

The latest news and announcements from Derbyshire UNISON

Minimum wage

The future of the minimum wage



UNISON publishes report on the future of the minimum wage

UNISON was at the forefront in bringing about the original minimum wage and, 25 years on, the union is again leading the debate about how further advances can be made in a new report.

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Titled *Delivering greater security for the low paid: a collection of essays on the future of the minimum wage*, the report features contributions from the Resolution Foundation, TUC, the Living Wage Foundation, Citizen's Advice and Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

It also includes a piece from the union's head of health at UNISON Sara Gorton, focusing on the

issue of low weekly pay, which remains a big problem for around one in four workers, including many social carers.

A survey of social care workers conducted by UNISON revealed that:

- 77% of staff said that they would take more hours if they were available
- 73% of staff said that they would you prefer a typical

full-time working week of approximately 37 hours if it were available

- Contracted hours varied from week to week for three quarters of staff.

In comments on their working patterns, the dominant issue was the stress and worry caused by inadequate hours, which leaves workers unable to pay bills on time.

Many respondents referred to the high fixed costs of rent and energy bills leaving them to juggle the frequently inadequate remaining income on food for them and their families.

Of course, they want flexibility, like most workers do, and they want a decent work life balance. But they want it within the bounds of the contractual security that many better paid workers take for granted.

UNISON therefore maintains that, while it's important to push for an increase to the minimum hourly rate, unions should also be looking to ensure that people have secure contracts guaranteeing weekly hours too.

Labour's commitment to scrap zero hours contracts and give workers the right to a contract for the hours they do will help significantly. But as UNISON policy officer David Arnold, who edited the collection, points out, it is the party's plan to introduce sectoral collective bargaining and fair pay agreements, with the first in adult social care, that could have the greatest impact on the low paid:

"This should enable trade unions to negotiate with employers and to address the too few hours problem

"In many ways this represents a shift in emphasis to a more joined up approach to addressing low pay. This is a theme that runs through the report.

Agreements, living hours, better sick pay provision and an improved benefit system, will all make the minimum wage even more effective in helping the low paid."

Read and/or download the report [here](#)