

# NO TO ZERO HOURS CONTRACTS

Lowestoft Coalition Against the Cuts and Waveney Trades Union Council supported the TUC-organised Decent Jobs Week outside Lowestoft's Sports Direct.

There are now over 1.4m people working on Zero Hours Contracts, counted as a job but with no guarantee of work or pay. These "employees" can be called in to work or simply be left sitting by the phone. Employers needn't give notice or dismiss these employees: the work will simply fade away. How can employers justify imposing these conditions which make a normal family life impossible? The hugely profitable Sports Direct employs 20,000 workers. 17,000 have no guarantee of regular hours.

Are these big, profitable and established firms, which include Argos, Amazon, McDonald's and JD Wetherspoon, really unable to structure their business so that those employees who want regular work get it?

Zero Hours Contracts are only part of employers' drive to casualise the workforce. Astonishing figures from the TUC show that one in every forty of the net jobs added to the economy between 2008 and 2014 has been a full-time employee job. 26 in every 40 have been part-time.

Locally CareUK is downgrading working conditions in care homes it recently acquired from Suffolk County Council. In spite of regulations which are meant to

guarantee that workers retain their conditions if they are transferred to a private employer CareUK is cutting pay by nearly £2 per hour. The great majority of present care workers will not be transferring to Britten Court, CareUK's new home in Lowestoft. BirdsEye employs agency staff on what are effectively zero hours contracts; many outsourced WaveneyNorse workers are the same. Is this the right way for our councils to treat their employees by outsourcing work so that others will cut pay and conditions, which they do?

Waveney TUC and LCAC wants more commitment and decisive action from political parties and from trade unions. The casualisation of work is another symptom of growing inequality in British society and it is set to get worse.



Leafletting against zero hours contracts outside Sports Direct in Lowestoft, December 2014

**We didn't vote for these cuts and this is our alternative\*...**

End tax dodging believed to cost £150 billion a year

Tax the rich

Stop the disastrous foreign wars, expenditure on weapons of mass destruction and invest in green jobs

Stop the bankers paying themselves obscene bonuses

Levy a Robin Hood tax on bank turnover

\*Resolution passed at LCAC launch rally - 2 March, 2011

## WHAT YOU CAN DO...

- Support LCAC by joining our leafletting every Saturday, 11-1pm, in the town centre precinct, outside the Britten Centre.
- Join our email list - keep up to date with activity in your area.
- Photocopy this leaflet and pass onto friends and workmates.
- Want to know more? We can supply a speaker for your group or trade union branch.

Contact us

lowestoftagainstthecuts@hotmail.co.uk  
01502 569174 / 568684 / 574010



# ANOTHER LOCAL CARE HOME DISASTER

Private care homes have an awful reputation. Orme House in Lowestoft was closed in 2012 after appalling conditions including "faeces on walls, doors and equipment" were discovered. The sell-off of Suffolk County Council's homes to the private equity firm CareUK was labelled "shameful" by Lowestoft Coalition Against the Cuts and our prediction that the Council's "savings" would come at the expense of staff training, pay and the welfare of residents has been borne out.

Many experienced staff have quit the homes and pay for new recruits has been cut by about £2 per hour. Training is not hands-on, it is conducted through video

programmes. Intake to two homes was suspended after CareUK's Mildenhall Lodge was issued with an enforcement order because of multiple failures including inadequate food and "the inability to find staff". As a result Lowestoft's Britten Court had its opening delayed.

Lessons should have been learnt. However laudable it is for a care home to have a fund-raising Christmas party there is a bigger picture. When Stephen Ardley, Mayor and Deputy Leader of the ruling Conservative Party on Waveney District Council, agreed to attend and when the Journal sent a reporter and photographer and printed a glowing report of the event one would take that at face value. One would conclude that all was well at the

Dell Residential Care Home in Oulton Broad.

## ENFORCEMENT ORDER

That isn't the case. Inspections by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) found failures there which were not remedied. At the last inspection the home failed four out of five tests including failure in "caring for people safely and protecting them from harm". The QVC is taking enforcement action against the owners.

The Mayor, Stephen Ardley, should have asked

questions before accepting the Dell's invitation. The Journal should have checked before affording this business such lavish and favourable

publicity. The information is on the CQC website. It was reported to HealthEast, the Great Yarmouth and Waveney Clinical Commissioning Group, in November and is in the minutes of its Governing Body. It was reported to Suffolk County Council. Lowestoft Coalition Against the Cuts knew.

What is alarming is that few in the general public know. Suffolk County Council's website still describes the Dell as a: "Friendly, pleasant Residential Care Home... The Dell is a clean, safe and comfortable environment for all its residents". We could find no mention of the CQC's report on the Dell's website but it does claim that: "the home maintains one of the finest care home reputations in our community".



[www.lowestoftagainstthecuts.org.uk](http://www.lowestoftagainstthecuts.org.uk)