Everyday Work

By Rachel Reeves and Mary Reader

On behalf of GMB Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region

EVERYDAY WORK

The world of work is changing and for too many people the change is not for the better. 'Full employment' in 2020 means having 3 jobs. Job security is almost a nostalgic throwback to a different time and underemployment is the blight on our society that unemployment used to be.

GMB members work in every sector of the economy providing the essential everyday services that we all need and the goods we all consume. What exactly are they getting out of it? For trade unionists it's often a major challenge to secure a voice in their workplace let alone to help shape how their life at work is run, negotiate improvements in their terms and conditions and secure a proper reward for the work they do.

This report, based on the testimony of GMB members across Yorkshire and North Derbyshire from a wide range of occupations in the private and public sector, highlights just how far society has travelled away from recognising the value of work itself and the dignity it confers on working people. It's a major contribution to the debate about how we can restore fairness to everyday work, ensure workers are valued by employers and by society at large and properly rewarded and invested in as a consequence. Rachel Reeves and Mary Reader have brilliantly captured the reality of everyday work today and the impact that reality is having on working people and the economy.

GMB is a campaigning union which is committed to using its industrial bargaining strength and political activism to deliver for its members - wherever they work. This report sets out some of the challenges and solutions which our movement faces if we are to make a lasting change to the lives of working people in this country. It will form part of our ongoing campaign to do just that and we will ensure that its contents are widely discussed and debated in union branches and workplaces throughout the country.

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Rachel Reeves MP

Rachel Reeves was elected Member of Parliament for Leeds West in May 2010. Previously, she worked as an economist at the Bank of England, the British Embassy in Washington DC and latterly at Halifax Bank of Scotland. Between 2010-2015, Reeves served on the opposition frontbench as Shadow Pensions Minister, Shadow Chief Secretary to the Treasury and Shadow Secretary of State for Work and Pensions. Following the 2015 general election, Reeves joined the Treasury Select Committee and in July 2017 was elected Chair of the Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Select Committee.

Mary Reader

Mary Reader was a Researcher for Rachel Reeves at time of writing. She holds a First Class degree in Philosophy, Politics and Economics from the University of Oxford and a Master of Public Administration (Distinction) in Public and Social Policy from the London School of Economics (LSE). Mary is a Senior Researcher at the Education Policy Institute in their Social Mobility and Vulnerable Learners team, conducting quantitative research into the disadvantage gap, social exclusion and segregation within the education system. She also works at the Centre for Analysis of Social Exclusion (CASE) at the LSE, where she is co-authoring three papers with Dr Kitty Stewart and Dr Tania Burchardt.

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'What is the nature of the hope which, when it is present in work, makes it worth doing? It is threefold, I think – hope of rest, hope of product, hope of pleasure in the work itself' – William Morris, Useful Work vs. Useless Toil

Introduction: Work in the Everyday Economy

Rachel Reeves MP

In December 2019, Wakefield elected its first Conservative MP since 1931. All across West Yorkshire – outside the city of Leeds, part of which I represent – the results were devastating for Labour. Dewsbury was lost to the Conservatives, while in neighbouring Hemsworth, the Labour majority was slashed from over 10,000 to barely 1,000 overnight. Voters across Yorkshire, the Midlands and the North East of England turned against Labour in their droves and the outcome was the most devastating result for Labour since 1931.

What does this have to do with work?

Labour's decline and the transformation of work

In autumn 2019, Mary Reader and I spoke to GMB members across West and South Yorkshire about work – what it means to them and how it could be better. The stories we heard are ones that we all need to hear. They can help Labour better understand what we have lost.

Wakefield was Labour because of work and because of the culture of organised labour. Like many of the places that have drifted away from Labour in recent years, Wakefield was a community based around large-scale employment in manual industry – in Wakefield's case, mining in particular as well as textiles and glass. In response to exploitation and to defend their interests, workers organised into trade unions and developed a culture of solidarity and mutual self-help. For Alice Bacon, who became a Labour MP in 1945 and grew up in a mining community in Normanton in the interwar years, to be Labour was 'as natural as breathing' (Reeves, 2016). In the 1970s and 1980s, textiles, glass and finally mining disappeared from Wakefield. Across the UK, industries and communities were devastated – some almost overnight, others after a long period of struggle in the face of a hostile

and unsympathetic Conservative government. The destruction of industry precipitated the loss of a culture and with it much of the pride, dignity and wealth that came from work and the traditions of solidarity and mutual self-help.

Today business is all too frequently detached from the needs of local areas. The short-term needs of international investors and fund managers frequently come before not only the needs of workers, consumers and communities, but also the longer-term interests of the business. Too many firms do not see providing good, stable and dignified work and paying back into the community as part of their role. Industrial jobs have been replaced by low skill low paid work in distribution centres and call centres. Trade unionism in the private sector has all too often been devastated. In a flexible labour market characterised by weak regulation, businesses have been able to undercut each other and drive down standards and pay for all workers.

The social and cultural devastation caused by precipitous deindustrialisation and the off-shoring of labour brought with it higher rates of physical and mental illness, addiction, and social isolation.

Telling a story about work in the 2020s

The transformation of work is central to the story of Labour's decline and it must be central to the story of how our party – and our movement – rebuilds a winning electoral coalition and creates a strong and just economy. That cannot be about nostalgia for the past: many of the jobs that have gone were difficult, dangerous and polluting. Neither should we look to quick-fix solutions that either cannot deliver on their promise or alienate voters whose priorities are what is happening in their jobs right now, not abstract ideas or distant promises. But let us be in no doubt. The old loyalties of class and organised labour have broken down and the Labour movement needs to respond with a new politics of work and belonging.

The four day week pledge in Labour's 2019 manifesto misunderstood the concerns of working people. On one hand it seemed to be a utopian and unrealistic idea but on the other it sounded hostile to the interests of workers who want a guarantee of more hours and a higher wage, not a cap on work. We went into the election with a generous offer for public sector workers on pay but lacked a clear, substantive message about how we were going to rebuild the public services they are working in after ten years of Conservative government, or what we were going to do for workers in the private sector. Aside from sweeping statements on 'scrapping' Universal Credit, we also lacked a credible plan for welfare reform. Labour's Green Industrial Revolution promised a Just Transition with an agenda for creating jobs and growth, and must be an important part of any future manifesto. Going forward, any meaningful transition must carry the confidence of

workers most at risk. It is essential that decarbonising and redesigning our economy for a sustainable future brings working-class as well as middle-class voters with us with the offer of new and better jobs and better quality of life and local environments.

However, we must also be honest that the kind of high-skilled manufacturing jobs that it would bring would not be able to replace the mass employment in industry of the first half of the twentieth century. There is no way back to an economy of mass employment in heavy industry. We must focus on the jobs people are doing today, in every part of the country.

Labour needs an approach to economic development that focuses on where work is concentrated now and where it will continue to be in the future.

This includes a focus on what I call the 'everyday economy' – in sectors like care, retail, distribution and in core public services, which employ people in every part of the country and which are essential to the basic life of people and communities.

I am proud to be a member of the GMB, a union which recognises the vital importance of the everyday economy, putting campaigning for better conditions for workers in care, in supermarkets, in schools, in hospitals, and in Amazon warehouses at the heart of its agenda. This report is about getting to grips with what is happening to work in these foundational sectors of the economy, and developing an agenda which can speak to the needs and desires of often underappreciated workers in all nations, regions, towns, villages and cities of the UK.

CHAPTER 1: WORK IN THE EVERYDAY ECONOMY

UK employment statistics give the impression that our economy is working. Employment is at its highest level since records began in 1971. In the last year, real pay growth has begun to make a tentative recovery from its post-crash slump. This is welcome progress, but the economy suffers from structural weaknesses which are reflected in low levels of productivity, poor quality jobs and a lack of security at work.

The UK faces a productivity crisis. Output per hour is 7 percent below the G7 average and we have a unique 'long tail' of low productivity businesses. Productivity is often, however, portrayed as an end in itself rather than a means, with the financial output produced by work becoming divorced from the social value it is supposed to represent. Consequently, we have seen a shift in the creation of value in the economy away from labour towards technology and capital. Industrial strategy has thereby been overly focused on growth in cities – property development, technological enterprise and high productivity trading sectors – to the detriment of working people in rural areas and towns, those on low and middle incomes, and those in low productivity, low skilled jobs. A narrow focus on productivity can only get us so far. It is not simply the quantity of work and output that matters. We need to consider the quality of work; the social value that it produces; the livelihoods it sustains, and the communities it supports.

