

Zero-hours contracts

Conference notes:

- The widespread increase in zero-hours contracts and agency work in both the private and public sector, and the link to the 'extra hours culture' leading to the restructuring of the workforce, and shifting control further towards employers and away from employees.
- The impact this is having upon wage levels, employment rights, job security and the divisive influence that this has upon the workforce.
- The substantial variation in wages across different sectors of the economy
- The national minimum wage for apprenticeships is £2.68 an hour Apprenticeships in general can be used to undercut wages – which obviously undermines the minimum wage.
- The low level of unionisation in those sections of the workforce most affected by ZHC and agency work.
- The success of Hovis workers in preventing the imposition of ZHC/agency work and the success of unionisation campaigns in the USA.
- The success that Die Linke has had in building support for its campaign for a minimum wage in Germany.
- The increased attacks on the legal rights of ordinary people.

Conference believes:

- Young workers are greatly impacted by ZHC and agency work, creating insecurity, a lack of control and the removal of their human dignity.
- There is a disproportionate impact on women and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic groups, those with disabilities and LGBT groups.
- Benefit claimants are often forced onto work programmes, workfare schemes, 'bogus' training courses and forced off JSA by sanctions; increasing their feelings of punishment, humiliation and disempowerment.
- The ConDem government is continuing to accelerate attacks on those claiming benefits; notably the threat to remove benefit rights from those aged 18 to 25 without any provision for genuine training and apprenticeships leading to real jobs.
- The Labour Party is complicit in this and there is scant evidence of any resolve to reverse these attacks.
- People should be empowered to work on their causes and campaigns, to gain full ownership of their lives for themselves.

Conference agrees:

To launch a Left Unity national campaign that aims to work with groups inside and outside the workplace to:

- Develop a high profile identity linking together all groups affected by this restructuring of the workforce – zero hours workers, agency workers, low paid workers, benefit claimants, young people and un-unionised workers.
- Campaign for those undergoing “training” and “apprenticeships”, in addition to other workers, to be paid the level of a living wage.
- Campaign for a boycott of and an end to workfare.
- Produce campaigning materials made available to all branches.
- Lobby/target employers to change their employment practices.
- Support the unionisation of workers in the private and the public sector.