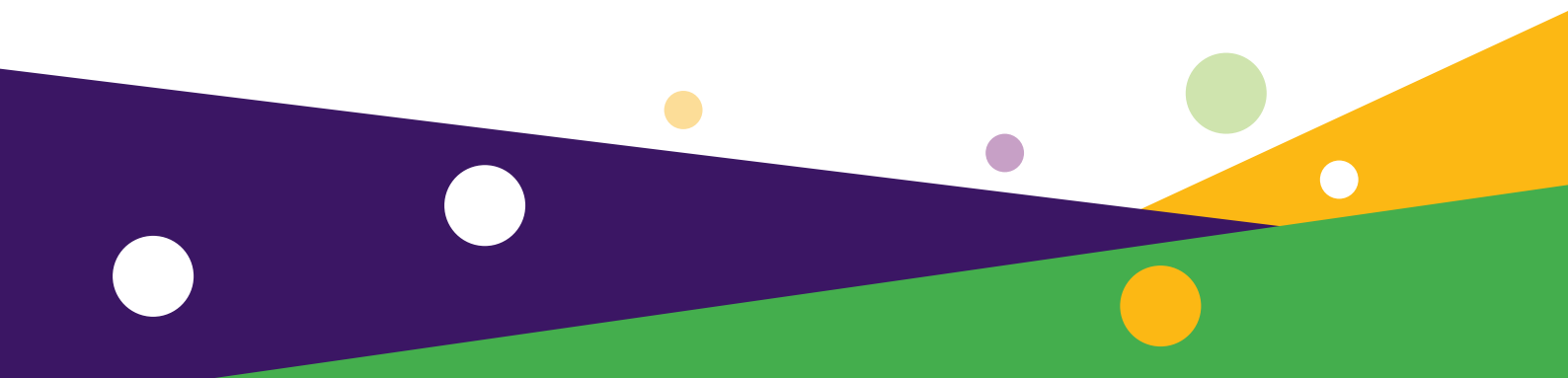


Version 3
Last updated 1 April 2020
Text additions in red



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 for hours, and studies show them surviving on certain hard surfaces for up to three days.**

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, **although members will be aware of tragic news reports over the last day.** It is still 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 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 STRICTER MEASURES FROM 24 MARCH

Reducing day-to-day contact with other people will reduce the spread of the infection. That is why the government introduced 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 measures. The relevant authorities, including the police, are being given powers to enforce them – including fines and dispersing gatherings.

1. Staying at home

You should only leave the house for one of four rea-

sons:

- **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.**

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.**
- **Communal places within parks, such as playgrounds, sports courts and outdoor gyms.**
- **Places of worship, except for funerals attended by immediate families.**
- **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). The page has a dark blue header with the GOV.UK logo and a search bar. Below the header, the main heading is 'Coronavirus (COVID-19): what you need to do'. Underneath, there is a section titled 'Stay at home' with three 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 says '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. Below the logos, there is an 'Announcements' section with three links: '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 the 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, 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 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.

If your employer is not providing the necessary PPE in cases of possible infection, ie a resident showing symptoms, you should report it to UNISON (see section entitled **PPE provision and shortages**). But you should also do everything possible yourself to force your employer to find PPE. In, other words, kick up a stink! Contact senior management or home owners if you feel your approaches to immediate line management are not leading to PPE provision.

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.

Key workers have asked if employers are allowed to take their temperature before they start work. Legally they would have to have your consent and also need to put into place a GDPR Privacy Impact Assessment Statement. Practically, they would also have to ensure 'non-contact' thermometers. It is therefore highly unlikely any employer will try to take temperatures. They will rely on you not reporting for work should you feel ill or are running a high temperature, which could be symptoms of coronavirus. You are in charge!

PPE provision and shortages

The concern over the quantity, quality and availability of PPE is one of national concern and media articles and letters from medical professionals, workers and service users and their families have multiplied over the past week.

UNISON shares these concerns and will be at the forefront of vigorous campaigns to change such regimes once the immediacy of the current crisis has passed. Indeed, politicians across the world who believe things will return to 'normal' at the end of this pandemic, are in for a rude awakening! Ordinary working people on every continent will be demanding massive change to the way things are run!

But this doesn't help the current problems.

UNISON general secretary Dave Prentis has written to Boris Johnson demanding he takes action to ensure all hospitals, care homes, police forces and council services have the sanitiser, gowns, masks and gloves needed to keep staff safe.

While supplies of PPE have clearly got through to parts of the UK's public services, UNISON is concerned there are still many workers who have little or no PPE at all.