The pamphlet *The Everyday Economy* (2018) set out a vision for a new economic settlement for the UK. It focuses on the things that matter most to people: work, families, and the communities in which we live. The everyday economy is a concept that draws inspiration from Karel Williams and colleagues of the Foundational Economy Collective. It is made up of the services, production, consumption and social goods that sustain our daily lives. The major sectors of the everyday economy – health, education, childcare and adult social care, transport, utilities, broadband, hospitality, retail, food processing and distribution – employ around 40 percent of the workforce in England and Wales. Jobs within the everyday economy produce social value every day and help society to function and sustain itself.

Yet all too frequently, workers in the everyday economy suffer from low pay, high insecurity, poor training and progression, and poor work-life balance. Responsibility for the risks of employment such as variable demand, sickness or having children have been

shifted from employers to employees. In contrast specialised, technical jobs such as finance and insurance that are detached from social value have been insulated from the risks of employment.

The rapid growth of 'non-typical' employment including platform work, self-employment and zero-hour contracts has accelerated the stripping back of collective responsibility. The burden of proof for employment status has been shifted from the employer to the worker. It is now for workers to prove that they should have access to basic employment rights rather than for employers to offer these standards as a given – as part of a social contract.

Work in our public services

The rapid growth of platform work and zero-hour contracts has rightly attracted a great deal of political attention in recent years. The government commissioned the Taylor Review three years ago and its *Good Work Plan* focused on these areas. However, the discussion has neglected the extent to which the trends within non-typical employment have infiltrated 'typical' employment. This is particularly apparent within public services which comprise a significant part of the everyday economy. Work is increasingly characterised by stagnant pay, creeping insecurity and poor work-life balance. What were once everyday, secure, dependable, fulfilling jobs, sustaining everyday life, have been subject to marketisation and consequently atomised and individualised.

Neoliberalism and the influence of New Public Management theory have been key drivers of this trend. There is a deep-rooted assumption within orthodox economics that publicly-provided services are inherently less efficient than private ones, and therefore, insofar as they exist, should mimic the characteristics and processes of the private sector. This assumption has driven the proliferation of outsourcing and user fees and charges, notably within the NHS. The private sector plays an important and central role in any mixed economy. But there is a powerful rationale for many sectors within the everyday economy – not least health (including social care) and education – to be publicly provided and publicly financed.

Many of the services provided in the everyday economy are public goods. When they are privately provided they tend towards market failure. Not only is this inefficient, it is also unethical. They are part of a crucial safety net that help to redress economic inequality and there is strong moral case for them to be subject to democratic responsibility and accountability. David Coats puts it well: 'public services are different because their justification lies in the notion that *citizens* (not consumers) have *rights* to certain goods that are *authorised* as a result of democratic decisions'. Users of public services are increasingly treated as consumers of a product rather than patients, students and citizens. The corollary is that public sector staff are

increasingly presumed to be self-interested profit-makers. Their efforts are evaluated 'in the marketplace of individual consumers' rather than 'the political marketplace of citizens and the collective decisions of representative democratic institutions' (Moore, 1995).

A symptom of this development is the growth of a target culture within the NHS and education. One of the founding principles of British socialism as it emerged at the end of the nineteenth century was resistance against the prioritisation of the instrumental value of work over its intrinsic value. People want work as a source of pride, esteem and fulfilment, but these are marginalised by a market-based work culture.

The value of work

Today's focus on employment rates and productivity is a reflection of the prioritisation of quantity over quality of work, and of the instrumental over the intrinsic value of work. Workers within the everyday economy have been squeezed to do more for less. It should come as no surprise, then, that morale and job satisfaction within the everyday economy is at an all-time low. How we respond to this crisis will be one of the defining challenges for the next Labour government. The story Labour tells about work will be a central part of how and when it returns to government.

An understanding of the value of work should be rooted in people's aspirations and everyday experiences of work. For this report, we interviewed twenty one workers in the GMB's Wakefield office, across a range of sectors in 'everyday' or foundational jobs – from social care to retail to steel manufacturing. We asked them about the nature of their work, what they enjoyed about it, what they did not, and what they valued. Despite the diversity of the sectors and jobs represented, we found striking themes that ran like a thread through most people's experiences. People looked for six main things in their work:

1. **Reward**
2. **Security**
3. **Development**
4. **Satisfaction**
5. **Balance**
6. **Community**

First, people work to sustain themselves and their families. They want to be financially *rewarded* with fair and decent wages. Second, people look for *security*. They want to be assured that they will not lose their job without good reason. Third, people look for personal *development* in work. They want their talents to be utilised to best effect and they want their capabilities developed through training and progression. Fourth, people look for *satisfaction* both in terms of the work itself, and freedom from discrimination, harassment and assault. Fifth, people value having a job that facilitates good work-life *balance*. Sixth,

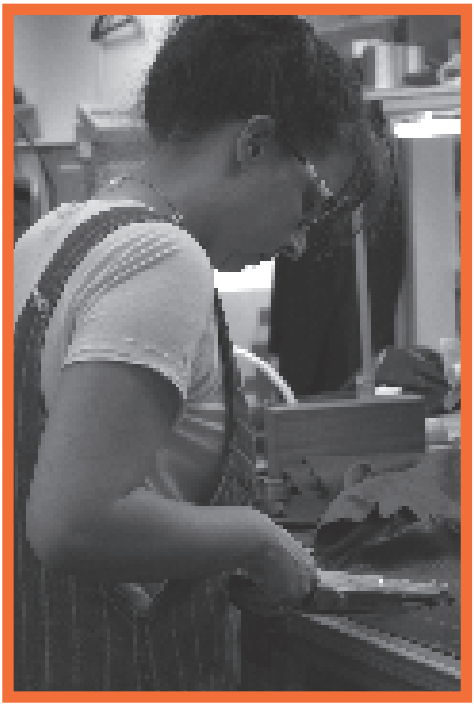
they want work to give them a sense of *community*, identity and belonging.

Making the case for good work

The Labour Party was founded by working people to give them political representation. That always involved – and must still involve – providing a strong and generous safety net for those unable to work, and in a changing world it will also necessarily involve providing the support and flexibility for people with additional responsibilities, whether that is caring for loved ones, training, or helping with additional needs if you are sick and disabled. But the legacy of several decades of neoliberalism and deindustrialisation has been the outsourcing and privatisation of services and higher welfare bills alongside high rates of un- and under-employment. Meanwhile the last four decades have seen a sharp, continual fall in the labour share of national income, as the return to the owners of capital has increased. Stagnant pay, insecure work and exorbitant rents has resulted in the welfare state picking up the growing costs of failure, and this provided the excuse for the Tories' socially devastating austerity.

In-work poverty has steadily increased over the past 25 years – up almost 5%, from 13% to 18% of the workforce living in poverty. In 1994-95 working households comprised 37% of those below the official poverty line. In 2017–18 the proportion had risen to 58%. We have an economy in which companies can make billions in profits, while their workers rely on food banks, poor quality and insecure rented homes and Universal Credit. There is certainly nothing left wing about accepting a state of affairs where the welfare rolls compensate for such an unequal and unjust system. We need to fix the system through well-paid, secure work and strong trade unions to bargain for that along with the strong safety net to provide support when it is needed.

To win back the trust of voters Labour must put good and secure work at the heart of its politics. The nature of work may have changed, but Labour's purpose must not.



CHAPTER 2: REWARD

'Without work, you don't have money. If you want to do something, you need money' – Justyna, factory worker

At the most basic level, work is a necessary means of earning money – a means of survival. Good work should not only ensure an adequate standard of living but also distribute rewards in a proportionate and fair way. Yet we live in a society in which the top 1% earners – those earning £160,000 a year and more – receive 14% of the national income (Joyce, Pope and Roantree, 2019). In the last 40 years, only 10 percent of national income growth went to the whole bottom half of the income distribution (Roberts et al., 2019). The return to certain kinds of labour – highly specialised, technical labour like finance – is vastly higher than the return to everyday work that facilitates society to function on a daily basis.

Since the financial crash in 2008, we have experienced a 'lost decade' of average earnings growth (Cribb and Johnson, 2019). The latest IFS analysis of the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) shows that median weekly earnings in April 2019 are still 2 percent below their 2008 level, with those of low-income men particularly badly hit (with their wages standing at 12 percent below their 2008 level) (Cribb and Johnson, 2019). If this stagnation in wage growth continues until the end of the decade, we will have seen the longest period of wage stagnation since the Napoleonic Wars (Blakeley, 2019).

