

Address to Council from AnnelieseDodds

The Living Wage and Zero Hour Contracts

Councillor Coulter's motion recognises that the estimated one million people on zero-hours contracts generally want real jobs with real protection, just like everyone else. People on zero-hours contracts work fewer hours, on lower weekly pay, and are more likely to be seeking alternative employment than others, making a mockery of claims that zero-hours contracts have been introduced because they are always in workers' interests.

As one person on a zero-hour contract, who was recently quoted in a BBC report, said, their proliferation has led to a situation where people have no control over their personal finances from day to day and week to week. In Pat's words, a telemarketing worker in his late forties: "I'd have the landlord screaming at me for the rent...The fridge would be empty. I'd have to lean on friends for help, I've slept on sofas - lots of us did. It's the only way to keep going."

It is right that this motion has been presented to Oxford City Council because an increasing number of public sector employers have started, inappropriately, to adopt zero-hours contracts for large parts of their workforce. Indeed, around a fifth of those employed on zero-hours contracts are employed in the caring, and generally government-funded, professions of health and social work, and 8% in the arts, entertainment and leisure, again, often directly or indirectly employed through local authority funding.

I hope that Oxford City Council will be resolute in its rejection of zero-hours contracts, as proposed in this motion, in advance of the national and EU-level action which has never been more urgent to prevent their burgeoning use in the UK and elsewhere".

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