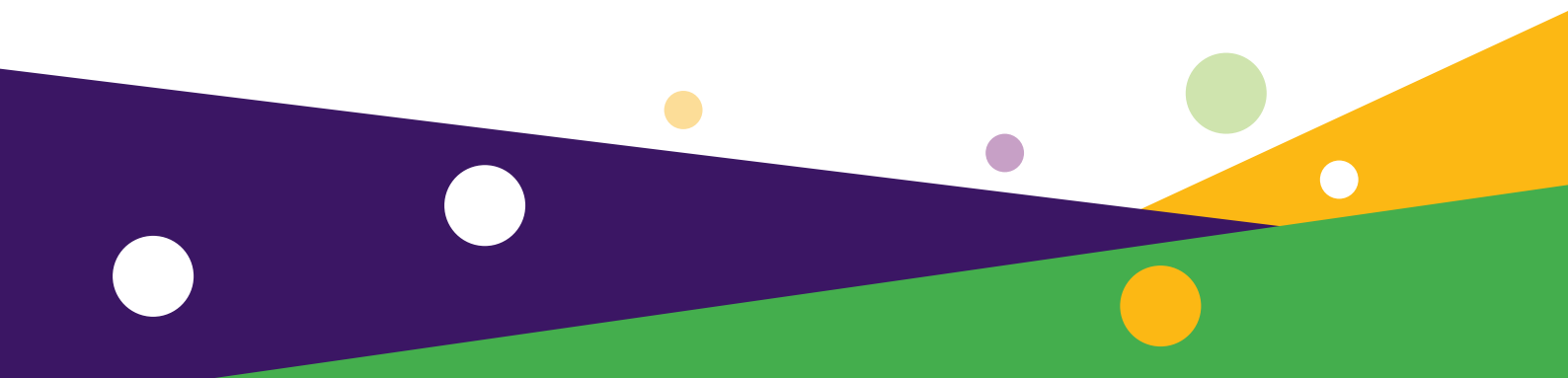


Version 1
Last updated 24 March 2020



Coronavirus

A comprehensive guide for
Derbyshire UNISON members



We have put this guide together for members as some were complaining both about conflicting information and also the number of government/ NHS advice regulations they were being directed towards.

It is intended to be comprehensive but by its very nature, it is brief. For fuller details about coronavirus, you may want to visit the [government website](#) or the [NHS website](#).

You should also check in to your [Derbyshire UNISON website](#) regularly for updates on work-related issues.

Obviously, our main concern is the health and welfare of members, their families and friends and the people we provide services for.

With an ever-changing situation, we may not always have a full answer to your query and some matters may have to wait until the crisis is over. Our priorities will be for 'life and limb' issues. But we will always try and assist.

Finally, this document will be updated as and when necessary with a version number and amended date on the front cover.

Keep safe!

Jeanette Lloyd

Branch Secretary

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WHAT IS CORONAVIRUS?

Coronavirus is a group of viruses which normally cause mild illness, with symptoms similar to a common cold. Novel coronavirus is the term used for strains not previously identified in humans.

The latest strain, first identified in December 2019 in China, has now formally been named COVID-19. It is very different from, and far more serious than, the usual seasonal influenza outbreaks that happen every year.

Symptoms can include a fever, fatigue, dry cough and difficulty breathing; as well as other symptoms related to the common cold. Following transmission, symptoms take an average of 5 days to begin – this

differs to flu viruses which tend to incubate very quickly.

The disease is air-borne and contracted by breathing in viral droplets, ejected during coughing, sneezing or even breathing. The virus cannot survive on non-living objects for more than a few hours.

In more severe cases, the virus can cause pneumonia, an infection which causes inflammation of the lungs and greater breathing difficulties. While everyone is at risk of contracting coronavirus, the risk is higher for certain groups, particularly those over the age of 65 or with existing health conditions.

WHAT IS A PANDEMIC?

A pandemic is an outbreak that affects hundreds of millions of people worldwide, leading to a large proportion of them becoming ill. Pandemics occur when a virus with very different features emerges. Because it is new, people have little or no immunity to it.

Normally there are around two or three such pandemics every century. The most recent was in 2009

with the H1N1 virus, commonly referred to as swine flu. Around half a million people died globally.

An earlier outbreak of the same H1N1 virus in 1918 caused an estimated 20–40 million deaths worldwide, mostly among people aged between 20 and 45.

