

Green Party: Low unemployment rate masks soaring number of zero hours contracts



15 March 2017

The Green Party welcomes the falling unemployment rate but is concerned the figures mask the growing insecurity faced by workers.

According to figures published today, the unemployment rate has fallen to 4.7%, the lowest level in 12 years [1].

However, other statistics also published today reveal 905,000 people are now employed on zero hours contracts, an increase of about 101,000 in a year [2].

Jonathan Bartley, Green Party co-leader, said:

“While we welcome news that the unemployment rate has dropped to such a low level, the reality is more people than ever are employed on precarious zero hours contracts. With inflation rising and wage growth stalling, the high employment rate masks the insecurity faced by British families.

“Zero hours contracts are part of a gig economy that facilitates the exploitation of workers and companies are failing to fulfil their moral and legal duty to give their workers secure employment and basic rights.

“In this age of insecurity we should be thinking big about how we build an economy that works for everyone. That’s why the Government should follow the lead of countries like Finland which are investigating the merits of introducing a basic income, to stop people falling into poverty, while providing the choice, security and stability they need.”

Notes:

1. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/unemployment-rate-falls-to-lowest-since-2005>
2. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/people-in-employment-on-a-zero-hours-contract-mar-2017>

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