

# Z<sub>z</sub>

## **Zero-hour contracts**

Zero-hour contracts are arrangements between an employer and an employee who has agreed to be available for work as and when required, therefore no particular number of hours or times of work are specified. Zero-hour contracts may suit some people who want occasional earnings, but they do run the risk of being misused, for instance when employees are asked to stop work during quiet periods but remain on the premises in case they are needed.

Under the **National Minimum Wage Regulations (1998)**, workers operating under a zero-hour contract on stand-by time, on-call time and downtime must be paid the national minimum wage, provided they are at their place of work and required to be there by the organization they work for. Similarly, this amount of time on premises is likely to count as working time under the **Working Time Regulations (1998, 1999 and 2002)** provided the worker is required to be on-call at the place of work.