On 11th March, the World Health Organisation defined the coronavirus outbreak a pandemic.

HOW DOES IT SPREAD?

The main way the virus spreads is by contamination when someone carrying the virus coughs or sneezes.

Viral droplets can travel up to six metres, making person-to-person transmission particularly likely. Virus-

es can also spread through particles known as aerosols, released from the lungs. These can travel further and can remain in the air or on surfaces for several hours.

HOW IS IT TREATED?

There is currently no vaccine or medication for coronavirus. Scientists are trying to produce one but it is unlikely to be available before the virus has spread globally.

Medications used to treat the flu can reduce symptoms, such as coughing and aches and pains. It is particularly serious if the virus leads to pneumonia and other more acute respiratory diseases because these cannot be treated with antibiotics.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

The most common symptoms of coronavirus are recent onset of:

- new continuous cough and/or
- high temperature

For most people, coronavirus (COVID-19) will be a mild illness.

WHO IS AT RISK?

Everyone is at risk. But there are some for whom the risks are higher. The UK government categorises the following as at higher risk:

- Aged 70 or older (regardless of medical conditions)
- Under 70 with an underlying health condition listed below (ie anyone instructed to get a flu jab as an adult each year on medical grounds):
 - Chronic (long-term) respiratory diseases, such as asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), emphysema or bronchitis
 - Chronic heart disease, such as heart failure
 - Chronic kidney disease
 - Chronic liver disease, such as hepatitis
 - Chronic neurological conditions, such as Parkinson's disease, motor neurone disease, multiple sclerosis (MS), a learning disability or cerebral palsy
 - Diabetes
 - Problems with your spleen – for example, sickle cell disease or if you have had your spleen removed

- A weakened immune system as the result of conditions such as HIV and AIDS, or medicines such as steroid tablets or chemotherapy
- Being seriously overweight (a body mass index (BMI) of 40 or above)
- Those who are pregnant

There are some who are at even higher risk. These people should already have been contacted by the NHS:

- People who have received an organ transplant and remain on ongoing immunosuppression medication
- People with cancer who are undergoing active chemotherapy or radiotherapy
- People with cancers of the blood or bone marrow such as leukaemia who are at any stage of treatment
- People with severe chest conditions such as cystic fibrosis or severe asthma (requiring hospital admissions or courses of steroid tablets)
- People with severe diseases of body systems, such as severe kidney disease (dialysis)

IF I HAVE THE SYMPTOMS, WHAT SHOULD I DO TO MINIMISE RISK TO OTHERS?

- If you live alone and you have symptoms of coronavirus illness (COVID-19), however mild, stay at home for 7 days from when your symptoms started.
- If you live with others and you are the first in the household to have symptoms of coronavirus, then you must stay at home for 7 days, but all other household members who remain well must stay at home and not leave the house for 14 days. The 14-day period starts from the day when the first person in the house became ill.
- For anyone else in the household who starts displaying symptoms, they need to stay at

home for 7 days from when the symptoms appeared, regardless of what day they are on in the original 14 day isolation period.

- It is likely people living within a household will infect each other or be infected already. Staying at home for 14 days will greatly reduce the overall amount of infection the household could pass on to others in the community
- If you can, move any vulnerable individuals (such as the elderly and those with underlying health conditions) out of your home, to stay with friends or family for the duration of the home isolation period

- If you cannot move vulnerable people out of your home, stay away from them as much as possible
- If you have coronavirus symptoms:
 - do not go to a GP surgery, pharmacy or hospital
 - you do not need to contact 111 to tell them you're staying at home
- If your condition gets worse, or your symptoms do not get better after 7 days, use the [NHS 111 online](#) coronavirus service. If you do not have internet access, call NHS 111.

WHAT SHOULD I DO TO MINIMISE RISK IN GENERAL?

- Avoid contact with someone who is displaying symptoms of coronavirus. These symptoms include high temperature and/or new and continuous cough.
- Avoid non-essential use of public transport. In fact, people should avoid travelling unless it is essential. Essential travel, the Department for Health and Social Care said, "does not include visits to second homes, camp sites, caravan parks or similar, whether for isolation purposes or holidays".
- Work from home, where possible. Your employer should support you to do this. Please refer to employer guidance for more information.
- Contact Derbyshire UNISON via branch@unisondc.co.uk or 01629 582266 if you run into difficulties.
- Avoid large and small gatherings in public spaces.
- Avoid gatherings with friends and family. Keep in touch using remote technology such as phone, internet, and social media.
- Use telephone or online services to contact your GP or other essential services.

