

## **28 Insecure work and underemployment**

Insecure work and underemployment are growing problems in the labour market.

The Office for National Statistics now acknowledges that there are at least 1.7 million zero-hours contracts. There are 865,000 agency workers according to the Resolution Foundation. There is also the increase in bogus self-employment in the gig economy.

Underemployment is widespread in the economy with workers on short-hours contracts relying on additional hours that are not guaranteed from one week to the next. Part-time work fits the needs of many workers but 2.6 million part-time workers want longer hours and over one million workers work part-time only because they cannot find suitable full-time jobs.

The exploitation of workers through the misuse of zero-hours contracts, agency work, bogus self-employment and short-hours contracts needs to be challenged.

Congress resolves that the TUC will campaign to:

- i. highlight the growing problems of insecure work and underemployment
- ii. make sure that people working in the gig economy are properly protected
- iii. end exploitative zero-hours contracts and start to deal with the problem of short-hours contracts by giving workers a statutory right to contracts that reflect the hours that they normally work
- iv. demand employers give workers the hours they need and tackle the growth of short-hours contracts in their businesses
- v. close the loopholes in the Agency Workers Regulations to ensure that agency workers get equal treatment from day one of their placement
- vi. lobby the government to take action over bogus self-employment.

---

**Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers**

## **29 A new deal for workers**

Insecure employment and the growing pressure workers are under to work harder and faster for less, are the defining issues of our time for the trade union movement.

Far from creating a country that works for everyone, the Conservative government is creating a country in which we work 'til we drop. In contrast, Labour's 2017 manifesto put forward a transformative agenda on employment rights.

The government-commissioned Taylor report failed to address the need to enhance individual and collective rights to protect workers and bring about a real upturn in terms and conditions. The crucial question now facing the union movement is what are we going to do about it?

Congress agrees it is time to make greater demands on behalf of all workers and develop a new model of trade unionism that can organise workers everywhere, reverse the decline in overall UK trade union membership and counter the predicted impact of the gig economy.

Specifically, Congress calls on the General Council to:

- i. develop a common bargaining agenda to tackle insecurity
- ii. publish a trade union manifesto on what constitutes a new deal for workers
- iii. mobilise for a national demonstration for a new deal for workers to be held no later than the first half of 2018.

To facilitate the above, the General Secretary will bring forward documentation for agreement at the Executive Committee and General Council. This will also include how we build support for a major campaign and reach a consensus on deliverable action.

---

**Communication Workers Union**

## **30 Atypical working and self-employment**

Congress notes the increased use of atypical employment contracts in the UK economy, and welcomes the attention that has been given to the problems of casual and zero-hour contracts, self-employment, and the so-called 'gig economy', including the Matthew Taylor review, and the TUC's Working on the Edge initiative.

Many workers in precarious employment relationships face uncertainty about the demand for their labour, and are denied access to basic employment rights which Congress believes should apply wherever they are economically dependent on an employer or engager.

Congress also acknowledges that in some parts of the economy, for example the professional services and media sectors where Prospect has members, the flexibility offered by atypical employment can work to the benefit of both workers and engagers, and supports the right of those workers to opt for flexible employment provided it is their genuine and informed choice, and there is no threat of detriment, or denial of engagement, should they refuse.

Willingness to enter flexible working arrangements should not, however, undermine employment rights where there is a relationship of economic dependence between worker and engager.

Congress calls on the General Council to: