

LABOUR'S NEW DEAL FOR WORKING PEOPLE



Labour  Unions

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Forewords

From day one, a Labour government will strengthen workers' rights and make Britain work for working for people.

The Labour Party has a long and proud history of being the Party not just of working people but for working people. Everyone deserves a job they can live on and build a life on, no matter who they are or what job they do. Our ambition to ensure a fair day's pay for a day's work is core to our values. We all deserve high-quality, secure, rewarding jobs. That is why Labour in power will secure a New Deal for Working People.

Boosting people's income is not just the right thing for them – it is the right thing for our economy. Better pay would end the self-defeating low wage, low investment, and low productivity cycle that the country has been trapped in for the last decade. It will also help to tackle the cost of living crisis by ensuring everyone is paid enough to live on.

Labour will strengthen the protections afforded to all workers by banning zero-hours contracts, outlawing bogus self-employment; and ending qualifying periods for basic rights, which leave working people waiting up to two years for basic protections. This will include unfair dismissal, sick pay, and parental leave, giving working people under Labour rights at work from day one.

Labour's mission is to create more and better jobs that are closer to home, so people have the real choices that they have been denied for far too long.

Our country remains riven by inequalities which Labour is focused on fixing – to ensure the working people who create our nation's wealth get their fair share of it. Rather than stacking the



odds against working parents, Labour will deliver stronger family-friendly rights.

Restrictions on union activity are holding back living standards and the economy. We will update trade union legislation so it is fit for a modern economy and empower working people to collectively secure fair pay, terms and conditions.

The Conservatives have failed our country, but Labour's approach offers people real help right now and a vision for the future of work where working people enjoy dignity, gain security, receive respect, and are supported to prosper.

We are ambitious for our country's future. Together we'll build a Britain that works for working people.

A handwritten signature in white ink that reads "Rayner". The signature is stylized, with a large, flowing 'A' and a long, sweeping underline.

Rt Hon Angela Rayner MP
Deputy Leader of the Labour Party
Shadow Secretary of State for the Future of Work

When this Employment Rights Green Paper – offering a New Deal for Working People – was first launched, at a fringe meeting hosted by Labour Unions and Thompsons solicitors in the Grand Hotel in Brighton during the Labour Party conference last year, Andy McDonald, who was then the Shadow Secretary of State for Employment Rights and Protections, and who chaired the party's Power in the Workplace Taskforce, which drew up the document, was cheered to the rafters when he set out this vision for the future.

Speakers that evening – including Labour leader Keir Starmer, deputy leader Angela Rayner, Sadiq Khan, Anneliese Dodds, Jo Stevens, Barry Gardiner, Ian Lavery and senior representatives of affiliated trade unions – all praised the Green Paper as they underlined the importance of trade unions to a Labour Party which was forged in the factories and the foundries of industrial Britain.

In February 1900, 129 delegates representing a broad church of working-class and left-wing opinion – 'more Methodism than Marxism', from trade union activists to the Independent Labour Party, the Social Democratic Federation, and the Fabian Society – met at the Congregational Memorial Hall on Farringdon Street, just around the corner from what is now the ASLEF head office, to set up the Labour Representation Committee.

They approved a plan, proposed by Keir Hardie, to get working people into Parliament to 'promote legislation in the direct interests of labour' – meaning working men and women impatient for better pay and working conditions, proper holidays, decent pensions, and unemployment benefit when out of work. The Labour Representation Committee won 29 seats at the general election of 1906 – when its MPs changed its name to the Labour Party – and 18 years later, in 1924, they formed the first Labour government.

The party, of course, now as then, is a broad church. But, at its heart, this party – our party – is here to support working people who are trying to



protect their jobs, their pensions (which are really deferred wages), and their terms and conditions. The 800 people illegally fired by P&O earlier this year – like the six farm workers at Tolpuddle in Dorset sentenced to seven years' transportation in 1834 for having the temerity to form a trade union to protest about cuts in wages – need and deserve the protection of this party, and the protection offered in A New Deal for Working People.

Some people have talked, this year, of a 'summer of discontent'. What I have seen is a 'summer of solidarity' as working people ask for an increase in salary to keep pace with the rise in the cost of living. I believe the Labour Party and the labour movement should be one movement and I want to thank Angela Rayner for continuing to push this Green Paper, as the early delivery of A New Deal for Working People by a Labour government when we win power will go a long way to reinforcing that link.

A handwritten signature in white ink on a dark red background. The signature is stylized, with the first part resembling 'Mick' and the second part resembling 'Whelan'.

