

TUC says amount of people in insecure work has increased by 1 million

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Stark new poll shows around 1 in 4 (23%) of those working full time and part time are struggling to afford or cannot afford their monthly costs. **TUC** says the findings highlight the importance of government's Make Work Pay agenda. Union body says delivering Employment Rights Bill is vital for boosting living standards after "14 years of Tory stagnation"

One in six (17%) of full or part time workers have skipped a meal every day (2%), most days (8%) or every week (7%) to reduce their spending in the last 3 months, according to new YouGov polling published by the TUC today (Monday).

The poll of 2544 adults in the UK – of which 1,513 were adults working full or part time – shows that many workers are continuing to struggle with the cost of living:

- **Skipping meals:** A sixth of adults (17%) working full time and part time have skipped a meal every day (2%), most days (8%) or every week (7%) to cut back on spending in the last 3 months. And 1 in 10 (10%) say they have skipped a meal every day or most days.
- **Food and essentials spending:** Nearly a quarter (24%) adults working full time and part time said they had made large or significant cutbacks on food spending in the last 12 months and nearly a fifth (19%) said they had cut back spending largely or significantly on other essentials – such as medicine, personal hygiene products and petrol.
- **Going into debt:** Almost 1 in 4 (23%) adults working full time and part time said they were struggling to afford or couldn't afford their monthly costs – with 1 in 10 (11%) reporting going into debt most months (4%) or every month (7%) over the last year.

- Energy costs: Nearly a third (31%) of adults polled working full time and part time said they had avoided putting the heating on most days (23%) or every day (8%) over the last three months. And 1 in 5 (21%) said they had reduced their use of hot water for showers and baths on most days (16%) or every day (5%) over the last three months to reduce spending.

Toxic economic legacy

The TUC said the findings showed the legacy of “14 years of Tory stagnation” – and the importance of Labour’s Make Work Pay agenda to ending the broken economic model which has resulted in declining living standards and low growth.

Under the Conservative real wages grew by just 0.3% a year – compared to 1.5% from 1997 to 2010.

At the same time, the number of people in insecure work soared by 1 million between 2011 and 2023 to 4.1 million.

The TUC estimates that the average worker would be £117 a week better off had pay increased since 2010 at the same pace as between 1997 and 2010

Pay growth during Conservative-led government from 2010-2024 was worse than for any other period of government since the 1920s.

Making work pay

The TUC says the government’s Make Work Pay agenda is essential for improving living standards, putting more money into people’s pockets and placing the UK economy on a sustainable footing to growth.

The Employment Rights Bill will help deliver a much-needed economic reset, and a departure from the “low growth, low rights” model which characterised fourteen years of Conservative government.

The Bill will return to parliament this week as it continues through its committee stages.

If delivered in full the bill is set to benefit over 10 million workers – including many on low incomes.

[Separate](#) polling carried out for the TUC by Opinium over the summer showed the government’s employment rights reforms were hugely popular across the political spectrum – including with Conservative and Reform voters.

TUC General Secretary Paul Nowak said: “Every worker deserves to earn a decent living. But many working households are struggling to make ends meet.

“That’s why the government’s Make Work Pay agenda is so important.

“After 14 years of Tory chaos and stagnation, we urgently need to boost living standards and to get more money into people’s pockets. This is vital for workers and for local economies too.

“The Employment Rights Bill will crack down on insecure work, boost sick pay and establish a Fair Work Agency to tackle bad bosses.

“We cannot continue with the same broken status quo.”