Following this advice means you are complying with 'social distancing' guidelines.

FURTHER ADVICE TO PREVENT THE SPREAD OF CORONAVIRUS IF YOU DISPLAY SYMPTOMS THAT MAY MEAN YOU ARE INFECTED

If you are living with children

Keep following advice to the best of your ability, however, we are aware not all these measures will be possible.

What we have seen so far is that children with coronavirus appear to be less severely affected. It is nevertheless important to do your best to follow guidance.

If you have a vulnerable person living with you

Minimise as much as possible the time any vulnerable

family members spend in shared spaces such as kitchens, bathrooms and sitting areas, and keep shared spaces well ventilated.

Aim to keep 2 metres (3 steps) away from vulnerable people you live with and encourage them to sleep in a different bed where possible. If they can, they should use a separate bathroom from the rest of the household. Make sure they use separate towels from the other people in your house, both for drying themselves after bathing or showering and for hand-hygiene purposes.

If you do share a toilet and bathroom with a vulnerable person, it is important you clean them every time

you use them (for example, wiping surfaces you have come into contact with). Another tip is to consider drawing up a rota for bathing, with the vulnerable person using the facilities first.

If you share a kitchen with a vulnerable person, avoid using it while they are present. If they can, they should take their meals back to their room to eat. If you have one, use a dishwasher to clean and dry the family's used crockery and cutlery. If this is not possible, wash them using your usual washing up liquid and warm water and dry them thoroughly. If the vulnerable person is using their own utensils, remember to use a separate tea towel for drying these.

We understand it will be difficult for some people to separate themselves from others at home. You should do your very best to follow guidance and everyone in your household should regularly wash their hands, avoid touching their face, and clean frequently touched surfaces.

If you are breastfeeding while infected

There is currently no evidence to suggest that the virus can be transmitted through breast milk. Infection can be spread to the baby in the same way as to anyone in close contact with you. The current evidence is that children with coronavirus get much less severe symptoms than adults. The benefits of breastfeeding outweigh any potential risks of transmission of the virus through breast milk or by being in close contact; however, this will be an individual decision and can be discussed with your midwife, health visitor or GP by telephone.

If you or a family member are feeding with formula or expressed milk, you should sterilise the equipment carefully before each use. You should not share bottles or a breast pump with someone else.

You can find more information at the [Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists](#) website.

Cleaning and disposal of waste

When cleaning you should use your usual household products, like detergents and bleach, as these will be very effective at getting rid of the virus on surfaces. Clean frequently touched surfaces such as door handles, handrails, remote controls and table tops. This

is particularly important if you have an older or vulnerable person in the house.

Personal waste (such as used tissues) and disposable cleaning cloths can be stored securely within disposable rubbish bags. These bags should be placed into another bag, tied securely and kept separate from other waste. This should be put aside for at least 72 hours before being put in your usual external household waste bin.

Dispose of other household waste normally.

Laundry

To minimise the possibility of dispersing virus through the air, do not shake dirty laundry.

Wash items as appropriate in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. All dirty laundry can be washed in the same load.

If you do not have a washing machine, wait a further 72 hours after your 7-day (for individual isolation) or 14-day isolation period (for households) has ended when you can then take the laundry to a public laundrette.

What you can do to help yourself get better

Drink water to keep yourself hydrated; you should drink enough during the day so your urine (pee) is a pale clear colour. You can use over-the-counter medications, such as paracetamol, to help with some of your symptoms. Use these according to the instructions on the packet or label and do not exceed the recommended dose.

Wash your hands often

Clean your hands frequently each day by washing with soap and water for 20 seconds or using hand sanitiser. This will help protect you and the people you live with. This step is one of the most effective ways of reducing the risk of passing infection to others.

Cover your coughs and sneezes

Cover your mouth and nose with disposable tissues when you cough or sneeze. If you do not have one to hand, sneeze into the crook of your elbow, not into your hand.

If you have a carer, they should use disposable tissues to wipe away any mucus or phlegm after you have sneezed or coughed. Then they should wash their hands with soap and water.

Dispose of tissues into a disposable rubbish bag and immediately wash your hands with soap and water or use a hand sanitiser.

Facemasks

We do not recommend the use of facemasks as an effective means of preventing the spread of infection. Facemasks play an important role in clinical settings, such as hospitals, but there's very little evidence of benefit from their use outside of these settings.

