When you start working, here are some of the rights you should expect in the workplace. Which do you think are the most important and why? Are there any missing?

**Rights at work**

1. **To earn a living wage**
   This means earning enough to pay for food, shelter, transport and healthcare with some left over to spend on other things you may need.

2. **Working hours that are set by rules and are not excessive**
   You should not be forced to work more than the hours stated in a regulation. In the UK this is set by European rules and is 48 hours a week for most workers. Overtime should not be required on a regular basis, as everyone has the right to rest.

3. **To work in safe and healthy conditions**
   For example, if you are working in a factory with chemicals, you should be provided with protective clothing and gloves.

4. **Freedom from discrimination**
   You should not be discriminated against at work, for example because of your age, religion or gender.

5. **A contract of employment**
   A contract proves that you are being employed by someone else. It should set out your responsibilities, working hours and benefits, like maternity/paternity cover, sick leave, paid holiday entitlement.

6. **The right to join a trade union**
   People at work can join together in trade unions, giving them a collective and independent voice in the workplace. As members of a trade union, workers have more power together than they do as individuals. This helps them negotiate better pay and working conditions with their employers.

**Your task**

Read *Life in sporting goods factories* (Activity sheet 4b)

- Which rights are/are not being respected in these stories?
- Collect evidence by picking out key words or phrases.
- Why do you think rights at work are important?
- When workers are denied their rights, how could this affect them and their families?
- Why might respecting workplace rights be important for eliminating poverty?
- Why do you think workers who join a union might be intimidated by their employer?