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The minimum wage will increase on 1 April 2026, providing a notable uplift for younger workers and apprentices. Employees stand to benefit, but the extra cost may be difficult for many employers to absorb, particularly in hospitality.

Wage increases

Following high increases in April 2024 and April 2025, the minimum wage rate for employees aged 21 and over has increased 22% since 2024. Current and future rates from 1 April 2026 are:

Age	Current rate	From 1 April 2026	Percentage increase
National Living Wage (NLW) 21 and over	£12.21	£12.71	4.1%
National Minimum Wage (NMW) 18 to 20	£10.00	£10.85	8.5%
NMW Apprentices and those under 18	£7.55	£8.00	6.0%

Apprentices over 19 who have completed the first year of their apprenticeship are entitled to the rate for their age.

The new rates will have a significant effect on take-home pay. From April 2026, a full-time worker aged 21 and over will see their annual gross pay increase by around £1,000. The annual increase is more than £1,600 for someone aged 18 to 20.

When making their recommendations, the Low Pay Commission took into account stronger-than-expected wage growth, which was 4.6% annually up to September 2025.

Mitigating the effects

Forward planning is key to managing the minimum wage rate increases. For example:

- Review staffing and working patterns, while introducing more flexible working arrangements.
- Consider automating tasks. Where this is not possible, then investment in staff training will hopefully improve productivity and efficiency. With training, staff should be able to cover a wider range of roles, making the workforce more adaptable during busy periods.
- Even small changes, such as updating the way in which stock is controlled, can soon add up to a meaningful time saving.

If price increases are become necessary, these should be clearly communicated as early as possible to customers. The rates of National Minimum/Living Wage can be found [here](#).

We Can Help

For more information, please contact us, email us at info@nhllp.com or call us on **01753 888 211**, we are here to help.