Do not have visitors in your home

Do not invite or allow social visitors, such as other friends and family, to enter your home. If you want to speak to someone who is not a member of your household, use the phone or social media.

If you or a family member receive essential care in your home, then carers should continue to visit. Carers will be provided with facemasks and gloves to reduce the risk of you passing on the infection.

If you have pets in the household

At present, there is no evidence that companion animals/pets such as dogs and cats can be infected with

coronavirus.

Advice for informal carers

If you are caring for someone who is vulnerable, there are some simple steps that you can take to protect them and to reduce their risk at the current time.

Ensure you follow advice on good hygiene such as:

- **Wash your hands on arrival and often, using soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use hand sanitiser**
- **Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when you cough or sneeze**
- **Put used tissues in the bin immediately and wash your hands afterwards**
- **Do not visit if you are unwell and make alternative arrangements for their care**
- **Provide information on who they should call if they feel unwell, how to use [NHS 111 online coronavirus service](#) and leave the number for NHS 111 prominently displayed**
- **Find out about different sources of support that could be used and access further advice on creating a contingency plan is available from [Carers UK](#)**
- **Look after your own well-being and physical health during this time.**

THE NEW MEASURES FROM TODAY

Reducing day-to-day contact with other people will reduce the spread of the infection. That is why the government is introducing three new measures:

- **Requiring people to stay at home, except for very limited purposes**
- **Closing non-essential shops and community spaces**
- **Stopping all gatherings of more than two people in public**

Everyone must comply with these new measures. The relevant authorities, including the police, are being given powers to enforce them – including fines and dispersing gatherings.

The measures are effective immediately. The Government will look again at these measures in three weeks and relax them if the evidence shows this is possible.

1. Staying at home

You should only leave the house for one of four reasons:

- **Shopping for basic necessities, for example food and medicine, which must be as infrequent as possible.**
- **One form of exercise a day, for example a run, walk, or cycle - alone or with members of your household.**

- Any medical need, or to provide care or to help a vulnerable person.
- Travelling to and from work, but only where this absolutely cannot be done from home.
- Communal places within parks, such as playgrounds, sports courts and outdoor gyms.
- Places of worship, except for funerals attended by immediate families.

These four reasons are exceptions - even when doing these activities, you should be minimising time spent outside of the home and ensuring you are 2 metres apart from anyone outside of your household.

These measures must be followed by everyone.

2. Closing non-essential shops and public spaces

- Last week, the Government ordered certain businesses - including pubs, cinemas and theatres - to close. The Government is now extending this requirement to a further set of businesses and other venues, including:
 - All non-essential retail stores - this will include clothing and electronics stores; hair, beauty and nail salons; and outdoor and indoor markets, excluding food markets.
 - Libraries, community centres, and youth centres.
 - Indoor and outdoor leisure facilities such as bowling alleys, arcades and soft play facilities.

- Hotels, hostels, bed and breakfasts, campsites, caravan parks, and boarding houses for commercial/leisure use (excluding permanent residents and key workers).

3. Stopping public gatherings

To make sure people are staying at home and apart from each other, the Government is also stopping all public gatherings of more than two people.

There are only two exceptions to this rule:

- Where the gathering is of a group of people who live together - this means that a parent can, for example, take their children to the shops if there is no option to leave them at home.
- Where the gathering is essential for work purposes - but workers should be trying to minimise all meetings and other gatherings in the workplace.

In addition, the Government is stopping social events, including weddings, baptisms and other religious ceremonies. This will exclude funerals, which can be attended by immediate family.

The screenshot shows the GOV.UK website page for Coronavirus (COVID-19) guidance. The page has a dark blue header with the GOV.UK logo and a search bar. Below the header, the main heading reads "Coronavirus (COVID-19): what you need to do". Underneath, there is a section titled "Stay at home" with a list of bullet points: "Only go outside for food, health reasons or essential work", "Stay 2 metres (6ft) away from other people", and "Wash your hands as soon as you get home". Below this, it states "Anyone can spread the virus." and provides a link for "Full guidance on staying at home and away from others". At the bottom, there are three logos: "STAY AT HOME" with a house icon, "PROTECT THE NHS" with a cross icon, and "save lives" with a heart icon. The footer contains three columns of announcements: "You must stay at home apart from essential travel or you may be fined", "If you live in the UK and are currently abroad you are strongly advised to return now", and "All non-essential shops and community spaces are closed".

