

Zero Hours Contracts Report

Executive Summary



In the summer of 2015 Citizens Advice Eastbourne carried out a survey of clients working on zero hours contracts to find out about the impact on their day to day lives. Over the past 10 years these contracts have become more and more prevalent in the job market, to the point where they have become the expected norm for a majority of people working in lower paid jobs. Zero hours contracts have their place, for ad hoc projects like consultancy, covering absences, etc.

The survey has shown the negative impact zero hours contracts have on people and we have come up with a series of recommendations for employers in Eastbourne.

Comments from the survey included:

- couldn't get a mortgage
- had to find guarantor to rent
- struggled to pay bills
- trouble finding accommodation
- should be given 1 week's notice of hours
- no guaranteed hours
- hard to predict earnings
- lack of financial stability
- juggling family life
- can be laid off half day when whole day promised
- holiday pay but not sick pay
- absence agreed only if covered

We think people need the stability and security provided by a job with full employment rights and ultimately this is better for employers too. We have come up with a pledge, which we are asking Eastbourne employers to sign, saying zero hours contracts won't be used routinely. This will give the full employment rights people are entitled to as part of being a good employer.

Many employers do not realise that a zero hours contract may not be legal if it does not correctly reflect the nature of the working relationship and new government guidance (issued in October 2015) helps make this clear. Further information available here: www.gov.uk/government/publications/zero-hours-contracts-guidance-for-employers/zero-hours-contracts-guidance-for-employers

We are hopeful that many employers in the town will sign up to this pledge and improve the lives of their staff. This includes many low paid workers in the care industry, hotels and restaurants, hospitals and shops which are such an essential part of our town. Eastbourne is proud of being a popular tourist attraction and the people employed to keep this running should be valued and rewarded.

Contracts of Employment – The Pledge

I agree not to use zero-hours contracts routinely and only to use them when they correctly reflect the nature of employment.

When issuing contracts of employment I will consider other options first such as permanent and fixed term contracts with a specified number of hours per week.

I agree that zero-hours contracts should only be used where the working hours are unpredictable and irregular, for example, emergency cover, ad hoc pieces of work or one-off projects such as consultancy.

Signed _____

Organisation _____

Job Title _____

Date _____

When completed please send to:

Citizens Advice Bureau, Unit 6 Highlight House, 8 St Leonards Road, Eastbourne, BN21 3UH

Or scan and email to : pledge@eastbournecab.co.uk