This dire pay growth has disproportionately impacted on those on low incomes, in the public sector, and in the everyday economy more broadly. Current pay growth is weaker for public sector workers, at 1.4 percent compared to 1.7 percent for private sector workers (Resolution Foundation, 2019). Low pay is concentrated in the retail, hospitality and social care sectors (Coats, 2019b). In part due to the feminised nature of these workforces, 60 percent of the 4.7 million low-paid employees in 2018 were women (Cominetti et al., 2019).

Productivity and pay

Within mainstream economics, weak productivity growth often becomes an excuse for stagnant pay growth. Productivity is an essential ingredient of a healthy and fair economy, and we are

undoubtedly experiencing a productivity crisis in the UK: the average French worker produces more by the end of Thursday than we do in a full week (Mazzucato, 2019, March 13). The right has responded to this by blaming the victims of our productivity slump, by denigrating the 'idleness' of British workers and stigmatising low-skilled immigrants. This is a cynical and pernicious tactic that obscures the real cause of our productivity crisis: lack of public and private investment in innovation, infrastructure, skills and good management, both by businesses and the state. We currently have the lowest business investment in the G7 (Mazzucato, 2019, March 13). The productivity crisis, then, is a reason for the government to step up and take responsibility, not to step back while wages stagnate.

But the evidence shows that it is not just our stagnant productivity that is driving stagnant pay. In fact, wage growth for those on median earnings and below has become decoupled from productivity growth (Pessoa and van Reenen, 2012), especially for countries such as the UK that have witnessed a decline in collective bargaining (Bailey et al., 2011). The obsessive focus on productivity as the key to all improvements in wage growth, then, is distraction from the issues of power that sustain low pay – those of class, gender, race, disability and more.

An industrial strategy that prioritises social justice can bring stakeholders together to make sure productivity improves alongside the quality of work. Stories about the way new technology is used to monitor workers and deny them even basic comforts show that many big employers, like Amazon and SportsDirect, treat productivity and good working conditions as mutually exclusive. But there is no basis for this to be true. Happier, better managed workers – supported by investment in technology – can play their part in improving working practice and are likely to work better themselves.

Reward and social value

During our interviews with workers in the everyday economy, it became apparent that frustration about pay often functioned as the canary in the mine – it sung when other issues accumulated and made workers feel underappreciated, undervalued and exploited. Pay became a focal point of concern when workers felt they were not being rewarded more broadly for their work, or if their work was so demanding that they felt they should receive higher financial remuneration for it. Many interviewees did not object to the level of their pay *per se*, but instead brought up issues about the transparency and fairness within the pay system as a whole, such as inconsistent grading within an organisation (Hashim, Sarah K). Clayton, a worker in a Wilkinson's distribution centre, said: 'I'm in a job that I enjoy, not necessarily so with the pay that I'm on, but I'm one of those that think "I'm not bothered about pay, as long as I can keep

a roof over my head and keep up with my mortgage payment and keep my family safe"'.

Rewarding work is not just work that pays well – it is work where you feel both valued and valuable. Jude, a mental health nurse, spoke of how there needs to be a change in 'how they [public service workers] are valued – it's about value. And that is a financial value, but it is also about a societal value'. One of the most prominent sources of value in public services is the sense of making an impact, of contributing positively towards society. Unfortunately, however, it was clear from our interviews that there is often a reliance on the good will of public service workers, resulting in lower rewards in other areas such as pay. Sarah Y, a ward clerk at a children's hospital, said that although her pay 'doesn't leave you a lot come the end of the month, once you've paid your bills, your mortgage', that the question of whether she is paid a fair wage is 'a difficult one to ask someone in this line of work. I know this sounds ridiculous, but you do it anyway…You don't turn your back when there's someone poorly and your shift's over. So there's a lot of goodwill there.' Anne, who works as an assistant cook at a care home and used to be a care worker, told a story that epitomises this reliance on individual good will. When a resident told Anne that her favourite food was crumpets and she hadn't eaten one in years, Anne asked the care home management whether they could buy some in the weekly food order. When the management refused, Anne went out to the shop and bought a packet herself for the resident, out of her own minimum wage pay packet. Jude, a mental health nurse, reaffirmed this: 'There's a lot of reliance on good will.' Whilst Jude felt that the idea of nursing as a vocation had positive elements to it and that the appeal to the good will of staff 'is fine to a certain degree,' she was clear that 'there is a point at which…you're abusing someone's good will. You know, if you're expecting that all the time, if you're relying on that all the time and you can't do your core provision without that good will, then that's wrong.' The social entrepreneur Hillary Cottam has argued powerfully that we need to rethink how we deliver some of these core services, so people can spend more time caring and responding to patients' needs, and less time servicing a system that burdens them with a huge volume of administrative work. She is right that we need to think about structures that can harness and reward the care and initiative of people like Jude, rather than constraining them (Cottam, 2019).

Ultimately, pay functions in society as a reflection of how much social value we invest in certain jobs and sectors. Many workers in the everyday economy feel that work is rewarded in inverse proportion to the level of care and effort that they put into their job. We all feel the effect of good care, helpful service or basic friendliness when we encounter them. But we continue to undervalue and ignore the emotional labour of workers in retail or care who are expected to include the personal touch in everything they do, every day. This is tiring and difficult work. A more just economy – even a

more rational one – would recognise these talents and the advantages they bring to businesses as well as to society. It is well-established that good management could bring huge gains to productivity in Britain. The Fabian Society has previously argued that a new Catapult Centre for Management could make a difference (Tait, 2017).

The last fifty years have seen the rewards of economic growth – powered by the everyday economy and those who work in it – appropriated by a select few, to the detriment of the many. To redress this, we need to re-establish a connection between reward and the social value that work produces, so that the makers of social value – everyday workers – see the fruits of their labour. This means not only promoting collective bargaining but addressing the underlying drivers of low pay such as job insecurity, stagnant progression, poor access to training, and the gender and ethnicity pay gap.

CHAPTER 3: SECURITY

'I would much prefer to pick a job where I have a set amount of hours per week, I know what days I'm working. And because I have those set hours and know exactly how much I'm getting a month, it would be a lot easier to budget' – Josh, agency worker

If a major source of the value of work is survival through earnings, that can also only be achieved if work itself is secure, and earnings are relatively stable and predictable. Many of our interviewees stated that job security had huge psychological value for them, helping them to achieve a healthy balance between work and family and to budget more effectively. This is corroborated by other research which suggests that earnings volatility and job insecurity exacerbate problems of low pay, since they prevent workers from being able to reliably budget, leading to stress, anxiety and debt (Tomlinson, 2019).

The TUC estimates that around 3.8 million workers in the UK are in insecure work (TUC, 2018). Agency work, zero-hour contracts and low-paid self-employment are particularly insecure forms of employment, and they have increased significantly in recent years. The gig economy also has more than doubled over the last 3 years and now accounts for 4.3 million workers (TUC, 2019).

But job insecurity is not just the preserve of the gig economy. As Sarah Y, a ward clerk at a children's hospital, put it, 'I don't think that you can say that any job is secure these days, I really don't think you can.' According to recent polling by the RSA, economic insecurity has become the norm: just 43 percent say they are confident that they'll enjoy a decent standard of living in a decade's time, with a shocking 40 percent saying they are not confident (Taylor, 18 November 2019). Insecurity has come to affect public services in a major way, through developments such as outsourcing, privatisation and TUPEs, and pension reforms. Notably, social care, though a core public service, is privately-provided and a quarter of social care workers in England are working on zero-hours contracts (Skills for Care, 2019).

Insecurity, public services and outsourcing

There are two main types of job insecurity: tenure insecurity (when you

fear losing your job) and status insecurity (when you fear that valued features of your job will change). The public sector has typically provided exceptional job tenure security. But in 2012, levels of tenure insecurity in the public sector overtook those in the private sector for the first time (Gallie et al., 2017). In 2018, 16 percent of public and voluntary sector workers felt insecure in their jobs compared to 13 percent of private sector workers (CIPD, 2018). Austerity has contributed towards this insecurity by slashing public sector employment, with over 900,000 local government jobs cut between 2010 and 2019 (ONS, 2019). In the NHS, this growing insecurity co-exists with severe workforce problems of recruitment and retention. The result has been a reliance on 'bank' staff – staff who work flexible shifts with no set contracted hours (Buchanan et al., 2019).

