The HR Dept statement

**HR experts call for greater clarity on employment status and Zero Hours Contracts**

Ahead of Wednesday’s (16 July 2014) second reading of the Small Business and Enterprise Bill, a leading outsourced HR company has called on MPs to provide greater clarity around employment status and Zero Hours Contracts.

The HR Dept, which provides employment advice and support to thousands of SMEs across the UK and Ireland through its 57 offices, says that MPs should use this opportunity to remove widespread concerns around the increasingly popular practice of Zero Hours Contracts and ensure that the new legislation protects employees as well as employers.

Sue Tumelty, founder and executive director of The HR Dept said, “The Bill is a very welcome piece of legislation as it sets out a whole raft of measures to tackle the problems most often faced by small businesses.

“During the next stages of passage of the Bill it is vital that Parliament amends it to secure better clarity on who is a worker, who is an employee and who is truly self-employed as at present the definition of each differs slightly from one area of legislation to another and is thus open to confusion.

“The Government should also ensure that staff on Zero Hours Contracts are given the right to be first in line for permanent hour contracts, providing of course they have the skills, before any external recruitment process begins.”

She continues: “Zero Hours Contracts have had much bad press – some of it justified, some of it not.

"Some employees will actually welcome the flexibility that Zero Hours Contracts provide when applied properly and fairly, and they can help provide a very important competitive edge for SMEs.

"But job centres must properly explain the risks associated with being a zero hours employee - and applicants should not feel forced into this option.

“The HR Dept will be carefully following the next stages of the Bill and urging Parliamentarians to strengthen its legal status.”

If you would like comment on the employment issues around the bill on Wednesday, Gemma Tumelty Tel: 0845 180 1120, Mobile: 07980 003 154, Email: Gemma.Tumelty@hrdept.co.uk will be available and pleased to provide interviews and comment.

Ends

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