



23.02.22

## NUS-UKSI's response to committee consultation on Employment (Zero Hours Workers and Banded Weekly Working Hours) Bill

NUS-UKSI is strongly supportive of measures to regulate zero-hours contracts to ensure that they are not abused by employers. Zero-hours contracts can be useful in some circumstances, particularly for students who require flexible working hours. However, the imbalance of power between an employer and employee means that very often it is only the employer who is able to enjoy the full benefits of flexibility, while employees are afraid of turning down shifts in case they lose hours.

In response to the legislation:

- We welcome the proposal to introduce minimum hours bands. This provides some much needed certainty for individuals allowing them to more effectively plan their schedules and finances. We would highlight, however, that student workers often require different hours at different times of the year. A student who is comfortable working 12 hours per week during term time may seek to work more in holiday periods, or less during exam periods. Therefore, care should be taken to ensure that this measure does not disadvantage workers who require different working patterns throughout the year. NUS-UKSI previously recommended considering a minimum number of hours per year guaranteed to workers, which would allow for flexibility throughout a longer time period.
- We greatly welcome the proposal to introduction minimum payment for workers who are called in but then not given work. This can cause a significant amount of uncertainty and result in additional costs to workers, such as transport and childcare costs. Zero hours contract workers are often 'on call' all the time, waiting for the opportunity to be given work. This can cause a lot of disruption to their lives and cause significant stress. As well as protecting workers who are called in but not given work we would also support government considering if there is anything else which can be done to ensure that employers give due notice of upcoming work shifts as far as possible.
- We welcome the introduction of an effective ban on exclusivity clauses. We called for this in our response to the government consultation in 2014.