Mick Whelan
Chair of Labour Unions and
General Secretary, ASLEF

Introduction

Labour believes the vision outlined in this Green Paper will make Britain the best place to work, where working people are able to enjoy dignity and respect in their jobs whilst living fulfilled lives outside of their work. Now is a moment of change in our country. We want to build a Britain where people in every part of our country, regardless of their background, can get good quality jobs that are a source of pride, provide security, treat workers fairly, and pay a proper wage to live a good life on.

There is a clear consensus between economists, business and trade unions, that fair and decent conditions of work improve productivity, economic opportunity, health and wellbeing. We need to change from the self-defeating nature of the low wage, low investment, and low productivity cycle that the country has been trapped in for the last decade. We need to make sure that working people, who create our nation's wealth, are getting their fair share of it. We know that more secure, flexible and better paid work means healthier people, more settled families, better communities and thriving businesses. Workers, employers and Government working in partnership will create a prosperous economy that works for everyone.

Labour's New Deal for Working People would put us on a better course, with quality jobs and higher pay creating a virtuous cycle of higher demand, higher investment, boosted productivity, and improved skills. The strengthening of individual and collective rights will allow for a dynamic response to the great challenges of the future, enabling workers and the country to flourish and seize these new opportunities.

The Conservatives have overseen stalling wages, high inequality and increasing levels of poverty. Working people are struggling to make ends meet, child poverty has risen dramatically, in-work poverty is at a record high with one in six working households in poverty, millions of people are stuck in insecure work, workers are struggling to get the training they need to progress their careers, there is widespread inequality and discrimination in the workplace, and many parents tell us they are working more than one job to get by and are not getting enough time with their family. These are fundamental problems with our economy and labour market – we need a new approach to fix them.

It is clear that the benefits of economic growth and the pain of economic decline have not been shared equally. The wealthiest in our society have seen their wealth and incomes grow, whilst those on middle and low incomes have seen real terms cuts to their take home pay. Recent Government policies and decisions have ingrained the weakness of employment rights and imbalances of power in the workplace. This is harming our prosperity as individuals and as a nation, the UK's 31 million workers deserve a new deal.

This Green Paper will consider how we can address pay, security, inequality, and discrimination. We will outline the Labour view on how best to improve employment rights in each of these areas and how to ensure working people have the best deal through policies that mean businesses and workers thrive. This work is only the beginning, and the Labour Party will continue to work with trade unions, workers, and employers to build on these commitments from now until the next General Election.

**Working people cannot afford more decline.
It is time for change.**

Raising pay for all and ending in-work poverty

ALL JOBS SHOULD PAY ENOUGH TO SUPPORT A FAMILY AND ALLOW PEOPLE TO LEAD DECENT, HAPPY, FULFILLING LIVES.

Since the Tories came to power, in-work poverty, low pay, and financial insecurity have become rampant.

Incomes have stagnated and many workers have experienced real terms pay decline. In-work poverty has hit new highs, with one in six working households in poverty. Wages suffered a decade of stagnation – the worst in over a century.

Families across the country racked up debt and ran down savings, with millions unable to afford an unexpected one-off payment or loss of income.

This has been exacerbated by the pandemic, as data from the Trussell Trust showed food bank usage soaring, with families turning to emergency food parcels for the first time.

Over a third of UK households are one missed paycheck or unexpected expense from financial ruin, being unable to pay their bills, put food on the table and meet their housing costs.

Labour believes everyone should share in the wealth they create, have a decent standard of living, with enough left over for an enjoyable life and savings for the future. Labour's plan will ensure no worker suffers financial insecurity and all workers are properly rewarded for their work.

LABOUR WILL RAISE WAGES FOR WORKERS AND END IN-WORK POVERTY

The next Labour Government will eradicate in-work poverty by tackling the structural causes of poverty and inequality.

Labour will continue to assess how to deliver its commitment to raising the living wage to ensure that it is adequate and addresses the rise in the cost of living and inflation.

Labour is demanding that the minimum wage is immediately raised to at least £10 per hour for all workers and will continue to evaluate what a real living wage should be.

Labour will continue to assess how to deliver its commitment to raising the National Living Wage to ensure that it is adequate and addresses the rise in the cost of living and inflation since 2019.

The role of the Low Pay Commission will be reformed so that wage floor policy continues to be evidence-based but is as active as it can be in driving up wages.

Labour will ban unpaid internships except when they are part of an education or training course. Labour will ensure travel time in sectors with multiple working sites is paid. Labour will take action on 'sleep over' hours in certain sectors, such as social care.

LABOUR WILL DELIVER A SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM THAT PROVIDES A SAFETY NET FOR ALL

A Labour Government will replace Universal Credit with a social security system that allows low-income earners on benefits to keep more of their take-home pay, and which offers a safety net for all.

Labour will raise Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) and make it available all workers, including the self-employed and those on low wages currently cut out by the lower earnings limit for eligibility.

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LABOUR WILL USE PUBLIC PROCUREMENT TO SUPPORT GOOD WORK

Evidence shows that in-sourcing delivers better value for money, as well as providing greater efficiency, transparency, accountability, and opportunities to achieve wider social goals such as the fair treatment of workers. This is why Labour will end the presumption in favour of outsourcing and oversee the biggest wave of insourcing of public services for a generation.

Labour will use procurement to promote high standards. We will choose to do business with companies that treat their workers well, recognise trade unions and have provision for collective bargaining arrangements and fair wages clauses; have effective equality policies; adhere to high environmental standards; and are fully tax compliant.

We will use the public purse to support the businesses that strengthen local jobs and supply chains.

To this end, Labour will make, buy, and sell more in Britain to raise standards, awarding more public contracts to British businesses and bringing the jobs of the future to the UK.

WHEN WORKERS ARE EMPOWERED TO ACT AS A COLLECTIVE, THEY ARE ABLE TO SECURE BETTER PAY AND CONDITIONS

When acting alone, workers are often denied their fair share – but when backed by the collective power of their colleagues and trade unions, they can better secure their share of the wealth they helped to create. The labour movement's historic achievements have come through giving people power and a voice at work by means of collective action and collective representation.

Labour believes strong collective bargaining rights and institutions at all levels are key to tackling the problems of insecurity, inequality, discrimination, enforcement, low pay, and other issues identified in this Green Paper.

Collective bargaining is still the defining feature of industrial relations in some of the most successful economies in Europe, with many having collective bargaining agreements covering well over three quarters of their workforce.

Evidence from other countries shows collective bargaining drives up pay and living standards whilst reducing inequality. It ensures workers share in economic growth and allows workplaces and sectors to adapt better to new technologies and trends. The New

Zealand Labour Government has recently brought in collective bargaining policies to improve standards for all.

LABOUR WILL ESTABLISH FAIR PAY AGREEMENTS ACROSS THE ECONOMY

Labour will empower workers to act collectively via the roll-out of Fair Pay Agreements.

Fair Pay Agreements will be negotiated through sectoral collective bargaining, reversing the decades-long decline in collective bargaining coverage. Worker representatives and employer representatives would be brought together to negotiate Fair Pay Agreements that establish minimum terms and conditions, which would be binding on all employers and workers in the sector.

The Fair Pay Agreements would cover a wide range of issues including, but not limited to, pay and pensions, working time and holidays, training, work organisation, diversity and inclusion, health and safety, and the deployment of new technologies.

Fair pay agreements – and the enforcement of national agreements in sectors where they exist – would effectively form a ‘floor’ across industries that would give working people a real voice, as well as preventing exploitative employers undercutting the many excellent employers in a sector.

These agreements would not remove the need for minimum standards set down in legislation but would build upon these statutory standards and ensure that minimum rights do not become the maximum.

Sectoral collective bargaining to negotiate Fair Pay Agreements is the norm in many successful, developed economies. Other countries are beginning to roll out Fair Pay Agreements as a solution to rising inequality and new economic challenges.

Labour will consult widely on the design and implementation of Fair Pay Agreements, learning from those economies where they already operate successfully.

FAIR PAY AGREEMENTS WILL HELP THE ECONOMY ADAPT TO A CHANGING WORLD OF WORK

The pandemic has also sped up many existing trends in the world of work. The advent of new technologies and new business models look set to transform the working lives of many.

Many of these changes, such as new digital technologies and homeworking, present a chance to make services more accessible, and can improve productivity.

However, we have seen during the pandemic that some technologies have accelerated bad employment practices, driving down standards and damaging the wellbeing of workers. Workplace surveillance technologies such as GPS tracking, webcam monitoring and click monitoring, encroach on the autonomy and privacy of workers.

Strong collective bargaining mechanisms and institutions empower workers and ensure that they have a proper say in how any technologies or structures are implemented.

Where implemented properly, these exciting new technologies could be mutually beneficial for employers and employees, driving up productivity and increasing wages. The crisis has also shown that strong collective bargaining institutions can deliver better policy responses to emerging challenges, as employers across sectors can negotiate policies that better align with their needs and circumstances.

For instance, collective bargaining allows different employers and industries to negotiate a tailored response to the rise of homeworking. This provides them with the flexibility to capture the economic benefits and prevent some of the less-welcome consequences on work-life balance.

Where it exists in the UK, collective bargaining helped some sectors quickly respond to new challenges posed by the pandemic. Firefighters, for instance, were able to negotiate an agreement quickly to help with vital services, assisting ambulance crews and delivering food and medicine to the vulnerable.



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Secure and safe work

GROWTH IN INSECURE FORMS OF WORK

The UK allocates rights to workers by organising them into three different categories, 'worker', 'employee', and 'self-employed', each with a separate legal definition and set of accompanying rights.

The boundaries between the different categories are complex and defined in case law, making it very difficult for individual workers to know their true legal status. Workers often do not know their legal rights and any rights are harder to enforce.

Certain employers can actively exploit the complexity by falsely putting workers in a category with fewer rights, exemplified by some companies operating in the gig-economy.

Many people work like regular employees – in uniform, full time, with work set entirely by management – but are falsely classified as self-employed workers doing freelance work for that company.

As well as denying people their legal rights, this also undercuts all the good employers in the sector that chose to ensure their employees have the rights they are entitled to.

Throughout the pandemic, workers in insecure roles without proper rights and protections have kept the country on its feet. They worked on the front line, caring for society's most vulnerable, keeping essential services running and keeping food on shop shelves.

The Living Wage Foundation estimates that over a million key workers are in insecure work, lacking basic rights and protections, with one in nine in insecure work across the economy as a whole. They have been more likely to lose hours and pay, and more likely to get ill with Covid-19.

We need a system which ensure that all workers know their rights and have the comfort of protection at work. Working people ensure that our country keeps moving, and they deserve a base level of protection that provides security and certainty.

LABOUR WILL CREATE A SINGLE STATUS OF 'WORKER'

Labour will ensure that this injustice is rectified by creating a single status of 'worker' for all but the genuinely self-employed.

All workers, regardless of sector, wage, or contract type, will be afforded the same basic rights and protections. This includes rights to sick pay, holiday pay, parental leave, protection against unfair dismissal and many others.

By creating a simple, single status for all, Labour will also clamp down on bogus self-employment. Unscrupulous employers will no longer be able to treat their staff like regular employees whilst falsely claiming they are not, denying staff rights they are owed as employees. The many good businesses that treat workers well will not be undercut by those that chose to use loopholes in the system to deny workers their rights.

Many of the care workers, warehouse operators, delivery drivers and hospitality staff that have kept the country going through the pandemic will all be afforded this new single status of worker, benefiting from many of the rights and protections they have been denied.

LABOUR WILL GIVE ALL WORKERS DAY ONE RIGHTS ON THE JOB

Labour will also strengthen the protections afforded to all workers by ending the qualifying periods for basic rights.

The current arbitrary system leaves workers waiting up to two years to access some basic rights, including protection against some types of unfair dismissal.

Labour will end this arbitrary system and scrap qualifying time for basic rights, such as unfair dismissal, sick pay, and parental leave.

LABOUR WILL STRENGTHEN RIGHTS AND PROTECTIONS FOR WORKERS AND THE SELF-EMPLOYED

With a new single status of worker, millions more working people will benefit from existing rights and protections, but these need to be made stronger for all workers.

Labour will strengthen the existing set of rights and protections, including for pregnant workers, whistle-blowers, workers made redundant, workers making unfair dismissal claims and workers subject to TUPE processes.

Labour will increase Statutory Sick Pay (SSP), ensuring that we never again face a situation where workers have to choose between their health and financial hardship. Labour will also make it available to all workers, including the self-employed.

Labour will also act to strengthen protections for the self-employed. Many self-employed workers suffer from the same problems of insecurity, uncertainty, and a lack of basic rights.

WORK SHOULD PROVIDE A SECURE, STABLE INCOME TO BUILD A GOOD LIFE AND PLAN FOR THE FUTURE

For many, work is increasingly insecure, precarious and unpredictable. They have little idea when they will be working and how much they will be earning a few weeks ahead, creating stress and leaving them without the financial security to plan for themselves or their family.

Flexibility is too often 'one-sided' with workers expected to be completely flexible to the demands of their employer, working when and where they are asked to, with no certainty on how this will change day by day or week by week.

For these workers, receiving basic rights and protections as part of a new single status of 'worker' only solves part of the problem.

Greater security of working hours and standard working patterns would allow people to plan their family life better around their work. Children would be able to spend more time with their parents. The burden on the mental health of workers, anxious from week to week, would be lifted and people could predictably plan their futures.

LABOUR WILL BAN ZERO HOURS CONTRACTS AND GIVE WORKERS PREDICTABLE CONTRACTS

Labour will end 'one sided' flexibility and ensure all jobs provide a baseline level of security and predictability.

Labour will ban zero hours contracts and contracts without a minimum number of guaranteed hours. We will also ensure anyone working regular hours for twelve weeks or more will gain a right to a regular contract to reflect those hours normally worked.

Labour will also ensure all workers get reasonable notice of any change in shifts or working time, with wages for any shifts cancelled without appropriate notice being paid to workers in full.

These proposals will not prevent firms from operating flexible workforces or varying shift patterns, but will ensure a baseline level of security and predictability. Not every employer will want or need to have all its staff on fixed, full-time contracts, but these proposals will ensure workers do not have to shoulder the sole burden for unexpected and last-minute changes to working schedules.

FIRE AND REHIRE HAS SPREAD LIKE WILDFIRE AS THE GOVERNMENT DRAGS ITS FEET

'Fire and rehire' is the practice of an employer making an employee redundant and then re-engaging them on reduced terms and conditions.

The threat of fire and rehire is often enough for employers to bully employees into 'voluntarily' agreeing to lower pay and reduced terms and conditions. The use of fire and rehire is not a new phenomenon. However, it has gained prominence and become more widespread during the pandemic, in both the public and private sector.

A TUC poll estimated that 1 in 10 workers – almost 3 million people – have been subjected to fire and rehire tactics since first lockdown. Young workers, Black, Asian, and minority ethnic workers, and those on low pay have been disproportionately impacted. Fire and rehire also occurs in the public sector, with some recent examples of Government owned bodies using the tactic.

The Prime Minister has offered only warm words. Describing the practice as 'unacceptable' is not enough. The Government has dragged its feet and done nothing to prevent it.

Outlawing fire and rehire means workers can be safe in the knowledge that terms and conditions negotiated in good faith can't be ripped up under threat of dismissal. Workers will be able to plan and save for the future with security in their pay and terms. Good employers will also know that they will not be undercut by competitors who only engage staff under threat of the sack.

The practice has been used by companies that have received large amounts of financial support from the Government throughout the pandemic. The Government could have required employers not to use fire and rehire tactics as a condition of its support, but chose not to.

LABOUR WILL OUTLAW FIRE AND REHIRE

Labour opposes fire and rehire and a Labour Government will act to end it.

The comprehensive proposals to strengthen collective and individual rights outlined in this Green Paper go part of the way to doing this. In addition, there are three strands of employment regulation that need updating.

The first is improving information and consultation procedures, to make employers consult and reach agreements about contractual changes with their workforce.

The second is adapting unfair dismissal and redundancy legislation to prevent workers being dismissed for failing to agree a worse contract.

The final area is to ensure that notice and ballot requirements on trade union activity do not inhibit defensive action to protect terms and conditions of employment in situations where fire and rehire tactics are being implemented.

THE UK'S LONG-HOURS CULTURE AND STRAINED WORK-LIFE BALANCE

Work should enable us all to pursue fulfilling personal lives.

The obstacles to a good work-life balance differ greatly across the economy: for some work comes to dominate their lives through long working hours or an expectation to work outside of their paid working hours. For others, it is a lack of certainty and control over when they work – and what they will earn – which prevents them from being able to plan their life and choose how to spend their time. For a good work-life balance, both must be addressed.

The UK has some of the longest working hours in Europe, with a long-hours culture that contributes to poor physical and mental health, an increased risk of accidents at work, and decreased productivity. Labour is committed to achieving a better work-life balance while raising pay.

Good work-life balance benefits everyone. It allows workers to balance their lives and do their job well, whilst employers get happier and more productive staff that they are able to retain.

LABOUR WILL MAKE FLEXIBLE WORKING A DAY ONE RIGHT

Labour will ensure all workers have the opportunity to benefit from flexible working. The right to flexible working for all workers will be a default from day one, with employers required to accommodate this as far as is reasonable.

A Labour Government would support small- and medium-sized businesses to adapt to flexible working practices and increase the uptake of flexible working.

