

The latest news and announcements from Derbyshire UNISON

## Derbyshire Dales District Council

UNISON is pleased that Derbyshire Dales District Council is not proceeding recklessly with 'reopening' and the lifting of Covid-19 restrictions.



## The ending of lockdown restrictions: what it will mean for council staff

**Derbyshire UNISON area organiser Dave Gorton met with council representatives at an extraordinary safety committee meeting yesterday (Wednesday 14 July) to discuss revised risk assessments in the light of the relaxation of lockdown coming into effect in England from next week.**

### Contacting Derbyshire UNISON

01629 582266

[branch@unisondc.co.uk](mailto:branch@unisondc.co.uk)

[derbyshireunison.com](http://derbyshireunison.com)



It needs to be said from the outset that UNISON has some very real concerns that the government's intention to drop all measures at once (and which are already the subject of further, less signposted, U-turns!) could lead to more problems in the near future.

The confusion already apparent with facemasks, for instance, shows the government have

again made 'populist' announcements prior to checking with health and other experts.

This has, sadly, been their modus operandi throughout the pandemic.

With all that in mind, Derbyshire UNISON is pleased to see Derbyshire Dales District Council - at all levels - is not proceeding recklessly and has written to all

members stating "We must therefore proceed with caution because this pandemic is far from over".

Dave said:

"This caution is to be welcomed. Of course we all want things to be like they were 18 months ago - but that is not going to happen next week.

"The relaxing of certain necessary safety measures at work and in society generally needs to be done with a full and proper assessment at every stage before we move on to the next.

"Otherwise, we could be plunged back into the horrors still happening over large parts of the globe.

"A working vaccination programme has been, of course, good news but simply being vaccinated doesn't eradicate the problem completely."

The individual risk assessments for your work areas and disciplines will be shared with you when they've been finalised in case you spot any omissions but UNISON is happy they are along the right track.

We have suggested several amendments on more generic matters to remove any confusion through unclear or conflicting wording which have been welcomed by the chief executive.

Dave added:

"The decision not to reopen the town hall to all public callers immediately but delay this to August will give a further opportunity to ensure both that the council has it correct now but also is able to learn from any early lessons following the lifting of most restrictions on 19 July.

"Workers have a role to play in that monitoring. If you have suggestions, please make them to your line manager. Keep UNISON informed at the same time."

### **Testing and vaccinations**

For a minority of staff, new arrangements may include the necessity for them to have lateral flow tests completed because of the nature of their roles. Indeed, this may already be the case for some members.

If you realise you will be one of those staff affected in this way on your return to more normal working and have any issues with testing, it is best you raise them at an early opportunity.

Any worker who, for whatever reason, has not been vaccinated but who may be expected to visit a care home or other social care setting in the course of their official work duties, may similarly want to rise this with their line manager in advance of the date later this year when it will become compulsory for some people working in the environs of a care home to have proof of a 'double jab'.

UNISON does not expect there to be problems with any council, Derbyshire Dales District Council included, shifting from the line adopted nationally under the auspices of the National Joint Council (the joint employer and unions negotiating body) regarding compulsory vaccinations. However, we think it would be better for members to pre-empt any problems by discussing with their line manager (or UNISON first) before the eleventh hour.

If any member wants to discuss anything concerning lockdown restrictions easing or related matters with Dave, please email him via [dave.gorton@unisondc.co.uk](mailto:dave.gorton@unisondc.co.uk) or, alternatively, call him on 07921 474704. (As he is most often in other work meetings/events etc, an email is normally best if you have access).