Status insecurity, meanwhile, can include the fear of discrimination, victimisation by management, a reduction in worker voice, or workload intensification. Evidence suggests that status insecurity has significant negative effects on wellbeing, greater than the effects of traditional tenure insecurity (Gallie et al., 2017). Although many of our interviewees were on permanent contracts, they felt the effects of status insecurity. They spoke of having recurrent issues with their managers, the anxiety of their pensions being threatened, the threat of being TUPEd to the private sector, and the prospect of their workload being increased. Barbara, who is a wellbeing coordinator at a care home, told us that the scale of work intensification has meant that she is able to spend less time with residents, and is therefore losing the interaction that she feels makes her job worthwhile and valuable. Several NHS workers we interviewed spoke of how the expansion of competitive tendering of NHS services – enshrined in legislation through the Health and Social Care Act in 2012 – has injected insecurity into NHS work, as staff providing a service are no longer guaranteed that their service will continue. This would be less problematic if competition was a genuine driver of quality, but more often it is simply a race to the bottom, with the cheapest bidder winning. The collapse of Carillion, Southern Cross, Circle and a whole host of private companies is a testament to that. Chairing the BEIS Select Committee, Rachel oversaw the inquiry into the Carillion collapse. The committee's findings were an extraordinary indictment not only of the greed and hubris of the company's executives, but also of the failure of regulation and audit to prevent or even warn of their reckless behaviour. The committee report showed the desperate need for reform at all levels of business if we are to protect workers and consumers from yet more of these disasters, from corporate governance, to audit.

When a private provider beats an NHS provider in a bid and workers transfer from the public to the private sector, their conditions of employment are technically protected through The Transfer of Undertakings Regulations (TUPE). However, this offers temporary protection at best and does not preclude

the abandonment of terms and conditions of employment by subsequent takeover providers (Coats, 2019b). Many services provided by Carillion when it collapsed would once have been provided directly by the public sector. Jude, a mental health nurse, said that the introduction of competitive tendering within health 'gives an element of instability because you don't know if you are going to always work in this service' – or who for.

Earning instability and risk

These feelings of insecurity at work are often accompanied by earnings instability. Recent research from the Resolution Foundation has estimated for the first time the full extent and impact of weekly earnings volatility in the UK (Tomlinson, 2019). While previous research, which was only able to capture earnings volatility from year to year, indicated that earnings volatility has flatlined since the 1990s, this new research has shown that *weekly* earnings volatility has become an extremely common experience among workers in the UK, even among those in steady jobs. The report also found that earnings volatility is more pronounced for those on low earnings: over 80 percent of lower earners with steady jobs have volatile pay, compared with two-thirds of higher earners (Tomlinson, 2019).

The growth of job insecurity and earnings instability has transferred the risks of employment from employers to workers (Bell, 2016; Roache, 2019). It has also coincided with the erosion of pension entitlements for public sector workers, including the shift from defined benefit to defined contribution (Smith Institute, 2014). In short, workers in everyday jobs are working harder for less security, less stability and less reward.

The distribution of risk across an economy – notably the risks of unemployment and redundancy – is also changing. In recent years we have seen an acceleration of the shift of risk from the shoulders of employers to the shoulders of workers. The consequence has been the growth of tenure and status insecurity for everyday workers – even those within supposedly stable public sector jobs – in parallel with the growth of a lack of accountability and responsibility at the top of the income distribution. The banking system has not been made responsible for the 2008 crisis; the chief executives of Carillion and Thomas Cook have not felt the effects of their collapse. It is instead everyday workers – those who lost their jobs due to public service cuts in the wake of the economic crash, Thomas Cook workers who were made redundant, social care residents left in the lurch by the collapse of private care home operators, and users of those services – who have paid the price and continue to shoulder these risks. It is time to strengthen the principle that underlined the development of the modern welfare state: that security and prosperity is best achieved when risks are collectivised and borne as a society, not as individuals.

CHAPTER 4: DEVELOPMENT

'We don't invest in people. We invest in positions' – Jude, mental health nurse

There has been a meteoric expansion of educational experience in the UK over the last fifty years: the proportion of 25- to 29-year olds with a degree has increased from approximately 15 to 40 percent from 1965-69 to 1990-94 (Johnson, 2019). This should have led to advances in productivity and real wages. Yet both have stagnated. This is because, as the Industrial Strategy Council reported in November 2019, there are severe skills mismatches in our economy, greater than most countries in the OECD (Industrial Strategy Council, 2019). The report found that a shocking 40 percent of workers are employed in jobs for which they do not have the correct qualifications: 28 percent are underqualified and 13 percent are overqualified (Industrial Strategy Council, 2019). While technical and digital skills form a significant part of these skills gaps, it is also the bread and butter skills of literacy and numeracy on which we are falling short: 56 percent of the working-age population have the numeracy level expected of a primary school child (KCL, 2019). This is a travesty in a developed society: basic numeracy skills are vital for everyday life and for work. It is a symptom of an education system that has failed to close attainment gaps and to prepare young people for the world of work and the world of everyday life. It is all well and good sending more people to university, but we are continuously neglecting the skill and opportunities of those who get nowhere near the 'dreaming spires'.

Skills, training and development

The belief in social mobility and meritocracy is deeply ingrained in British society, despite contrasting starkly with the experiences of most people in everyday work. A large segment of the population – dominated by those educated to GCSE level or lower – see their pay fail to progress beyond minimum levels over their lifetime (Costa Dias, Joyce and Parodi, 2018). Of those who were in low paid jobs in 2006, just one in six had escaped low pay ten years later. Meanwhile, just under half were

'cyclers' who cycled back and forth between higher pay and low pay. Lack of progression and social mobility is geographically unequal: the North East has the highest proportion of workers in a low pay trap, at 3.4 percentage points above the national average (D'Arcy & Finch, 2017). Simultaneously, a notable segment of the population – dominated by affluent, middle class degree-holders – are overqualified for their positions and/or underemployed: in 2014, a young worker in a non-professional or managerial job was twice as likely to be a graduate as in 2004 (Thorley and Cook, 2017).

The result of these skills mismatches is a broken and divided society in which work no longer guarantees the development of our skills and capabilities, and skills and education no longer guarantees fulfilling work. In short, it leads to a situation in which work no longer provides one of the most important benefits it offers: personal development, and alongside it, pride.

To tackle this, we need to make 'lifelong learning' a reality within our education system, especially within post-16 and further education. The UK has a high share of graduates and a high share of people with low levels of qualifications, but a relatively small share of people with intermediate qualifications (above secondary but below a bachelor's degree) (CIPD, 2017). Many of the sectors within the everyday economy are treated as 'unskilled' sectors despite requiring significant care, attention and ability (social care and childcare are prime examples). Our vocational and further education system is singularly unequipped to provide adults with the training, progression and skills to progress within these roles because it is not funded to fulfil that purpose. While public spending on higher education has consistently risen and stands at around £17 billion a year, spending on adult skills is just £1.5 billion and the adult education budget has been cut by 45 percent since 2010 (CIPD, 2017; Rayner, 2019).

Academic and vocational training

For many sectors of the everyday economy such as nursing, the main method of tackling low pay and lack of esteem has been to seek professionalisation and to expand degree requirements. This has been a useful tool to improve pay and esteem, and degree-level knowledge has become important within nursing. However, two of our interviewees (Sarah K, Jude) were keen to emphasise that the skills required within nursing go far beyond academic knowledge. Jude stated that although she does not object to the introduction of nursing degrees, one consequence has been to change the demographic profile and diversity of the workforce: 'we have very high-achieving academic students …[but] we've lost the mature applicants who would have been having a second career'. This is corroborated by empirical evidence, which suggests that more 18-

and 19-year olds are being accepted onto nursing courses in the UK than ever before (Buchanan et al., 2019). Training and professionalisation has focused on medical knowledge and neglected the caring aspects. With the degree requirement has also come greater individual financial burden for those training to enter the profession: the abolition of nursing bursaries in 2017 and their replacement with student loans led to a fall in the number of nursing applicants by 18 percent, relative to a 2.6 percent fall in other subjects (Buchanan et al., 2019). So alongside expanded opportunities for lifelong learning, we also need to think about ways that we can put the experience of frontline workers at the heart of the service – in health, and elsewhere. One option is to create new Royal Colleges, which can provide status and give a place for the input of workers within the everyday economy – such as careworkers – in shaping best practice (Reeves, 2018).

The assumption that relevant and valuable skills can only be achieved through university education needs to be dismantled. The attempt to 'level up' simply by expanding university enrolment is a flawed method of improving social mobility because it neglects the skills and potential of those who choose not or would not thrive within the academic framework of university. The skills, knowledge and the idea of 'vocation' has been neglected with a mis-placed focus on expanding higher education at the expense of other routes.

