

Cheerio! Influence on the U.S. Gig Economy from Across the Pond?

Insights

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Many point to the Brexit movement as a sign that Donald Trump's White House victory should have not been a surprise. Will a potential movement afoot in the United Kingdom be a precursor of things to come in the gig economy for the United States?

Led by Frank Field, who serves as the Chairman of the Commons work and pensions select committee, there is a push in the UK for a new "national standard of fair work in the gig economy." This standard includes suggested reforms such as:

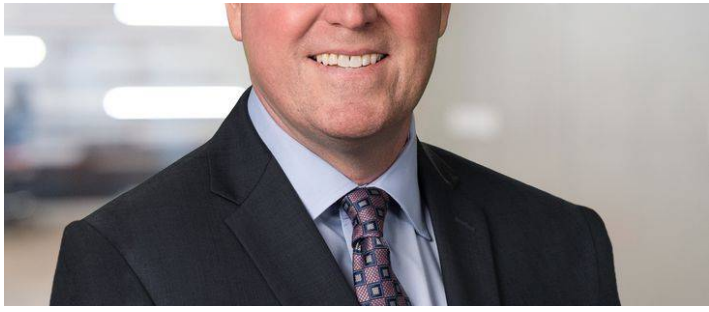
- a guarantee of income no lower than the national minimum wage *after* taking into account costs such as fuel and car insurance;
- four weeks' notice before working patterns are changed or work is withdrawn; and
- transparency about how companies calculate payments to workers.

Field recognizes that some workers are drawn to the gig economy for various reasons, but it's safe to say that he is not a big fan of the model. He has called out the "sulphurous effect" that the gig economy has on the "bottom of Britain's labour market." And he characterized the life of many gig economy workers as one that "represents a life of low pay, chronic insecurity and exploitation."

Field's proposal has been submitted to Matthew Taylor, the Chief Executive of the Royal Society of Arts, who was commissioned by the Prime Minister in October 2016 to review employment practices across Great Britain with an eye towards changes that might needed to keep pace with modern business models, including the gig economy. A spokesperson for the Taylor review said that it would consider Field's submission. Stay tuned to see whether Field's ideas have any legs and whether we might see similar ideas proposed in the United States.

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