The Workers' Observatory

MANIFESTO 2021
Scottish Parliament Election

We See the City.

Delivery riders, distribution drivers, and app-based workers are everywhere. We have served the public during the pandemic and throughout the hard winter for little reward. At the end of 2020, Edinburgh gig workers launched the Workers' Observatory to monitor work in our towns and cities and win better conditions in gig work, in collaboration with University of Edinburgh and the Scottish Trades Union Congress (STUC).

We are calling on Scottish parliamentary candidates to back our ambition for a **city-by-city transformation** of the relationship between gig economy companies and gig workers. Ahead of the Scottish elections, please ask your candidates to support our five key demands.

Nothing About Us Without Us

1

Before any decision is made affecting the gig economy, both Local Government and the Scottish Government should consult gig workers collectively. This might include decisions affecting licenses for private cab drivers, minimum pay in private care, or road safety policy.

MSP Pledge 1:

I will inform gig workers when I become aware of policy changes that may affect them, in areas from licensing to road safety, and seek to engage workers in collective consultation.

Show Us the Full Picture

2

Gig companies are always refusing to allow data they hold about workers to be known by workers. The reason is that the data would reveal how they truly work behind the scenes, such as how they determine pay, create schedules, and hire and fire workers. The Scottish Government and MSPs should work with gig workers to identify gaps in knowledge, request information from gig companies, and share the data with workers via Workers' Observatory.

MSP Pledge 2:

I will consult with gig workers about what information they would want to extract from companies and work in parliament to help extract and share this information.

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Let Us Meet on our Own Terms

3

Gig work can be isolating, and platform algorithms often deliberately prevent workers from encountering each other in the city. This makes it hard to share experiences, build demands, and create solidarity. Scottish and Local Government should make resources available for gig workers to establish hubs in the city, such as a bike hub for gig workers providing tea and coffee, toilets, a space to meet, as well as the opportunity to maintain and repair bikes and gear.

MSP Pledge 3:

I will write to councils and the Scottish Government asking them to consider providing gig workers with resources to establish local hubs at convenient places in towns and cities.

Investigate Injuries

4

Just like in other workplaces, when gig workers have accidents or injuries at work, these should be reported and monitored. Councils should receive accident reports from gig workers, such as food delivery cyclists, and share the information with riders so that they can monitor the risks and hazards of their work and develop appropriate demands.

MSP Pledge 4:

I will support a review of the rules and responsibilities concerning the reporting of gig worker accidents and seek to put information about risks and accidents in the hands of workers.

Invest in Our Innovation

5

The government is funding what it calls 'data-driven innovation', which directly improves the capacity of companies that use gig work to extract profits. In response, gig workers are developing tools and tactics to change the power relationship with platforms, but they have very scant resources. The Scottish Government should fund initiatives like the Workers' Observatory that allow workers to innovate, build solidarity, and develop tools for organising.

MSP Pledge 5:

I will lobby the Scottish Government to allocate resources from its data-driven innovation, digital economy, and Fair Work directorate budgets to worker-led organising initiatives and worker-driven innovation in the collaborative, platform, and gig economy, to ensure that gig workers are equipped to innovate and organise.

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