Lifelong learning must also extend well beyond the formal education system: our workplaces should be hubs for training, development and progression. Yet insecurity and workload intensification often squeeze out opportunities for training. Insecurity has a twofold impact: it reduces employers' returns to investment in training their employees as they are viewed as transient, and it disempowers workers from demanding the training opportunities that they deserve. Employer-led training per employee is currently two-thirds lower than the EU average, and falling (Rayner, 2019). As the Taylor Review reported in 2017, the number of employees attending training courses declined from 140,000 in 1995 to 20,000 in 2014 (Taylor, 2017). NHS investment in training and development for staff is currently a third of its 2014/15 value, while in local government median gross expenditure on training per employee fell by 26 percent from 2010/11 to 2017/18 (Buchanan et al., 2019; LGWS, 2018). One of our interviewees, Ian, is a steel worker and completed an NVQ Level 2 in Warehousing qualification and found it too easy so he hoped 'that there might have been a progression to doing level three, but things just seemed to die.' A major part of the problem is how training is funded and incentivised. The care workers we interviewed said that although their employer would not fund an NVQ Level 2, they offered them an extra 15p an hour if they completed it off their own backs. They concluded that it was not sufficiently attractive an option, nor financially feasible.

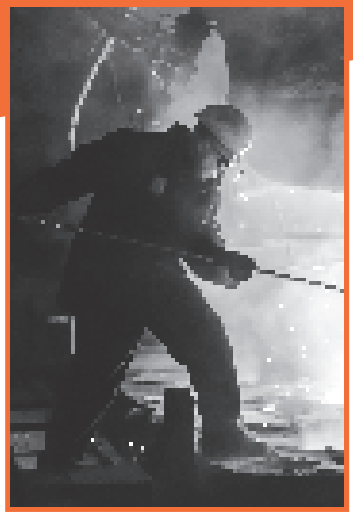
Development and wellbeing

Having a job that offers progression makes a significant contribution towards wellbeing because it confers that you are valued and worth investing in (Kosteas, 2011). Yet a notable 16 percent of workers are in jobs that offer little or no career progression whatsoever (CIPD, 2018). Hospitality and care have particularly flat structures and are typically characterised by limited opportunities for progression (JRF, 2018). One of our interviewees, Barbara, was promoted to a wellbeing coordinator role after working as a care worker for many years. But when asked how she would progress beyond her current position, she told us that 'There's no progression. The progression would be back into care again, and that's not a progression, because you know they work just as bad as me, they're working on minimum staff as well, so it's not a progression...' Meanwhile, Hashim, a council worker, said that your ability to progress within the council was more related to social networks than ability: 'it's sort of who your friends are'. He identified that 'where progression is really bad is frontline staff, so like probably bin men, people in care work…catering…cleaners'. Similarly, social worker Yvette highlighted how everyday prejudice impacts people's working lives, and that she knew very few people of colour in senior social work positions. As a woman of colour, she found that 'there was a lot of stigma in social work. I think it was to do with the colour of my skin. I think no matter where, and it sounds awful, but in terms of progression, I think no matter how good or well or hard [I worked], I don't think there was going to be any progression.' After twenty years of service, she decided to leave social work to work for a charity.

A lack of training and progression strips work of a sense of direction and development, making high turnover no surprise. We are consequently seeing severe recruitment and retention crises within the NHS, social care, education and policing: in adult social care there was a 30.9 percent turnover rate in 2018/19 (Skills for Care, 2019). To match the growth in the over-65 population, the social care workforce would need to expand by 36 percent (580,000 jobs) by 2035 (Skills for Care, 2019)

We are not going to be able to achieve the requisite job recruitment and retention within public services to meet growing demand by driving down pay, freezing opportunities for training and progression. We are going to get there by investing in the people doing these vital jobs – and by signalling their work is valuable. For too long, our paradigm of success, progression and development has been tailored around not only an 'elite' model but a heavily masculinised one: a university education followed by professional occupations such as law, finance and business. We need to reclaim the jobs of the everyday economy as jobs in which personal development is a reality, not a slogan.

CHAPTER 5: SATISFACTION



'Historically, our job always used to be quite low paid. But it was little things like the team dynamics, which would make up for it. We used to basically be able to have a laugh, get on with the job. It could be a bit pressurised... [but] you just got on with it. But now, we're that cut to the bone that there's times when things are busy and you literally don't have a minute' – Ian, steel worker

As a society, we spend a huge proportion of our time at work. The satisfaction that we derive from our work on a daily basis is therefore a huge determinant of our overall happiness and wellbeing. When we enjoy our work, it brings our lives a sense of purpose and structure, and makes us feel that our capabilities are being utilised – that we are making a difference. Conversely, when work feels like a daily drudgery, we can feel anchorless in our lives or that we are wasting our talents and abilities. Moreover, many face discrimination at work, a lack of support during sickness, mental health difficulties or when on parental leave.

Mental health

Work and our mental health are intimately connected. Work is a central part of individual and collective identity, and the various physical and mental aspects of work can be either beneficial or harmful to health (Waddell et al., 2006). One estimate calculates the cost of mental health to the economy – mostly due to the rise of sickness – to be about £100 million a year, the same as the cost of the entire NHS (Quilter-Pinner and Reader, 2018). Almost two thirds of employees (62 percent) attribute symptoms of poor mental health to work, or say that work is a contributing factor (Thorley and Cook, 2017). The rise of the gig economy has undoubtedly exacerbated this, as the impact of job insecurity and earnings instability have become commonplace. A GMB survey from 2017 found that six in ten insecure workers experience stress at work as a result of the nature of their employment (Roache, 2019).

Several of our interviewees referred to

increases in the use of sick leave due to stress or mental health problems within their work. Ian, a steel worker, suffers from depression and said that after 2008, when his company were 'really cut to the bone' with the implementation of redundancies and the drafting in of agency staff to plug short-term gaps, he was 'really under stress' and 'ended up having to take six weeks off work, which is not me.' These levels of stress, sickness and fatigue lead to a vicious circle between staff shortages and stress at work: staff shortages increase workload and stress, thus creating more stress for current staff and sickness at work.

Public services are among the worst-hit in the epidemic of poor mental health – largely due to workload intensification. Severe workforce crises within public services have led to greater responsibilities being placed on fewer shoulders. The public sector sees a significantly higher proportion of workers with 'too much' or 'far too much' work: 43 percent relative to 30 percent within the private sector (CIPD, 2018).

Not only are sickness absence rates higher in the public sector than the private sector, but mental health is more likely to be the reason for it (ONS, 2018). Stress, mental health, depression, anxiety and fatigue represented over a quarter of all working days lost to sickness in local government in England, a level disproportionately higher than the national average (LGWS, 2018). Jude, a mental health nurse, said that the workforce crisis has intensified the stress caused by the introduction of competitive tendering since 2012: 'you kind of have to keep going and doing that, but if you've got less and less staff, it becomes harder and harder'. She said she knows countless staff members who have been off sick with stress, sometimes for long periods of time.

Furthermore, the evidence is clear that stress and mental health at work disproportionately impacts those in lower status jobs and on lower incomes. As Michael Marmot's Whitehall II Studies of British Civil Servants demonstrated, health is strongly patterned by social class and income, and the lack of job control in lower status jobs is directly correlated with greater risk of coronary disease, higher morbidity rates and poorer mental health (see, e.g. Marmot et al., 1991). Barbara, who works in social care, indicated that it is lower status workers who are made to feel responsible for providing high-quality care, rather than organisations as a whole: 'I couldn't sleep at night if I didn't do everything in my power to help residents, somebody's got to change things, and that will have to be me'. When the system fails, individual staff invariably are left to step in – over and above their job description and pay grade.

In response to the rise of sickness due to stress, many employers have introduced sickness reviews and targets. This usually operates by employers making set review points (or trigger points) of a certain number of days of short-term sickness or absence. If an employee exceeds these review points, the employer issues a formal warning; if absence continues,

then disciplinary action or dismissal can occur (ACAS, 2019). Several interviewees (Hashim, Ian) indicated that sickness reviews operated in ways that were dehumanising, discriminatory and damaging to workers. Hashim, who works in the GMB's convenor office within his local council, said that he had assisted an employee with a sickness review who had been given a target of 2 days sickness over six months, considerably lower than the council's official policy of 8.5 days over twelve months. In a further breach of official policy, he also cited cases in which the managers who were involved in causing the stress and sickness were put in charge of sickness reviews. Hashim argued that cuts to local government funding have driven these practices, because the logic then becomes that 'if you've got people being paid who are not at work… we can save money this way [by dismissing them]'. The rise of sickness reviews has thereby contributed towards tenure insecurity within supposedly permanent jobs.

