Under-employment up 16 per cent since 2010

The number of people who are under-employed in North East has increased by 16 per cent since 2010, according to new analysis published by the TUC last week.

The analysis shows that as well as unemployment rising in the region by 13,000 since the last election, under-employment has also gone up by over 20,000.

The current level of under-employment of 148,000 in the North East is over 50,000 higher than it was before the recession (91,000).

The TUC analysis of the Labour Force Survey shows that across the UK the number of people who count as under-employed – people working part-time because they  can’t get a full-time job, or wanting more hours in their current job – has increased for both employees and the self-employed.

While there has been a small recent fall in involuntarily part-time work (people working part-time because they can’t get a full-time job), the TUC analysis reveals that a rise in the number who want more hours in their existing job means that under-employment is still increasing.

Under-employment has risen by 16 per cent across the region, and the fastest increase since 2010 has been among self-employed workers.

There has been a 127 per cent (11,500) increase in the number of self-employed people in the North East who class themselves as under-employed since 2010, compared to an 8 per cent rise (9,200) for employees.

The TUC says the analysis shows that despite talk of a recovery, continual real wage falls mean that more people than ever are looking for extra hours to make ends meet.

Ministers have made much of the UK’s improving jobs figures as a sign that all is now well with the economy. But here in the North East we have suffered the double whammy of rising joblessness and under-employment.

There are now over 20,000 more people who would like to be working more hours than they are.

As the squeeze on pay continues, many people don’t have enough money for everyday essentials, let alone the cash to cover any unexpected emergencies. With no let up in their financial woes in sight, people are understandably looking to take on more hours just to keep the wolf from the door.

Without a decent pay rise and the creation of more permanent, secure jobs, under-employment is unlikely to fall any time soon.

**Beth Farhat**

**Northern TUC Regional Secretary**