LABOUR WILL BRING IN THE 'RIGHT TO SWITCH OFF' AND WORK AUTONOMOUSLY

Labour will bring in the 'right to switch off', so working from home does not become homes turning into 24/7 offices. Workers will have a new right to disconnect from work outside of working hours and not be contacted by their employer outside of working hours.

Labour will introduce new rights to protect workers from remote surveillance. Rights and protections must keep pace with the changing nature of work and technological advancements. At a minimum Labour will ensure that proposals to introduce surveillance technologies would be subject to consultation and agreement of trade unions or elected staff representatives where there is no trade union.

LABOUR WILL BRING ABOUT STRONGER FAMILY-FRIENDLY RIGHTS

Existing policies to support family life are weak and often not available to all workers.

Labour is committed to extending statutory maternity and paternity leave, introducing the right to bereavement leave and strengthening protections for pregnant women by making it unlawful to dismiss a woman who is pregnant for six months after her return, except in specific circumstances.

A Labour Government would also urgently review the failed shared Parental Leave system, with reforms to incentivise sharing of leave.

EMPOWERING WORKING PEOPLE THROUGH TRADE UNIONS

Unionised workplaces, working hand in hand with employers, are more likely to provide decent pay, good training, and benefits, such as holiday and sick pay, above the statutory minimum.

Trade unions have reaffirmed their value throughout the pandemic, from winning the furlough scheme, to agreeing safe working conditions with employers. They have also kept the country going with agreements and campaigns in key sectors. The imbalance of power between individual workers and employers means that it is essential that workers are able to band together to improve their bargaining power.

The right of unions to operate effectively in the workplace, in each sector of the economy is vital for achieving fairness, dignity and democracy at work for all.

RESTRICTIONS ON TRADE UNION ACTIVITY ARE HOLDING BACK LIVING STANDARDS AND THE ECONOMY

Unions have been subjected to increasingly restrictive rules, most recently in the Trade Union Act 2016, which included arbitrary thresholds in industrial action ballots; complicated balloting and notice rules designed to make industrial action and union organising more difficult; and new restrictions on pickets.

Even before the Trade Union Act came into force, the UK already had one of the most regulated systems of industrial action in the world, with unions having to comply with complex and often unnecessary legal requirements.

These restrictions mean workers are denied their fair share of the wealth they create, whilst a lack of collective representation has led to a race to the bottom that damages the economy and hampers long-term growth. The principle of solidarity of workers being able to support each other is an important democratic freedom, and is vital to a healthy economy and society.

The law regulating trade union activity has also not kept pace with changes in new technology and ways of working, such as the increased use of electronic communication, or the rise of the gig economy.

LABOUR WILL UPDATE TRADE UNION LEGISLATION SO IT IS FIT FOR A MODERN ECONOMY

Labour is committed to strengthening the rights of working people by empowering workers to organise collectively through trade unions. Labour believes this is the most effective way to tackle the challenges identified in this Green Paper.

Labour is committed to repealing anti-trade union legislation which removes workers' rights, including the Trade Union Act 2016, in order to remove unnecessary restrictions on trade union activity. Labour will also strengthen trade unions' right of entry to workplaces to organise, meet and represent their members and potential members, and to contact remote workers.

Labour will simplify the process of union recognition and establish a reasonable right of entry to organise in workplaces. Labour also will end the current complexity and remove barriers to workers being collectively represented by a recognised trade union in their workplace.

The law governing trade union statutory ballots is antiquated and fails to recognise the huge steps trade unions have made to engage and communicate with members. The current system of only allowing statutory trade union ballots via the post is costly for trade unions and their member and significantly impacts turnout.

Labour will allow trade unions to use secure electronic and workplace ballots, simplifying the law around union recognition, and giving union reps adequate time off for union duties.

Labour will create new rights and protections for trade unions to undertake their work, strengthening protections of trade union representatives against unfair dismissal and union members from intimidation, harassment, threats, and blacklisting.

Labour will simplify the law around statutory recognition thresholds, so that working people have a realistic and meaningful right to organise through trade unions. Labour will look at lowering the threshold, which is too high in many large firms. Labour will also consult on and consider whether unions should automatically be entitled to statutory recognition where 50% or more workers in a bargaining unit are members.

Labour will ensure there is sufficient facilities time for all trade union reps so that they have capacity to represent and defend workers, negotiate with employers and train. The laws regulating industrial action should ensure that UK law complies in every respect with the international obligations ratified by the UK, including those of the International Labour Organization and the European Social Charter, as reiterated in the Trade and Cooperation Agreement with the European Union.