Discrimination, harassment and assault

As malpractices within sickness reviews demonstrate, negative power dynamics within the workplace can have pernicious effects. They can also lead to cases of discrimination (by gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation or disability), sexual harassment and even sexual assault.

There were several accounts of racial abuse and discrimination in the workplace from our interviewees (Hashim, Yvette and Justyna). Justyna, who migrated from Poland five years ago, works in a factory and said that her former managers 'started joking that they will take all the immigrants and put them in a bus'. Migrant workers already face greater levels of economic insecurity: foreign-born workers are more likely to do shift work, have non-permanent jobs, and be on zero-hour contracts than UK-born workers (Migration Observatory, 2019). Discrimination in the workplace gives migrant workers a daily reminder of their insecurity both within the labour market and in the UK more generally. Meanwhile, ethnic minorities and people of colour face greater barriers to progression in work: despite making up one in eight of the working age population, BAME people are represented in only one in 16 top management positions (McGregor Smith, 2019). Yvette, a former social worker who is a woman of colour, had experiences of clients being quicker to file a complaint about her than they were for her white counterparts. She also said that there were hardly any examples of senior social workers from ethnic minority backgrounds, making progression seem a distant possibility that contributed to her leaving social work.

Too often, workers within the everyday economy are left exposed and unprotected from the risks of harassment, assault and abuse that come with their roles. At the most extreme, one of our interviewees, Sarah K, is an ambulance

technician who was sexually assaulted by a patient in an ambulance in 2016. It later transpired that the offender was a known to the police as a sexual predator. While police have access to a system for flagging such risks when they attend a property, ambulance services do not because they only receive an address at first – with a name only coming later. Sarah received little to no support from her local ambulance service in the wake of her assault. 'I've come to work, I've come to an organisation, I should be safe. We can't get rid of all risk, we're never going to be able to. But there needs to be some joined up [thinking]', she said. Sarah felt completely alone in her struggle to secure a conviction, and felt that there was no collective responsibility for the incident: 'The onus should not be on me to do all the litigation. It should be the [hospital] trust's. And the trust have taken no responsibility in any of it.' Sarah reported the incident to the police and with the support of her local GMB union, her attacker was not only prosecuted but the national campaign 'Protect the Protectors' was formed, with the support of Holly Lynch MP. In April 2018, the Assaults on Emergency Workers (Offences) Act legislated for tougher sentences for those who assault emergency workers. As a result of Sarah's campaigning, sexual assaults were included within its remit.

One of the striking aspects of Sarah's story is the extent to which there were fewer safeguarding measures in place for NHS workers than there are for emergency police services: 'it's different for them [the police]. They know where everybody is. They get prosecuted and sorted out. We've not got that.' As in other areas of employment rights, there is an assumption that the duty of care and the existence of good will reduces the rights and entitlements you can expect working in a care-based public service.

Jobs within the everyday economy – by dint of their intimate connection with the daily lives of others, and the observable difference they make to our society – have huge potential for high levels of job satisfaction. Indeed, many of our interviewees emphasised how much they enjoyed certain aspects of their jobs, especially interactions with patients or customers, and the feeling of making a difference. But the failure of public policy to deal with workforce crises, largely driven by a lack of esteem and reward, has exacerbated work intensification and left many workers feeling like hamsters on a wheel. Furthermore, the requisite processes to protect workers against discrimination, assault and abuse are severely lacking in many cases. We need to re-establish a social contract with workers in the everyday economy where they are given the protections and rights that they deserve in exchange for the social value they produce, day in day out.

CHAPTER 6: BALANCE

'You are always splitting your time between work, family and community work…And you know what, you never feel like you do any one of them justice.' – Jude, mental health nurse

For most people, even those who have high levels of job satisfaction, it is important to achieve a balance between work and wider life, including their family life. As Jude put it, 'Yeah I love my job, most of the time, but my family come first'. Ambulance technician Sarah K, meanwhile, emphasised how family time was an important tonic at times of stress at work: 'we make sure we have that family time. It's trying to instil…we see lots of negativity, lots of bad things [at work], so it's trying to make sure that we have that balance and positive time. It's taken us a while to do that; that's me being in for 25 years, and my husband for 20.' The interaction between workplace overtime and flexibility policies and national childcare and adult social care policy is therefore hugely important to people's everyday experiences of work.

For decades, the UK saw a steady decline in working hours. However, since 2008, we are working one hour more than the level that would be expected based on 1980s trends (Bell and Gardiner, 2019). Simultaneously, one in ten workers want to work more hours. Bell and Gardiner (2019) square this circle by presenting compelling evidence that what lies behind our seemingly impressive employment record is, in fact, a desperation by households to sustain living standards, in the face of pay stagnation, a rising state pension age and cuts to social security. In other words, the poorer we feel, the harder we work.

It is hardly surprising, then, that work-life balance is particularly bad within the everyday economy, where pay is typically lower and in many parts of the European Union a strong public service ethos acts as an incentive that is exploited. The work-life balance index – a composite measure based on the number of hours worked, whether work encroaches on personal life, and the existence of certain HR practices – is 3 percentage points worse in the public sector than the private sector (CIPD, 2018). Meanwhile, operative and assembly jobs are among the occupations most likely to work long hours (Kodz, 2003).

Family life and care

What is more, the gendered nature of the everyday economy typically means that work-life balance is a high priority for workers within it. The major sectors of the everyday economy have feminised workforces: 79 percent of jobs within health and social work, 70 percent within education and 82 percent within social care are held by women (Powell, 2019; Skills for Care, 2017). In the public sector more generally, 68 percent of employees are women (ONS, 2015). While great progress has been made in equalising the burden of caregiving responsibilities, it remains the case that women disproportionately take the lion's share of responsibilities for caring for children and elderly relatives. 80 percent of nurses doing agency work cite 'more control over shifts' as the primary reason for choosing to work this way (Timewise, 2018).

Several of our interviewees experienced difficulties in organising childcare during school holidays, notably due to the costs involved. Childcare costs have risen steeply in the UK in recent years, at levels well above average pay growth: a recent survey found that for a couple with one child under the age of two, average childcare costs per year ranged from £5600 to £9100 (Financial Times, 2019, February 28). For some, help from relatives was indispensable (Clayton, Jude). Jude and her partner, both of whom are mental health nurses, keep a spreadsheet in which they split their annual leave between the thirteen weeks of school holidays to avoid having to pay for childcare. Consequently, they only have a couple of days off together a year in addition to bank holidays. While Jude emphasised that this was a personal choice they had made and they were happy to make it, it is illustrative of how significant a barrier the cost of childcare is for many families – so much so that it incentivises them to spend less time together.

Jude's example is also symptomatic of the way in which, in response to the absence of real collective responsibility for childcare and social care, individuals have to perform logistical acrobatics to ensure that loved ones are adequately cared for. While spending on early years and childcare has grown sharply in recent years, particularly due to the introduction of the free 15- and 30-hour childcare entitlement for 3- and 4-year olds (and the recent addition of the 15-hour offer for 2-year-olds), there is compelling evidence of problems with access to, and quality of, provision. Children from the most disadvantaged families, who stand to gain the most from childcare, are currently the least likely to access the funded entitlements (Albakri et al., 2018; Gambaro et al., 2015). One particularly concerning effect of current policy is that if a parent loses their job, their 30-hour childcare entitlement is reduced to 15 hours (as the 30-hour offer is only available to working families), a factor which is likely to make the job search more difficult, as well as being destabilising. Take-up for the 2-year-old offer, in particular, is very low, and the most disadvantaged families do not take up the offer (Albakri et al., 2018).

Furthermore, there is evidence that the extension of the 30-hour offer has squeezed out disadvantaged families from higher quality nurseries, as they have a preference to cater to 30-hour offer children (available to working families) than 15-hour offer children workless families (Johnes and Hutchinson, 2016). Work too often operates to the detriment of our personal and family lives. In the 21st century, the distinction between work and family is in many ways the most porous it has been, with gig economy employment, work-from-home arrangements and flexible working. That can be a positive and empowering development. However, we need to ensure that such developments facilitate work-life balance for workers, rather than simply being an intrusion of work into family life. We need to keep pushing for modern day reforms on childcare, work flexibility and employment rights, in order to ensure that people's everyday experience of work does not detrimentally impact on their family lives. In particular, we need to incentivise more men to take responsibility for caregiving, in order to tackle the deeply entrenched gendered division of labour, in the hope of achieving a 'dual caregiver' model in which both men and women assume equal responsibilities for breadwinning and caregiving (Fraser, 1994). Take-it-or-leave-it so-called 'daddy leave', as implemented in Sweden, would be an excellent start.

