weekends, writes Sarah Roche in this issue.

It certainly is not. The Unit has collected data on young people's paid work since 1980, and over the years the list of 'top jobs' has been extended in line with the varieties of employment reported to us. At present, the list of regular jobs for secondary-school pupils is as follows:

- Babysitting
- Hairdressing
- Working in a shop
- Manual work
- Paper or milk round
- In a hotel, bar or café
- Farm work or gardening
- Paid housework

This article is based on provisional 1997 data for 20,111 pupils.

The 'Hidden Army'

The first thing to be examined, however, is the size of the 'hidden army' about which the Low Pay Unit is concerned. These are the percentages that report having a regular paid job during term-time:

Age	Boys	Girls
11-12	15.1	10.2
12-13	23.8	18.5
13-14	36.9	20.2
14-15	43.1	39.2

Converting these percentages into numbers, based on Institute of National Surveys population statistics, gives us the following very approximate size of part of the UK school-age workforce, excluding Northern Ireland. We say 'very approximate' because, as suggested below, regional variations may be considerable.

Age	Boys ('000)	Girls
11-12	57	36
12-13	89	65
13-14	138	72
14-15	162	140

This gives an approximate total of 759,000 workers between the ages of 11 and 15, within which more boys than girls have got a term-time job in all the age-groups (other data suggest that may be reversed in Year 11).

The percentages are considerable — almost a quarter of 12-13 year old boys, and 40% of those aged 14-15, have a regular paid job of some sort.

Note that, with the exception of those doing paid housework, all the young people in the 11-12 age range, and about half of those in the 12-13 age range, were under the age limit for legal gainful employment in any of the listed jobs.

Regional variations?

Information derived from this question during more than a decade of use shows year-on-year variations that are greater than those for most of the behaviours measured by the Health Related Behaviour Questionnaire. As the re-

	Age			
	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15
<i>Boys' jobs</i>				
Babysitting	5.1	5.5	6.6	5.5
Hairdressing	0.0	0.4	1.6	0.4
Working in a shop	4.4	5.3	1.6	9.1
Manual work	4.4	5.4	8.2	8.1
Paper/milk round	36.8	47.1	57.4	49.1
In a hotel, bar or café	5.1	2.2	3.3	5.8
Farm work or gardening	8.8	6.5	3.3	6.3
Paid housework	22.8	13.9	14.8	5.3
Other work	12.5	13.7	3.3	10.2
<i>Girls' jobs</i>				
Babysitting	12.0	31.8	46.9	26.4
Hairdressing	0.0	1.3	2.0	3.6
Working in a shop	4.4	5.3	1.6	9.1
Manual work	1.1	1.6	4.1	1.5
Paper/milk round	17.4	25.4	16.3	15.6
In a hotel, bar or café	0.0	2.4	2.0	17.7
Farm work or gardening	3.3	2.7	4.1	1.4
Paid housework	40.2	19.8	14.3	5.4
Other work	22.8	10.6	8.2	11.9

Table 1. The percentage of 'workers' in different jobs. Respondents with more than one job are asked to record the one paying the most money.

Table 2. The percentage of 'workers' in different earning categories.

	Age			
	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15
<i>Boys' earnings</i>				
Up to £5.00	44.7	32.5	20.0	10.6
£5.01-£10.00	24.8	34.8	32.3	30.7
£10.01-£20.00	18.4	20.4	35.4	34.1
£20.01-£30.00	5.0	5.0	1.5	10.8
£30.01-£40.00	2.1	1.0	3.1	4.3
More than £40.00	2.8	2.1	3.1	6.5
<i>Girls' earnings</i>				
Up to £5.00	52.0	44.2	38.8	12.8
£5.01-£10.00	29.6	32.7	24.5	25.9
£10.01-£20.00	11.2	13.4	26.5	35.1
£20.01-£30.00	2.0	3.7	4.1	12.8
£30.01-£40.00	1.0	1.2	0.0	5.4
More than £40.00	1.0	1.8	4.1	4.8

gional breakdown is different for each annual sample, this seems to suggest that young people's patterns of paid work do vary quite considerably from region to region.

Hours worked

Let us now look at the hours worked by the 'workers'.

