

Submission to the Low Pay Commission on the National Minimum Wage—March 10th 2016

Fianna Fáil has always protected citizens in this state who are on low pay. We introduced the National Minimum Wage (NMW) Act in 2000 which gave all employees a legal statutory entitlement to a minimum wage. We suggested and welcomed the most recent increase to the minimum wage. This will allow workers to get some much needed breathing space and in itself will stimulate the economy by increased spending.

Ireland's recovery is still very dependent on outside events and the nearest challenge to it is the result of Brexit. If the people in Britain and Northern Ireland vote to leave the EU it will have a negative impact on business in Ireland and this will also impact on job creation. The most recent increase in the minimum wage had the correct balance between rewarding work, as well as sustaining and creating jobs. These principles have to be maintained.

Zero Hours contracts

Bringing clarity to work hours is as essential to creating decent jobs as increasing the rate that a worker is paid and helping vulnerable families reliant upon welfare. Workers in precarious zero hour contract positions face uncertainty every week, as to the hours they are required to do and this leads to a lack of security in relation to how much they are actually going to earn. On a broader level, low pay and casual working arrangements prevent people from getting mortgages, entering rental agreements and being able to make financial commitments. Tackling this is an essential part of our commitment to creating decent jobs as part of our vision for "An Ireland for all".

We support banning zero hour contracts by changing the remit of the Low Pay Commission to put forward legislation on banded-hour contracts for those on low pay. This will allow workers on low and zero hour contracts a minimum set of hours and the right to request more hours as practised in other larger retailers.

Implement the Living Wage across Government Departments

Establishing a “Living Wage” is an important measure in ensuring that works pays at all levels. An adequate living wage, which has been estimated at €11.50 an hour, is vital to attracting more people in the workforce. The living wage forms part of our commitment to creating decent jobs across the country. The government, as the largest employer in the country, should act as a role model in this regard. This will set a broader standard without placing an undue legislative burden upon employers struggling to keep down costs.