CHAPTER 7: COMMUNITY

'Whenever I talk about workplace, or somebody asks me a question about workplace, I never think about [my] bar shifts, I always think about the union offices I come to. This is my workplace, I think of them, as the place where we have the CLP meeting as my workplace… Those are my workplaces, that's where I actually get work done.' – Josh, agency worker

Margaret Bondfield, a trade unionist and former shopgirl who in 1923 became one of the first Labour women MPs to be elected, once reflected on the contribution that community organising and trade unionism brought to her life on an everyday basis. 'Everyday Trade Union work took on a deeper significance,' she wrote. 'The doing of ordinary everyday things became lit up with that inner light of the Spirit which gave one strength and effectiveness; strength to meet defeat with a smile…to be willing to do one's best without thought of reward' (Bartley, 2019, p. 26). Bondfield's quote encapsulates the deep sense of satisfaction, solidarity and purpose that many of our interviewees identified with their involvement in trade unionism, political and community organisation. That is a testament to the importance of community life as the locus of our work and our family.

However, our community life has been gradually eroded over time, as our economy has become ever more polarised, and as our social infrastructure has been allowed to fray, especially since 2010. Community centres, libraries, pubs and high street shops have closed; town centres have become increasingly bare. As the spaces and institutions that people once shared have withered, and our economic fortunes have moved further apart – driven by a bloated housing market and stark regional equality – faith in collective progress has declined and our sense of collective belonging and civic pride in our towns and cities has suffered (Lawrence, 2018). Fast-paced transition from an industrial to a service-based economy has left many communities behind – particularly towns and rural areas. A series of trade union reforms under Conservative governments between 1980 and 1993, and then again with the 2014 Trade Union Act, have actively thwarted the ability of workers to organise collectively to demand better pay and conditions. In 1979, union density (the proportion of employees who are members of a trade union) was almost 50 percent and almost 80 percent were covered by collective bargaining (the official process by which wages are

negotiated by collective bodies including trade unions) (Coats, 2019b). By 2018, union density stood at just 23 percent (BEIS, 2019).

Trade union density is strongly patterned by geography: the North East, North West, and Yorkshire and the Humber have the highest levels of union membership, while the East, South East of England and London have the lowest (Davies et al., 2019). Notably, the decline in union membership has been starker for communities with historically high union density: in the North East, the reduction in union density (28 percent) has been double that of the South East (14 percent) (Own analysis of Davies et al., 2019).

Regional inequality

The UK is now more regionally unequal than every country inside the EU, and London has effectively 'decoupled' itself from the rest of the economy (Crisp et al., 2019; Tomaney and Pike, 2019). For many commentators, Brexit was a wake-up call to the fact that our country has deep rifts based on the geographic distribution of economic activity and the division between a 'cognitive class' of the highly educated and those with less education in low-skilled employment. Almost a quarter of the national population – about 16 million – live in ex-industrial regions in the UK, areas that have been particularly badly hit by transition to a services economy, the decline of manufacturing and mining, and austerity (Tomaney and Pike, 2019). Skill-biased technological change, globalisation and the erosion of collective bargaining has had scarring effects on employment within ex-industrial areas.

One repercussion of this has been the expansion of unemployment and sickness benefits. Work by Christina Beatty and Steve Fothergill at Sheffield Hallam University has shown that adults claiming working-age sickness-related benefits are highly concentrated in ex-industrial mining communities in the UK where employment experienced severe negative shocks, such as the North East and North West of England, and South Wales (Beatty and Fothergill, 2004). Through a combination of the profound social legacies of deindustrialisation and successive government's erosion of unemployment benefit eligibility and adequacy, reliance on disability benefits rose enormously in these areas (OECD, 2010). The number of working-age claimants of incapacity benefits increased from 750,000 at the end of the 1970s to 2.5 million at the start of the 2000s and has hovered around this mark ever since (Crisp et al., 2019). Austerity alongside punitive welfare regimes encompassing the intensification of conditionality and sanctions, and the tightening of the Work Capability Assessment (WCA) for Employment and Support Allowance (ESA), have therefore impacted these regions disproportionately. As further work by Beatty and Fothergill has shown, Blackburn and Blackpool in Lancashire were projected to lose £560 per working age adult since 2015, relative to £130 in

the Hart district in Hampshire (Beatty and Fothergill, 2016). This doubling down on post-industrial areas has aggravated regional inequality in the UK and undermined the principles of collective national identity upon which the modern welfare state was founded.

The scale and pace of these economic developments within work and welfare has had social repercussions. In many ex-mining communities like Barnsley, distribution centres for online platforms like Amazon and ASOS have become the major centre of employment. The detachment of customer experience from the workforce in such platform services in practice has led to the atomisation of communities and the legitimisation of poor working conditions (Bloodworth, 2018). Gary, a local government retiree, reflected on the changes in civic responsibility assumed by the major employers in Sheffield, his home town, and the impact on community life: 'particularly in Sheffield [you used to have] industrialists who made more money out of steel and everything else and mining and so on. But they actually founded the university, they gave land to create public parks, they created massive public awareness, created education etc. Now I don't see any evidence that today's entrepreneurs throw it back into the community. It's all into building villas in Spain or yachts.' Meanwhile, Ian, a steel worker, said that 'when I look around, there's no cohesion at all. I used to know everyone on my street. Now I talk to the neighbour who's the next house over – that's about it.' The trend of the last half-century has been the growing detachment of firms from the places they operate and from the communities in which they were once grounded. One of the challenges going forward is to achieve a re-grounding of business, re-establishing a legal framework and a sense of obligation that ensures they do not simply take from places without paying back into them.

Public services and trade unions

Workforces within public services have typically been characterised by a strong sense of team spirit and community working due to the strong social ethos implicit in the work. Sarah Y said that there was a strong sense of community in the children's hospital where she worked, and that 'We're very very close, you know, when we lose someone on the ward. You know, team working – you've got to be able to work in a team to be able to make the ward run. It's working together, mucking in when it's really really busy'. However, our interviewees also suggested our increasing social fragmentation has had its effect on our public services. Jude used to work in a small community-based day hospital and recalls that 'it was like an extended family'. But, she reflected, 'My work now is nothing like that.' Jude claimed that there was now a 'culture where we are trying to get every ounce rinsed out of people, and if you're giving that, you want to know why that person isn't giving that'.
However, like many of our interviewees,

Jude described her union activities and her involvement with the Labour Party as a tight-knit community: 'my union work…and my Labour work, the stuff I do outside, that *is* like an extended family because it's common values, and it's camaraderie, and a willingness to support you and back you up.' Sarah K said that she would never have stepped foot back on an ambulance after her assault if it hadn't been for the support of the GMB community – 'It feels kind of like a family'.

Expanding union membership and collective bargaining

The trade union movement continues to faces challenges in recruiting members from 'new' workplaces in the UK (particularly among platforms such as Uber and Deliveroo) and younger workers (in 2018, 77 percent of trade union members were aged 35 or older) (ONS 2019). Kahn-Freund's definition of collective bargaining as 'constant and unending dialogue of powers' is a distant reality for many: in the UK just 26 percent of the workforce have the terms and conditions of their work set by a collective agreement (TUC, 2019).

Workplaces with collective bargaining have higher pay, more training days, better equal opportunities practices, better holiday and sick pay provision, more family-friendly measures, less long-hours working and better health and safety (TUC, 2019; IMF, 2017; Hayter, 2015). The government should therefore prioritise the expansion of collective bargaining by giving unions guaranteed rights of access to workplaces to organise and individuals the right to join a union when they start a new job (IPPR, 2018). As the IPPR has argued, workers should be auto-enrolled into trade unions, including within the gig economy (IPPR, 2018).

Devolving power, diversifying ownership

The expansion of collective bargaining needs to be accompanied by bottom-up, grassroots policymaking that grows out of the specific needs of communities. Recent government policies to tackle regional inequality, build infrastructure and promote community-building have often been top-down, technocratically imposed on areas without listening to their concerns. For all its rhetoric of redressing power imbalances, the Northern Powerhouse imposed devolution centrally with only a vague connection to people's sense of place.

