What is meant by children in employment?

All young people who work or assist in a trade or occupation which is carried out for profit or non-profit (e.g. charities, public sector organisations) purposes are considered to be employed - even if they receive no payment for that assistance.

By law, no child under 13 years may be employed. Children aged from thirteen to sixteen must have a work permit. The work permits are issued by Children’s Services and it is the responsibility of the employer to ensure that children of compulsory school age have a permit, and are working within the regulations. The Children and Young Person’s Act of 1933 provided the principal primary legislation, which remained largely unchanged for 65 years.

More information about the rules and restrictions on children in employment can be found on the National Network for Child Employment and Entertainment website.

What is meant by children in entertainment?

Many children enjoy performing, whether in plays, films, advertising or on television, and many parents enjoy supporting them. Some children also take part in modelling assignments and also paid sporting activities.

Laws exist to protect children’s welfare and prevent them from being exploited, and in most cases children require a performance licence in order to take part in these activities. (Children & Young Persons Act 1963, Children (Performance and Activities) Regulations 2014). This applies to both amateur and professional productions. The licence states the conditions which must be observed to ensure the child’s safety. Regular visits are made by the Child Employment Officer to TV sets and studios, theatres in Leeds and on location filming and photographic studios to check on the welfare of children taking part in these activities.

Why is this area of work important?

It is the responsibility of the local authority Children’s Services to ensure that children are not exploited whilst working or taking part in performances, and that they do not miss out on attending school.

Children must also be adequately supervised whilst taking part in these activities, and local authority officers carry out regular inspections to check on their safety and well-being. Chaperones are vetted and approved by the Council before they can be responsible for supervising children, and they all must have an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS; formerly Criminal Records Bureau, CRB) check as part of the process. They also receive safeguarding training and general training around their role and responsibilities.

Reports of children working illegally are taken seriously, and followed up with the employer who may be liable for a fine if they are found to employ children illegally.
How is this work carried out by Children’s Services?

This work is currently done by the Child Employment Officer who is part of a team within Targeted Services Attendance along with support from the Business Administration Team in the issuing of work permits and entertainment licences.

The team works closely with other colleagues in the Yorkshire and Humberside region, with regional representatives meeting once a term to discuss any issues, e.g. in relation to recent TV or theatrical productions or policies and procedures around child employment and children in entertainment. They also receive relevant information from the National Network for Children in Entertainment meetings.

Over the years, the team has carried out joint child employment sweeps with West Yorkshire Police in Leeds Market and the surrounding area — these are spot checks to ensure no school age children are working illegally. They have also held awareness campaigns in shopping centres across the city.

The team has also taken part in initiatives promoting the national ‘Child Employment Week’ over the past few years.

It should be noted that work experience for young people is organised by schools and academies; this is covered by separate legislation, and is not part of the team’s remit.

What should practitioners do if they have questions or concerns about children in employment or entertainment?

There is further information, advice and guidance available from the national network, including information about health and safety and risk assessments, through their website [www.nncee.org.uk](http://www.nncee.org.uk).

However, this is a national resource and processes and procedures differ between local authorities. For information about licences, chaperones and employment permits in Leeds, or to report suspected breaches of the child employment and entertainment regulations, please contact the Leeds City Council Child Employment Officer.

Who are the key contacts?

Child Employment Officer [Ruth.Kitson@leeds.gov.uk](mailto:Ruth.Kitson@leeds.gov.uk) Tel: 0113 3782480

Business Administration [Eileen.Murray@leeds.gov.uk](mailto:Eileen.Murray@leeds.gov.uk) and [Julie.A.Wilson@leeds.gov.uk](mailto:Julie.A.Wilson@leeds.gov.uk) Tel: 0113 3782480

Any correspondence should be sent to PO Box 837, Targeted Services Attendance, Leeds LS1 9PZ.