

Labour Market: Worker Exploitation Economic Development, Transport and Climate Emergency Scrutiny Commission

Stakeholder questionnaire

The City Mayor's Strategic Plan commits to tackle non-compliance across all sectors that may be blighted by low pay and poor conditions. This questionnaire is part of a collaboration by the Scrutiny Commission with the University of Leicester aiming to gather information on the monitoring, incidence, and practices of worker exploitation across different sectors in Leicester. For these purposes, worker exploitation is seen as a continuum stretching from low pay to poor conditions or Modern Slavery.

Given your expertise in monitoring and combatting specific aspects of worker exploitation, Leicester City Council (Economic Development, Transport and Climate Emergency Scrutiny Commission) would like to invite you to complete this questionnaire prior to the evidence session on worker exploitation. The Commission considers matters which include regeneration, public transport and cycle and car provision, tourism, adult learning and job provision.

We understand that some information might be regarded as sensitive and, in this instance, would encourage you to submit this to either the secretary of the Scrutiny Commission, Dr Ed Brown (edmund.brown@leicester.gov.uk) or the University of Leicester research lead, Prof Nik Hammer (nh80@le.ac.uk). Any information received in this regard will be treated confidentially. Equally, you can submit your views to edmund.brown@leicester.gov.uk should you be unable to attend.

The information gathered will form part of a report that will be published by the Scrutiny Commission at a future date in 2025. The report will not name any individuals but may, in some instances refer to organisations. Please note, however, that anything highlighted to us as confidential in the process will be treated as such by the Commission and the research team and be appropriately protected in the report.

Name of your organisation: Health and Safety Executive

What aspects of worker exploitation is your organisation concerned with?

Health, safety and welfare of workers

How do you gain access and/or gather information about this type of worker exploitation?

HSE Inspectors have the power of entry to carry out a workplace inspection or to investigate a concern or incident.

Information can be from:

- Concerns raised direct to HSE
- Frontline Inspections to workplaces
- Accidents/Incidents in workplaces that require investigation
- Shared intelligence from other labour market enforcement bodies

What aspects of worker exploitation, requests for support etc, do you track systematically, e.g. in administrative databases?

Internal record keeping used to track intelligence sharing.

Worker exploitation is not a defined category for reportable incidents (RIDDOR) however records kept where breaches of health and safety regulations are found and enforcement action taken.

Do you have indications that beyond the data you gather, there is any further, hidden, worker exploitation?
No
In your experience, are the forms of worker exploitation you encounter more prevalent in specific forms of business organisation (gig economy, supply chains, etc)?
Poor management of health and safety can indicate poor business management in general. Industries with low pay, poor supervision and use non-standard employment contracts can be associated with non-compliance of regulations.
In your experience, are the forms of worker exploitation you encounter more prevalent in specific localities, sectors, gender, ethnicity, etc?
HSE data does not cover all these categories.
Have there been any notable increases/declines in worker exploitation in your experience?
no
What, in your view, are the drivers of worker exploitation?
Poor working conditions, general poor management of a business and lack of understanding of worker rights
How do you address the worker exploitation or requests for support you encounter?
All workers are protected under health and safety law. Where breaches of health and safety regulations are found, HSE has a range of enforcement powers to take.
Do you report any incidence of worker exploitation to other organisations/agencies?
Intelligence is shared with other labour market enforcement bodies, agencies and regulatory bodies as appropriate
Do you collaborate with other organisations/agencies with regard to worker exploitation? Which ones?
HSE works in partnership where relevant, including data sharing, participation in joint initiatives and contributing to wider, more strategic discussions. This can include, GLAA, HMRC NMW, DWP, Local Authorities, Immigration Enforcement, NCA or Police
Is there anything specific the local Council could do to support labour market enforcement?
Each Local Authority has co-regulatory responsibility for health and safety and must make adequate enforcement provision under the Health and Safety (Enforcing Authority) Regulations 1998 (EA Regulations)
Is there anything else you would like to add/we should pay attention to?
HSE is responsible for workplace health, safety and welfare. It is not a first responder under Modern Slavery legislation and does not refer potential MS victims to the National Referral Mechanism.