



# Work and Pensions Committee

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From the Chair

7 March 2017

Gary Simpson  
Managing Director, Parcelforce Worldwide

*Mark Gary Simpson*

## **Self-employment and the gig economy inquiry**

The Work and Pensions Committee is currently carrying out an inquiry on self-employment. Our evidence sessions on 8<sup>th</sup> February and 22<sup>nd</sup> February heard from self-employed couriers and some of the companies that they work for.

In light of these sessions and recent media reports, the Committee has some questions for Parcelforce:

1. A report in the Guardian on 6<sup>th</sup> March 2017 stated that Parcelforce's self-employed couriers are required to pay a charge of £250 if they are unable to work on a given day and cannot arrange cover.<sup>1</sup> Can you please confirm whether this is correct, and explain what the legal basis of this policy is?
2. Please could you confirm what Parcelforce would expect the average loss to a courier to be per day not worked, taking into account both lost earnings and the charge;
3. Please could you also supply data on the proportion of courier rounds each week that are covered by a substitute courier, and what proportion of these are covered by a) a substitute identified by the courier and b) by Parcelforce, after levying the £250 charge;

Please could you also supply, in line with your competitors:

4. A copy of Parcelforce's contract for self-employed couriers;

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2017/mar/06/sick-parcelforce-couriers-royal-mail-mands-john-lewis-hamleys-dpd>



5. Details of the costs that Parcelforce couriers are expected to meet (eg. fuel, vehicles, vehicle maintenance and insurance, uniforms) and how these are split between Parcelforce and the courier;
6. Data on the average hourly rate that Parcelforce couriers receive, both before and after essential costs such as fuel, insurance and vehicle maintenance are taken into account, and details of any audits that Parcelforce undertakes to ensure that its couriers are receiving at least the National Living Wage;
7. Data on the number of hours that Parcelforce couriers work per week, broken down into ten hour blocks (eg. the proportion and number working 1-10 hours, 11-20 hours and so on).
8. Data on the duration of couriers' work for Parcelforce: for example, what proportion of couriers work for Parcelforce for up to six months, up to one year, up to two years, and so.

We would be grateful if you could please provide a response by 20 March.

Best wishes,

**Rt Hon Frank Field MP**  
**Chair**