**The rise of the “gig” economy:**

**The number of workers at risk of missing out on key protections is up 84% since 2006:**

3.2 million UK workers (1 in 10) are now in precarious work – and the number of workers at risk of missing out on key employment protections has nearly doubled in a decade to 1.5 million (an increase of 700,000), according to a new TUC report published today (Thursday).

The report – *Living on the edge* – shows that 1.5 million people now risk missing out on protection from unfair dismissal and the right to redundancy pay (even if they have worked for two years or more for an employer). And nearly half a million (485,000) have no legal right to sick pay due to low pay.

*Living on the edge* also reveals that the pay penalty for some forms of precarious working has got worse over the last decade:

* **Zero-hours** workers now earn £3.80 less an hour than the average employee – a third less (34%), compared to 26% less in 2006. Hourly pay for zero-hours workers has increased by just 67p in the last decade
* **Self-employed** workers now have earnings 40% lower than those of employees, compared to 28% lower a decade ago.  One in three (34%) self-employed households earn less than £200 a week – over 1.2 million families.
* **Casual** workers still get paid nearly 40% less an hour than the average worker – no improvement on a decade ago.

The prime minister has called on Matthew Taylor to lead an independent review into how employment practices need to change in order to keep pace with modern business models; Living on the edge calls on the independent review of employment practices to strengthen legal protections for precarious workers.

The TUC believes that the Taylor review of employment practices should examine the following areas:

1. **Making sure everyone can access decent rights at work:**

The TUC believes that existing rights should be available to all those in work, not only those who qualify for ‘employee’ status. This includes family friendly rights, protection from unfair dismissal and the right to redundancy pay.

1. **Guarantee that self-employment is a choice made by the worker, not the employer:**

Employers should not be able to ‘opt-out’ of their employment and tax responsibilities simply by labelling someone as self-employed.  The TUC wants all workers to qualify for all workplace rights unless the employer can demonstrate the individual is genuinely self-employed.

1. **Secure protection for everyone when they cannot work.**

All workers, including those on low pay should be entitled to statutory sick pay and policymakers should look at extending other forms of support such as paternity pay.

1. **Ensure that workers can challenge bad employers in court**

Tribunal fees should be abolished. Since introducing fees of up to £1,200, the number of employment tribunal cases has fallen by over 9,000 a month.

1. **Strengthen workers’ ability to organise for better conditions at work**

Expanding union presence in workplaces is a vital route to tackling insecurity. A good start would be to make it easier for all workers, including those in precarious jobs, to be able to talk to a union rep.  Unions should therefore have a right to access workplaces or to meet with staff during working hours.

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