SHOULD I BE TRAVELING TO WORK?

There have been so many different documents issued by various authorities and bodies about working during the current crisis and your rights at work it would take dozens of pages to reiterate here.

Ultimately, much of it is now out of date, especially since last night's virtual lockdown. We have condensed as much of that information into the key messages members need to know.

Discussions with some employers will continue, particularly in ensuring they have moved or are rapidly moving towards insisting only essential staff need to actually travel to their work (if their job cannot be conducted remotely) and that ALL non-essential tasks are cancelled.

There is a difference, because of our recognition rights won over decades, between what we can agree for local government workers (councils, schools) and those in the private and community sectors. That is why UNISON puts so much emphasis on recruitment. We're not just an individual protection society; we negotiate collective rights that really mean something in crises like this and many other occasions.

But our message to employers is the same. From now on, UNISON believes the only workers who should be physically traveling to work should be those performing essential tasks. And that should remain the case even if such workers cannot work from home.

Crucially for those covered by the NJC (National Joint Council for local government services), it has been recognised that:

“Ultimately, in many cases employers will have no option other than to accept that some employees can neither work at home nor be redeployed / seconded etc and will therefore be staying at home on full pay for the duration of this emergency. The LGA is and will continue to be in discussion with government regarding the support required for the sector.”

If your council or school manager is refusing to act sensibly and sensitively over this, please bring this to their attention and also inform Derbyshire UNISON via branch@unisondc.co.uk or 01629 582266.

WHAT IS ESSENTIAL WORK?

The best person to determine what is essential work is probably yourself! However, we expect employers will want to be seen to be taking the final decision.

Already today it is very clear that many employers are rapidly heeding government advice and virtually closing all operations or only leaving running those which are crucial to life and limb.

It is impossible to present a definitive list of essential tasks or occupations. A good starting point is the government's own key workers list published for those still able to send their child(ren) to school. (UNISON has noted that some jobs recently categorised by the prime minister as 'low-skilled' are now 'essential!'):

- **Social Workers**
- **Care workers**
- **Frontline health and social care staff and those required to maintain the sector**
- **Childcare, support and teaching staff in**

schools and specialist education professionals required to support this provision

- **Staff essential to the operation of the justice system**
- **Workers delivering key frontline services**
- **Staff involved in the management of the deceased**
- **Admin staff in local government essential to the delivery of the COVID-19 response**
- **Staff delivering essential public services such as payment of benefits**
- **Staff involved in the distribution of food or other key goods**
- **Transport workers**
- **IT staff necessary to support COVID-19 response**
- **Call centre staff**
- **Payment providers**
- **Waste disposal services**

However, it does not mean that ALL staff in such occupations should be traveling to work. Clearly, for instance, schools with an estimated 10% of students in attendance do not need 100% staffing, nor would we expect every worker in a prison to be classed as 'essential to the operation of the justice system' and a call centre is only essential in providing

responses on behalf of government or health authorities, not in selling television packages!

If you feel you have been incorrectly classified as an essential/key/critical worker, firstly take it up with your immediate line manager then contact Derbyshire UNISON via branch@unisondc.co.uk or 01629 582266 if it is not resolved.

STAYING SAFE AS AN ESSENTIAL WORKER

Workers most at risk are those providing adult social care to individuals who show symptoms associated with having been infected with coronavirus. It is the intention of these guidelines not to simply point members in the direction of other agencies' advice. However, we believe it important to signpost [this advice from the NHS](#) which is very comprehensive, covering personal protective equipment PPE, home care and home visits and residential home settings.

This is just a summary of some of these:

Home care

If the individual being cared for has symptoms of COVID-19

Personal protective equipment

Care workers should use personal protective equipment (PPE) for activities that bring them into close personal contact, such as washing and bathing, personal hygiene and contact with bodily fluids.

Aprons, gloves and fluid repellent surgical masks should be used in these situations. If there is a risk of splashing, then eye protection will minimise risk.

New personal protective equipment must be used for each episode of care. It is essential personal protective equipment is stored securely within disposable rubbish bags.

These bags should be placed into another bag, tied securely and kept separate from other waste within the room. This should be put aside for at least 72 hours before being put in the usual household waste bin.

Cleaning

If care workers undertake cleaning duties, then they should use usual household products, such as detergents and bleach as these will be very effective at

getting rid of the virus on surfaces. Frequently touched surfaces should be cleaned regularly.