Age	Hours worked		
	1-5	6-10	>10
<i>Boys</i>			
11-12	70.2	13.6	9.3
12-13	67.9	20.3	5.8
13-14	60.0	32.3	7.7
14-15	56.3	32.2	11.6
<i>Girls</i>			
11-12	89.5	7.3	3.1
12-13	78.2	17.6	4.2
13-14	73.4	16.3	10.2
14-15	49.1	36.1	14.8

These figures show a very wide range of working hours. Remember that they are the percentages of the 'working population', not of the whole sample.

Over 10% of the workers in Year 10 are working for more than 10 hours a week. Since about 40% of the young people in this year group have a regular paid job, these figures suggest that about 1 in 25 of all 14-15 year olds are working for more than 10 hours a week.

Jobs and money

Table 1 reveals that babysitting is the most popular employment for all except the youngest girls, while far more boys do a paper or milk round than anything else. Working in shops and the catering trade is also income for a considerable number of older girls. Paid housework makes a major contribution to the youngest pupils' incomes.

A study of the 14-15 year old data in Table 2 shows that 22% of the boys and 23% of the girls had earned more than £20 during the previous week.

Working hours

We have performed a calculation to estimate how much time these young people in Years 8 and 10 spend working at school and elsewhere.

To start with, we assumed that they spend 28 hours a week at school. We then added this to the number of hours that they reported spending

	Age	
	12-13	14-15
<i>Boys' working hours</i>		
Up to 30	63.7	43.4
31-35	25.3	30.6
36-40	7.6	15.9
41-45	2.6	6.8
46-50	0.6	1.8
More than 50	0.3	1.6
<i>Girls' working hours</i>		
Up to 30	55.8	37.3
31-35	28.7	29.1
36-40	10.1	18.6
41-45	4.4	10.7
46-50	0.6	2.8
More than 50	0.3	1.5

Table 3. The total weekly hours spent 'working' at school, doing homework, and in regulated paid work.

working at 'regulated' jobs during the previous week, which meant that babysitting and paid housework were excluded from the total.

Homework can also be a significant expenditure of time, and the questionnaire records how many hours young people spent doing homework after school on the previous day (which was a weekday). After some debate about 'week-end homework' we decided to multiply the minimum time reported by five, and added this to the weekly total (Table 3).

There are many hesitations about this calculation, but we have tried to be clear and conservative in our assumptions. The results show that in Year 10 there may be 3.4% of boys and 4.3% of girls working more than 45 hours and 1.6% of boys and 1.5% of girls working more than 50 hours a week, including homework. Remember that the European guideline for the maximum weekly working time by adults (which does not yet apply in the UK) is 48 hours.

On average, girls work longer during the week than boys; this is mostly due to them

Table 4. This table divides the Year 10 sample into 'non-earners' (NE) and 'earners' (E). The percentages within these groups corresponding to the label on the left can be compared.

	Boys %		Girls %	
	NE	E	NE	E
Has current 'partner'	19.8	25.6	26.1	32.5
High Esteem Score (15+)	44.8	45.1	31.0	36.5
Drank alcohol last week	48.0	59.4	47.1	60.4
Has been offered drug	32.9	40.6	32.2	40.3
Sees self as fit/very fit	53.9	59.4	29.2	32.7

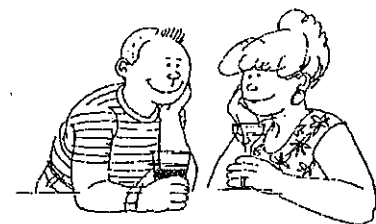
spending longer doing homework.

Young people's work in the context of other behaviours

Table 4 shows several systematic differences between non-earners and earners in Year 10 (here, also, babysitting and paid housework have been excluded). All figures are percentages. These differences are mostly highly statistically significant; the scores for self-esteem are not different between earning and non-earning boys.

These differences are in keeping with a more confident or more out-going type of person; whether this is as a result of the extra income and experience, or whether these young workers had these qualities before their employment, we cannot tell from these figures. Nonetheless, it seems that participation in the world of work, as well as raising health and safety issues, is also connected with initiation into a variety of other health-related activities.

In the next issue we plan to present some data relating earnings and total income to the kind of work done.



Young People and ALCOHOL

How much are they drinking? — What are they drinking? — Where are they drinking? Why are they drinking? — What do they think drinking does to them? — What do they fear may happen because of drinking? — Do their parents know they are drinking? — Does drinking make them aggressive? — Does drinking make other people in the family aggressive?

These results are based on a survey of 8315 pupils in Years 8 and 10, carried out in 1996.

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