

Legal rights at 16 <http://www.mumsnet.com/teenagers/legal-rights-at-16>

### 16 year olds and the law. At 16, teenagers can:

- Apply for legal aid
- Receive a community sentence called a Youth Rehabilitation Order
- Be detained in custody (but not in an adult jail) under a Detention and Training Order - the maximum term is two years but some of this will be served under supervision in the community

A young person found guilty of a serious crime, such as murder or serious assault, can be detained for longer periods.

### 16 year olds and relationships

- Have sex, gay or straight, as long as their partner is also 16+ (or 17+ in NI)
- Move out of the family home (but if under 17, social services may apply for a care order)
- Rent accommodation (but an adult guarantor is required)
- Get married (with parental consent)

### Medical treatment

- Give consent to medical, dental and surgical treatment**
- Choose their own doctor**
- Pay prescription charges - unless pregnant, on income support or in full-time education (law differs in Wales)**

### Study, work, benefits and money

- Get free full-time education (at school, sixth form college and city technology college)
- Access school records
- Claim benefits and get a National Insurance number (this should be sent automatically a few weeks before their 16th birthday)
- Join the armed forces (with consent of parents or carers)
- Work as a street trader and/or sell scrap metal
- Earn the minimum wage
- Claim child tax credit if responsible for at least one child
- Invest in a cash ISA

NB: The law was recently changed regarding compulsory education - from September 2013, young people must stay in education until they are 17. In 2015, it will rise again to age 18.

### Leisure

- Drink beer or cider with a meal in a pub or hotel (but can't be the person buying it)
- Do the football pools and play the National Lottery
- Buy Premium Bonds
- Fly a glider
- Order their own passport

### Driving

- Ride a moped with a maximum engine power of 50cc (and a provisional licence), drive an invalid vehicle (with a licence) and a mowing machine or small tractor.
- Drive a car if receiving mobility allowance

### Parents, babysitting and the law

There's no minimum age in law for when a young person is allowed to babysit another child. But parents have legal responsibility until the minor becomes 18 – . RoSPA and the NSPCC recommend that no-one under 16 is left to care for an infant.....

At 16, child benefit ceases unless your child is still in full-time education... equivalent, or on certain

18 year olds and the law

At 18, teenagers can:

- Vote in local and general elections
- Stand for election as an MP, local councillor or mayor
- Serve on a jury
- Be tried in a magistrate's court, and go to prison if found guilty of a criminal offence
- Make a will
- Pawn stuff in a pawn shop

Relationships at 18 years old At 18, it's legal to:

- Get married without parental permission
- If adopted, see the original birth certificate (and have their name added to the birth contact register)

Medical treatment At 18, teens can:

- Consent to their body being used in a medical study
- Carry an organ donor card

Leisure

Your adult child can now undo all your good work legally, as they can:

- Buy cigarettes, rolling tobacco and cigarette papers
- Buy alcoholic drinks in a pub or a bar
- Buy fireworks
- View, rent or buy an 18-rated film
- View, rent or buy pornographic material that does not contravene UK obscenity laws
- Place a bet in a betting shop or casino
- Get a tattoo
- Get body piercings

Driving

- Ride a motorbike above 125cc with a licence
- Drive lorries between 3,500kg and 7,500kg (with the appropriate licence)

Money

And if the Bank of Mum and Dad has gone bust, an 18 year old can:

- Open a bank account

Things an 18-year-old still can't do legally

- Adopt a child\*
- Supervise a learner driver\*
- Drive a bus\*

\* All require the person to be 21

And as parents of an 18 year old you need to remember to check...

Whether or not your teen is still covered by family medical or travel insurance policies  
With the local council that the extra adult in your household is on the electoral roll and will receive a polling card if an election is called

That any child savings accounts now have to change to adult accounts (at which point they can be taxed)