Labour will introduce a new duty on employers to inform all new employees of their right to join a union, and to inform all staff of this on a regular basis.

Labour will examine how the requirement to give notice of industrial action should be simplified and ensure it reflects the dynamic nature of disputes.



Labour is committed to repealing anti-trade union legislation which removes workers' rights, including the Trade Union Act 2016, in order to remove unnecessary restrictions on trade union activity.

ENFORCING SAFE AND HEALTHY WORKPLACES

Rights and protections are only worth the paper they are written on if they are enforced.

The Health and Safety Executive and local authorities have lost funding of more than 50% over the past decade, with workplaces now likely to be proactively inspected only once every 250 years.

Meanwhile, a decade of cuts means the Employment Tribunal system is at breaking point, with some workers facing up to two years waiting time for their legal redress.

The weakness of the UK's enforcement regime has been laid bare by the pandemic. Under-resourced and over-stretched agencies have struggled to enforce health and safety regulations, leading to preventable deaths and millions suffering stress, depression, or anxiety.

This includes the millions of self-employed workers that are not entitled to health and safety representatives, and are not protected from penalty if they raise health and safety concerns.

Work should be a place where people feel safe and secure. A good job should improve wellbeing, providing purpose, fulfilment and opportunities to develop.

Labour's plans to overhaul enforcement will foster healthy and safe working environments, supporting the well-being of workers and boosting their long-term physical and mental health. It will also ensure firms cannot compete in a 'race to the bottom' on working conditions, cutting corners on health and safety to increase margins.

LABOUR WILL ESTABLISH A SINGLE ENFORCEMENT BODY TO PROTECT WORKERS

Labour will establish and properly fund a single enforcement body (SEB) to enforce workers' rights.

The new body will be given extensive powers to inspect workplaces and bring prosecutions and civil proceedings on workers' behalf relating to health and safety, minimum wage, worker exploitation, and discriminatory practices.

Labour will ensure that there are enough inspectors employed in the system via the SEB so that they can undertake unannounced inspections and follow up on anonymous reports.

LABOUR WILL STRENGTHEN THE LAW TO ENFORCE WORKPLACE RIGHTS

Trade union health and safety reps play a vital role in keeping workers safe and have demonstrated this, no more so than through their work during the pandemic. Labour will explore how to utilise the knowledge and experience of trade unions to maintain healthy and safe workplaces everywhere.

Labour will allow workers to bring civil cases for breaches of statutory health and safety regulation and defend workers' ability to recover legal representation costs from negligent employers.

Labour will extend the time period for bringing claims to Employment Tribunals. There will be tougher penalties for those who break the law or fail to comply with tribunal orders, including personal liability for those that were directors of companies at the time.

Caps which limit the amount of compensation that workers can receive are unfair and discourage companies from following the law. Labour will ensure that workers will receive full compensation, without statutory limits, if they suffer loss because of employers' breaches of the law.

LABOUR WILL BRING IN PROTECTIONS FOR THE SELF-EMPLOYED

The rights and protections for those who are genuinely self-employed will be enhanced.

Labour will ensure the self-employed have the right to withdraw their labour due to immediate health

and safety risk, strengthen blacklisting protection for self-employed workers who raise health and safety concerns, and extend the rights to have a health and safety representative at work to self-employed workers. This will give the self-employed the same protections as those who are employed.

LABOUR WILL TACKLE CRIMINAL LABOUR EXPLOITATION

Labour will introduce legislation to provide joint and several liability between companies across the supply chain to ensure there is accountability if slavery or criminal labour exploitation is uncovered at any stage in the production process.

Through naming and shaming, businesses will also be encouraged to check their supply chain, with appropriate penalties for deliberate and knowing use of slavery or criminal labour exploitation in supply chains.

LABOUR WILL PUT MENTAL HEALTH ON A PAR WITH PHYSICAL HEALTH IN OUR WORKPLACES

Labour will review the law on health and safety at work to revise outdated legislation and make it fit for now and the future.

Labour will raise awareness of neurodiversity in the workplace and across wider society. Labour will review provision for stress, mental health, the impact of new technology and new materials, and the impact of emerging health and lifestyle issues such as long Covid.

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Labour opposes fire and rehire and a Labour Government will act to end it. Outlawing fire and rehire means workers can be safe in the knowledge that terms and conditions negotiated in good faith can't be ripped up under threat of dismissal. Workers will be able to plan and save for the future with security in their pay and terms.

