

Ministry of Labour

GIVING WORKERS A VOICE

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Past and Future

Ministry of Labour not a new idea in UK or in Europe

Past

- First established by Ministries and Secretaries Act, 1916
- Department of Employment was abolished by Thatcher

Future

- Use of Prerogative powers
- Statutory powers under Ministers of the Crown Act 1975

So no need for primary legislation – quick and obstruction free!



General Roles and Responsibilities

- Provide a strong voice at the heart of Government for UK's 33 million workers
- Establish a National Economic Forum with Treasury Department
- Provide a link across the many Departments impacting on labour market
- 3 specific major tasks



Rolling out Sectoral Collective Bargaining

- Establish National Joint Councils in each industry
- Encourage employers and unions to meet, agree scope, procedure, terms, application and enforcement issues for their sector
- Establish national level cross-sector structures to develop and deliver employment policy, economic planning and labour standards
- Provide a natural place for unions and employers to meet, discuss and reach agreement on industrial issues



Modernising Labour Relations

- Still need safety net of statutory employment rights - clarify, simplify.
- Universal definition of worker
- End blacklisting and ZHC
- Modernise H&S laws to reflect fragmented labour market
- Update equality legislation



Enforcement mechanisms

- Oversee the creation and operation of a new Labour Court and Labour Inspectorate system
- Provide a home to monitor and act on all major industrial accidents effecting workers including rail, air and marine sectors.
- Supervise international labour standards and liaise with Department of Trade and DBEIS over supply chains, certificate of standards and licences on goods, services and transport entering UK



Overview of Role of Ministry of Labour

- Seat at the Cabinet table providing a voice for UK's 33 million workers
- To coordinate government activities effecting working life in Britain
- To radically restructure and modernise workplace relations
- To plan labour supply, eliminate skill shortages, provide education, training and apprenticeships
- To supervise, monitor and improve international labour standards and laws
- To maintain a properly resourced Labour Inspectorate
- To encourage investment in efficiency, productivity, innovation and R&D
- To establish, with the Treasury, a National Economic Forum to create and sustain a fair, efficient and productive economy for the benefit of all
- To promote and oversee policies to achieve above aims including enforcement powers, attaching conditions to public contracts, grants, licences etc



Sources of information



Manifesto for Labour Law: towards a comprehensive revision of workers' rights



IER videos on CB: <http://www.ier.org.uk/news/new-you-tube-clip-ewing-hendy>

High Pay video at www.highpaycentre.org/blog/new-film-income-inequality-in-the-uk



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