

Ministers step up bid to end 'exploitative' zero-hours contracts

Angela Rayner, the deputy prime minister, will hold talks with union bosses and business leaders on Wednesday as the government pursues its ambition of ending "exploitative" zero-hours contracts.

Sky News understands that Ms Rayner, business secretary Jonathan Reynolds and Justin Madders, the employment rights minister, will meet representatives of major business groups including the CBI and FSB as part of Labour's 'Make Work Pay' reforms.

Sources said it would provide a forum for ministers to outline further details of their plans amid a growing backlash from the private sector.

Officials from the TUC, Unite and USDAW, the shopworkers' union, will be among those in attendance, according to one insider.

Figures suggest that the number of workers on zero-hours contracts has risen over the last decade to more than one million.

The government has argued that the level of insecurity they create leaves workers in a vulnerable position.

"It cannot be right that someone on a zero-hours contract can have their shift cancelled at the last minute on the bus to work," a government source said.

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Ministers are expected to say that the government does not intend to ban zero-hours contracts altogether, with students and carers able to remain working on such terms if they are offered guaranteed hours.

The government has held a series of roundtable meetings with bosses in recent weeks, pledging that the private sector would be able to have its say on the reforms "at every stage".

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MakeUK and U Hospitality will be among the other business groups represented at Wednesday's talks.