Personal waste (for example, used tissues, continence pads and other items soiled with bodily fluids) and disposable cleaning cloths can be stored securely within disposable rubbish bags.

These bags should be placed into another bag, tied securely and kept separate from other waste within your own room. This should be put aside for at least 72 hours before being put in the usual household waste bin for disposal as normal.

Laundry

If care workers support the individual with laundry, then they should not shake dirty laundry before washing. This minimises the possibility of dispersing virus through the air.

Wash items as appropriate, in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

Dirty laundry that has been in contact with an ill person can be washed with other people's items. If the individual does not have a washing machine, wait a further 72 hours after the 7-day isolation period has ended; the laundry can then be taken to a public laundromat.

Items heavily soiled with body fluids, for example, vomit or diarrhoea, or items that cannot be washed, should be disposed of, with the owner's consent.

Residential homes

If a resident has symptoms of COVID-19

Care homes are not expected to have dedicated isolation facilities for people living in the home but should implement isolation precautions when someone in the home displays symptoms of COVID-19 in the same way that they would operate if an individual had influenza. If isolation is needed, a resident's own

room can be used. Ideally the room should be a single bedroom with en suite facilities.

All staff will be trained in hand hygiene. Much of the care delivered in care homes will require close personal contact. Where a resident is showing symptoms of COVID-19, steps should be taken to minimise the risk of transmission through safe working procedures. Staff should use personal protective equipment PPE for activities that bring them into close personal contact, such as washing and bathing, personal hygiene and contact with bodily fluids. Aprons, gloves and fluid repellent surgical masks should be used in these situations. If there is a risk of splashing, then eye protection will minimise risk.

New PPE must be used for each episode of care. It is essential that used PPE is stored securely within disposable rubbish bags. These bags should be placed into another bag, tied securely and kept separate from other waste within the room. This should be put aside for at least 72 hours before being disposed of as normal. Care homes have well-established processes for waste management.

Clean frequently touched surfaces. Personal waste (such as used tissues, continence pads and other items soiled with bodily fluids) and disposable cleaning cloths can be stored securely within disposable rubbish bags. These bags should be placed into another bag, tied securely and kept separate from other waste within the room. This should be put aside for at least 72 hours before being disposed of as normal.

Do not shake dirty laundry before washing. This minimises the possibility of dispersing virus through the air. Wash items as appropriate in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. Dirty laundry that has been in contact with an ill person can be washed with other people's items. Items heavily soiled with body fluids, such as vomit or diarrhoea, or items that cannot be washed, should be disposed of, with the owner's consent.

Education

Education workers most at risk from will be those who have to continue working to provide a service in schools for children of key workers and those who work in establishments still open which provide services to children with learning and behavioural difficulties, sometimes in a residential setting.

Every effort must be made to maintain as far as is practicable the general guidelines on social distancing. However, it is recognised this is not going to be always possible in a classroom, or residential, setting.

If you feel a child/student you work with shows symptoms of coronavirus, inform your line manager/headteacher immediately. If you cannot get a satisfactory resolution to any such issues which leaves you at risk, contact Derbyshire UNISON via branch@unisondc.co.uk or 01629 582266.

Home visits (non-care)

If you work in a set-up that provides maintenance in peoples' homes, your employer should have put in place procedures that ensure only essential/emergency visits are continuing. If that is not the case, contact Derbyshire UNISON now via branch@unisondc.co.uk or 01629 582266.

If there is anyone in a property you are instructed to visit who has contracted coronavirus or you feel displays symptoms, you must immediately inform your line manager for guidance. If you are unhappy with the response, contact Derbyshire UNISON.

General

Ultimately, workers have a right under Section 44 of the Employment Rights Act 1996 to refuse to work in potentially unsafe conditions.

Section 44 provides employees with the 'right' to withdraw from and to refuse to return to a workplace that is unsafe. Employees are entitled to remain away from the workplace (e.g. stay at home) if – in their opinion – the prevailing circumstances represent a real risk of serious and imminent danger which they could not be expected to avert.

It is advisable to contact Derbyshire UNISON for further advice first before relying solely on this act. We will support workers who feel they are at risk.

We are aware this guide does not yet cover issues surrounding pay. The situation is extremely fluid both with updated government announcements and individual employers' own considerations changing the situation very rapidly. We will be updating the guide over the next few days with regard to pay and related issues.

joinunison.org

HERE WHEN YOU NEED US

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