Tackling discrimination and workplace inequalities

Not all workers experience the problems outlined above equally. The stark inequalities and injustices present in our society are also played out in the workplace. Legislation that empowers and protects workers is therefore key to addressing inequalities in the workplace and society at large.

We know the scale and extent of the structural barriers that prevent people from participating in a society which is free and fair, and which permeate into the treatment of workers in their workplace.

We want to see workplaces where everyone, regardless of their background, is able to feel secure, develop themselves, and build a good life. Working people in Britain come from all walks of life and they each have their own unique circumstances. The legislation that governs their working life must enable equality.

Labour is committed to introducing statutory rights for trade union equalities reps to ensure they have the time to support colleagues facing inequalities and discrimination and contribute to positive changes in workplaces.

The policies in this paper will form part of a broader programme to end social inequalities and address structural barriers.

LABOUR WILL TACKLE WORKPLACE HARASSMENT

The scale of sexual harassment experienced by sections of the workforce is shocking. 1 in 2 women and 7 out of 10 LGBT+ workers have experienced sexual harassment at work.

Labour will also require employers to create and maintain workplaces and working conditions free from harassment, including by third parties.

LABOUR WILL GIVE THOSE WITH CARING RESPONSIBILITIES GREATER PROTECTIONS

Labour will strengthen the rights of workers to respond to family emergencies with paid family and carers' leave, the right to have flexible working, and greater ability for workers to enforce these rights.

LABOUR WILL ACT TO CLOSE GENDER, ETHNICITY AND DISABILITY PAY GAPS

Structural inequalities at work and in wider society contribute to large and stubborn gaps in pay between different workers. Labour will bring forward a number of measures to end these gender, ethnicity and disability pay gaps.

Labour will permit equal pay comparisons across employers where men and women carry out comparable work. Labour will enforce the requirement to report and eliminate pay gaps with employers required to devise and implement plans to eradicate these inequalities.

Labour will ensure outsourced workers are included in employers' gender pay gap reporting and pay ratio reporting.

The publication of ethnicity pay gaps will be made mandatory for firms with more than 250 staff, to mirror gender pay gap reporting, following years of inaction from the Government.

LABOUR WILL TACKLE SOCIO-ECONOMIC DISCRIMINATION AT WORK

Labour will address socio-economic inequalities in the workplace by enacting the socio-economic duty in the Equality Act 2010. This will require the Government and public sector to deliver better outcomes for lower income people, and to make narrowing and eliminating inequality a priority.



The stark inequalities and injustices present in our society are also played out in the workplace. Legislation that empowers and protects workers is therefore key to addressing inequalities in the workplace and society at large.

Conclusion

There must be a fundamental change in our economy, and for this to happen the world of work must be fundamentally changed.

The agenda set out in this Employment Rights Green Paper will deliver a New Deal for Working People.

As a country, we are at a fork in the road.

As we emerge from the pandemic, there is a choice: the Government wants to continue with insecure and exploitative employment, while Labour wishes to have a new partnership with employers and trade unions to create jobs and build a society where everyone is entitled to fair pay, job security and dignity at work. To achieve this, workers must have a comprehensive set of rights and protections with trade unions empowered to organise, bargain and win for working people.

Fair and decent work that provides security, improves our national productivity, increases economic opportunity, and protects health is what we all deserve. It is entirely possible to have a future economy that rebalances wealth and power to serve the needs of working people, and Labour will deliver that.

Work should be a pillar upon which we can build our lives. Everyone needs and deserves improved living standards and economic security. This Employment Rights Green Paper sets out a future Labour Government's plan to ensure everyone is entitled to that, as part of a New Deal for Working People.

Within 100 Days

A Labour Government will write this plan into law within 100 days of taking office.

The next Labour Government will use all the tools at its disposal to deliver better jobs and better work for everyone in Britain. That work will start with our New Deal for Working People, which we will sign into law through an Employment Bill within the first 100 days of the next Labour Government to help deliver an economy built on fair pay, job security, dignity and equality at work.

When acting alone, workers are often denied their fair share – but when backed by the collective power of their colleagues and trade unions, they can better secure their share of the wealth they helped to create.

The labour movement's historic achievements have come through giving people power and a voice at work by means of collective action and collective representation.

Labour is committed to strengthening the rights of working people by empowering workers to organise collectively through trade unions.

Labour's Employment Rights Green Paper – A New Deal For Working People

Labour  Unions

labourunions.org.uk/newdeal