

TEXTE

Zero-hours contracts have a devastating impact on career progression

[...]The number of people working on a zero-hours contract has increased by 358% since 2012 – and represents almost 3% of the UK workforce. Zero-hours contracts do not guarantee a minimum number of hours – meaning the worker is effectively “on call” to work as and when they’re needed. The work offered is unstable with no long-term guarantee of hours or future employment. And this can be a major challenge to career progression. Despite the insecurities associated with this type of contract, workers on zero-hours contract are classed as “employed”, which is why the UK can claim the joint highest employment rate since records began, with 76.1% of people in work.

Long-term insecurity

It’s been argued that zero-hours contracts are used mostly by those in full-time education along with semi-retired people. But figures show that more than 23% of people on zero-hours contracts have worked for their employer for more than five years. As part of our research, we interviewed 35 zero-hours contract workers and heard how this precarious employment situation was affecting their career prospects. They told us how working on zero-hours contracts meant ending their aspiration for a career progression.

No training or development

Zero-hours contracts are not designed with training and development in mind because the workers are considered to be temporary – needed only when necessary. So the opportunity to take on extra responsibilities – which are relevant for any career progression – are not made available to workers. Those on zero-hours contract are often given minimal training and some are asked to pay for their training themselves. This lack of training and development restricts the kinds of jobs workers can do and limits their choices. [...]

Any employment contract that abuses this important workers’ right should be banned. And Labour’s plans to rid the UK of zero-hours contracts is one step closer to ensuring every worker gets a guaranteed number of hours each week, which will allow more people to gain security and fulfilment from their day-to-day working lives.

Adapted from: Ernestine Gheyo Ndzi, *The Conversation*, 24th September 2019

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