

Better work and better pay

Britain's route to prosperity and higher living standards is through more secure and better paid jobs. But Conservative policies are causing whole sectors of the economy to be dragged into a race to the bottom on wages and skills. The Government has weakened employment rights and promoted a hire-and-fire culture. Labour believes our economy can only succeed in a race to the top – competing in the world with better work, better pay and better skills.

Too many people do a hard day's work but remain dependent on benefits. We will raise the National Minimum Wage to more than £8 an hour by October 2019, bringing it closer to average earnings. We will give local authorities a role in strengthening enforcement against those paying less than the legal amount. And we will support employers to pay more by using government procurement to promote the Living Wage, alongside wider social impact considerations. Our Make Work Pay contracts will give tax rebates to businesses who sign up to paying the Living Wage in the first year of a Labour Government. Publicly listed companies will be required to report on whether or not they pay the Living Wage.

It is hard for Britain to succeed when employees feel insecure and employers are undercut by those using exploitative working practices. Labour will ban exploitative zero-hours contracts. Those who work regular hours for more than 12 weeks will have a right to a regular contract. We will abolish the loophole that allows firms to undercut permanent staff by using agency workers on lower pay.

The Conservatives have introduced fees of up to £1,200 for employment tribunal claimants, creating a significant barrier to workplace justice. We will abolish the Government's employment tribunal fee system as part of wider reforms to make sure that affordability is not a barrier to workers having proper access to justice, employers get a quicker resolution, and the costs to the tax payer do not rise.

Labour is the Party of work, and we value working life. We will push up standards and boost productivity by implementing the commitments in Labour's Workplace and Business manifestos.