

PETER GIBSON MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

January 2023

Dear Constituent

Thank you for your email about workers' rights.

I have been assured that Government is committed to maintaining and enhancing workers' rights following the UK's departure from the EU. The Working Time Directive has been transposed into UK law through the Working Time Regulations 1998, and under the EU (Withdrawal) Act 2018 these and other Regulations have been retained.

The regulations provide that, subject to certain exceptions where the nature of the work makes it impractical, employees cannot work more than 48 hours a week averaged, normally, over a period of 17 weeks. It is possible for employees to opt out of this provision voluntarily and in writing, either indefinitely or for a specified period. Employers can request that an employee opts out but cannot terminate their employment or treat them unfairly if they decline.

Although concerns were raised following reports that the Government was planning to lower the standard of workers' rights, I am pleased that ministers have taken every opportunity to reassure and clarify that the Government has absolutely no intentions of doing this. On the contrary, the Government will work to protect and enhance workers' rights.

While employers and employees must be given the flexibility to arrange the terms and conditions of employment, all employers are expected to treat their workers fairly and in the spirit of partnership. I strongly condemn the use of 'fire and rehire' as a negotiating tactic. The Government introduced support schemes, such as the CJRS, to protect jobs and I welcomed the extensions to the scheme, including the final extension to the end of September 2021.

Ultimately, the UK has one of the best records on workers' rights in the world, going further than the EU in many areas, and I am determined to build on this progress. By further protecting workers, supporting businesses to comply with the law, and preventing them from being undercut by a minority of irresponsible employers, the UK can continue to have a high-wage, high-employment economy that works for everyone as we build back better from the pandemic.

The Government will not abandon our strong record on workers' rights; we have amongst the highest standards in the world and that will not change.

Once again, thank you for taking the time to contact me and if I can ever be of any further assistance to you then please do not hesitate to contact me again. If you would like to keep up to date with my activities as your Member of Parliament then please subscribe to my Darlington Matters newsletter using this link: www.petergibson.org/signup

Yours Sincerely
Peter Gibson

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