As Lisa Nandy argued in her *Everyday Socialism* essay, it is no coincidence that while the clean energy co-operative owned and run by hundreds of local people in her Wigan constituency has survived, the Sure Start that was planned and funded in Whitehall has not (Nandy, 2019). Progressive initiatives, and innovation, are at their best when they are rooted in the places in which people

live, work and socialise. Regional examples of community-building are strong and numerous: in Manchester, the Greater Manchester Pension Fund invests in local infrastructure and housing schemes; in Nottingham, Robin Hood Energy is tackling fuel poverty by providing local people with competitively-priced gas and electricity; in Leeds, Neighbourhood Networks are facilitating elderly people to live independent lives while contributing to their communities; in Preston, the council has led state-of-the-art community wealth-building activities. Resisting the seemingly inexorable pull of investment towards London and cities, the Preston model has redirected £70 million back into the Preston economy and £200 million into the Lancashire economy since 2013.

We also need to expand and re-imagine ownership models through which community voice can be heard and collective ownership can become a reality. This process of re-imagination should put participatory and deliberative models of decision-taking, such as citizens' assemblies, at its heart, so that workers in the everyday economy shape the agenda going forwards. One example of an ownership model for greater worker voice is Democratic Ownership Funds, which would require large companies to gradually dilute current shareholders' power by issuing new shares and turning them over into a workers' fund (Gowan and Lawrence, 2019). These could operate at the level of firms, communities or sectors, or could even be country-wide in the form of a social wealth fund.

Meanwhile, Public-Common Partnerships (PCP) would offer an 'overlapping patchwork' of co-ownership between state authorities, Commoners Associations and project-specific parties such as trade unions (Milburn and Russell, 2019).

Britain's economic model is broken: not only is our society suffering the effects of rapid changes within work and welfare, the decline of trade union membership, widening regional inequality, and the fraying of our social fabric. We are also going to have to transform the way our economy works over the next few decades to drastically reduce our carbon emissions.

The task for the next Labour Government will be to overcome multiple crises: our deep economic malaise; an increasingly unjust society, and the climate crisis. But these also present an opportunity. British history is strewn with examples of national crisis and division sowing the seeds of national renewal. The 1945 Labour government, led by Clement Attlee, forged the welfare state in place of a miserly, means-tested system, and reimagined political possibility out of the furnace of international war and the ashes of financial ruin. Trade unions were created by the people, for the people, in some of the most dangerous, precarious and poorly paid jobs – miners, millers, live-in shopgirls – in acknowledgement that strength could be found in numbers. While work and the shape of working people's lives have changed, the challenges, and many of the solutions, remain unchanged.

CONCLUSION

The everyday economy underpins the life of our communities and all other economic activity. Without refuse collectors, nurses, social care workers, police, and retail workers, rubbish would pile up in the streets, the sick and elderly would go uncared for. We would not be able to secure the goods and services we require for a basic standard of living.

They work in difficult jobs, and do so under ever more difficult conditions, as austerity has cut deep while demand has grown. This is not just about the public sector: everyday work in both public and private sectors has to be central to Labour's politics and the policies we pursue.

An agenda for the everyday economy

We are going to have to take radical action to address the structural failings of the UK economy. An industrial strategy that takes into account the everyday economy alongside more traditional high-skill, high-wage, high-productivity sectors must be a part of that. And any industrial strategy must have worker voice woven throughout it – otherwise it risks being a top-down process which misses opportunities and fails to take into account the expertise of workers, as well as their needs. Labour should never be a party that does to people – our historical mission is to give working people a voice. So let's ensure that industrial strategy thinking isn't confined to establish business groups and think tanks but fully draws on the ideas and priorities of working people.

First, we must push for fair **reward** and value to be given to jobs in the everyday economy. It means ensuring better pay through an increased minimum wage, as well as the promotion of collective bargaining, and promoting the status of workers. One way is to create national colleges (which can go on to pursue Royal College status) for professions such as care work, to boost the prestige of undervalued workers and to encourage the development of skills and best practice. Corporate governance reform - giving workers a place on company boards and remuneration committees - is also essential.

Second, we need to improve the **security** of workers. The prioritisation of shareholder value has exposed workers to the collapse of companies such as BHS, Carillion, and Thomas Cook. We need a new Companies Act to reform the firm so that its actions must take into

consideration the interests of workers, consumers and the wider common good.

Workers need their own independent voice through strong trade unions. The GMB has done excellent work supporting precarious workers pursue their rights through the courts, using new communications technology to organise and empower gig economy workers. But better protections need to be enshrined in law.

Third, work must offer meaningful **development**. Labour must be serious about building a system of lifelong learning. As new technologies drive the labour market changes people will need to be able to retrain and learn new skills. As Shadow Secretary of State for Education, Angela Rayner made significant progress with the promise of a National Education Service, and it is vital to keep pushing for a significant expansion in high quality vocational education. Improving the quality of management will help to boost our economic performance, as well as producing better workplaces with more opportunities for development. Learning must be at the heart of our work culture.

Fourth, people want **satisfaction** in work, and so we need to tackle our crisis of stress and mental ill-health. It means serious investment for parity in mental health provision, and a commitment to driving down waiting times. But to tackle the underlying causes, we need to address the causes of work-related stress, including low pay, powerlessness at work, and insecure employment. Added to insecurity are the problems of discrimination, harassment and other forms of maltreatment experienced within the workplace. These can be countered through corporate reform and trade-union membership is part of the solution, but we must also lower the barriers to employment tribunals and tighten up the sanctions on offending employers.

Fifth, if we want to restore **balance** in workers' lives, they need to be able to benefit from flexibility. Currently, flexibility for employers manifests as insecurity for workers. Expanding affordable, high quality childcare is essential. So is guaranteeing employment rights, especially for workers in the gig economy. The GMB's 'Taxi for Uber' campaign took one of the most ruthless gig economy platforms to court, and despite multiple appeals, managed to establish that Uber drivers are entitled to rights as employees of the company. Recruiting and supporting members in highly atomised jobs, is essential.

And finally, if we are to rebuild the sense of **community** in many parts of the country that have experienced profound and dislocating change, we must direct investment towards the parts of our country that need it most, and redistribute power as well as resources towards our towns, cities and regions. It is about empowering people to act for their communities, together.

Business depends on local and central government for roads, for railways and airports, for planning permission, the rule

of law and courts, and for a healthy and educated workforce. It is right therefore that business should pay back in, by providing good work for fair pay. Our best companies support their local communities.

Local and central government should champion the idea of 'social licensing', whereby companies coming into contact with the state – whether in the form of contracting, procurement, or seeking planning permission for a supermarket – are expected to sign up to a set of commitments, in the form of environmental or labour standards, progressive taxation, or other relevant community objectives (Foundational Economy Collective, 2018). This provides a statutory framework for a more reciprocal relationship between business and communities.

Transforming the everyday economy, rebuilding Labour's coalition

The Labour movement emerged in reaction to the exploitation of working people under unrestrained capitalism. They organised together to demand decent pay, good working conditions, and security in case of sickness and unemployment. This same ethos informs the trade union movement today, and it must be central to the purpose and the message of the Labour Party.

By telling a story about the everyday economy, we can speak about people whose work sustains our daily lives but which is underappreciated and undervalued. Everyone participates in the everyday economy, whether we live in thriving cities like London, or Wakefield, Leeds, Edinburgh or Ynys Mon. It is a unifying force in the country. It underpins the wider economy. It provides the bonds that bind people together in society. Yet it has been neglected for far too long.

Labour can rebuild its coalition and bring together the towns and cities, the regions and the nations of the UK by prioritising the everyday economy and so improving work and wages, supporting families and improving the local places people live. If we want to transform work, then we must start with the everyday.

LIST OF INTERVIEWEES

Interviewees recruited by GMB Union (Yorkshire & North Derbyshire Region) and conducted in July 2019.

Anne (assistant cook, care home)

Barbara (wellbeing coordinator, care home)

Steven (care support worker)

Gary (manager, county council education department)

Hashim (GMB convenor's office, city council)

Ian (steel worker)

Josh (agency worker)

Jude (mental health nurse)

Sarah K (ambulance technician)

Clayton (senior planner supply chain - Wilkinson's distribution centre)

Yvette (charity worker and former social worker)

Glynn (council worker)

Justyna (factory worker)

Sarah Y (ward clerk, children's hospital)

Barry (Hermes SE+ courier)

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GMB UNION

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