Firstly, shortages of PPE - or the refusal of employers/managers to provide it - in Derbyshire is hard to quantify because members are not reporting them directly to us. Some we hear about but it becomes difficult to know whether we're getting talk about the same incidents from more than one source or whether they're separate incidents.

Therefore, **we need workers in the social care sector - whoever your employer is - to report PPE shortages to Derbyshire UNISON** via branch@unisondc.co.uk or 01629 582266. Even if you're in contact with one of our representatives, please report them centrally so we can get exact figures and identify problems clearly.

The details we need are:

- **Employer**
- **Workplace (or home care geographical area)**
- **What you believe should be provided and isn't**
- **Reason provision has been refused (if known)**
- **Your name and contact details ***

* Every member has our assurance that no employer will be given details of where reports/complaints originate. But anonymous reporting doesn't help us build an accurate picture.

We cannot promise to resolve all issues to every member's personal satisfaction; this will never be done whilst there remains differences between the national guidelines on PPE issued by the chief medical officer and the NHS, which employers will follow, and what protection some workers believe they should have. As this guide establishes, for instance, the NHS does not consider the wearing of face masks essential in every care situation.

But we will support workers, collectively and individually, who feel concerned or unsafe and at risk.

In the county council, a regular dialogue has been set up between UNISON and both operational and health and safety managers to report concerns and get solutions.

UNISON is setting up a national hotline to allow public service workers to share their concerns about PPE, so the critical issues can be raised with ministers. We will circulate details when they're available. But please respond to our request in Derbyshire first and foremost.

We also want to emphasise once again that care workers not already in UNISON should join now. If you're united as a workforce with us behind you, we can achieve change and safer working conditions in the short run. If there's just one or two of you, your employer finds it relatively easy to ignore you!

If you're reading this, you're already a member - you can get your work colleagues signed up easily by them logging on to joinunison.org. It can be done on their mobile phones in a few minutes.

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.

Hospitals

Only a small number of Derbyshire UNISON members are based in or have to visit hospitals as part of their job. Obviously, hospitals are going to be more susceptible to outbreaks of coronavirus than other workplaces and it is important workers follow guidelines issued in the hospital for NHS and other staff.

As well as this, we believe the majority of paperwork done by members in hospitals (social work) could be done remotely, ie from home. If you have not yet

sorted a working from home solution, ask your line manager now and seek support from Derbyshire UNISON if necessary via branch@unisondc.co.uk or 01629 582266

Refuse collection

UNISON is aware of particular problems with many authorities and contractors failing to change the normal practice of having three workers in a cab, despite social distancing rules.

We are clear that there should be no more than two in a cab and have impressed this on providers. In some areas, new ways of working have been implemented, for example having the third member of a refuse crew following the truck in a separate vehicle, and we are arguing for this approach to be used everywhere. It may increase the cost of the service in the short term, but it needs to be done.

Alongside this, employers should provide appropriate PPE (protective gloves, face masks) and hand san-

itiser, and ensure the insides of cabs are regularly deep cleaned.

Please let us know if your employer is not yet following these guidelines via branch@unisondc.co.uk or 01629 582266.

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.

SPECIFIC CONSIDERATIONS FOR THOSE WORKING IN SCHOOL SETTINGS

Most school support staff are considered key workers and – if fit and able to do so – can expect to be asked to help provide the service of keeping schools open for a small minority of students. Most members working for local authority and academy schools are covered by the National Joint Council NJC Green Book and agreements made by UNISON nationally cover them. However, there are some issues specific to schools:

If I'm asked to provide cover for other roles, what pay should I be receiving?

There may be a need for staff to help with alternative roles, but this should be on a voluntary basis first and with proper support from your employer. (This role may be at another school). If you have concerns about changes, please contact Derbyshire UNISON via branch@unisondc.co.uk or 01629 582266.

If you agree to undertake a different role and/or working pattern you should suffer no financial detriment and should continue to be paid at your usual contracted rate. If the role you're asked to do is paid

at a higher rate, you should receive the higher rate of pay for the duration of the assignment.

Will schools be opening over the Easter holidays and weekends? If so, do I have to come in and will I be paid?

Some schools will be opening during what would normally be the Easter holidays. Some have also indicated that they intend to open seven days a week.

UNISON does not believe staff should be forced to work outside their normal contracted hours, particularly if they have caring commitments of their own. Most staff in schools are on term time only contracts, meaning you are not contracted or paid to work during school closure periods.

If term time only staff are required to work outside normal contracted hours, ie in the school holidays, they should be paid for this. This is specified in the NJC guidance on term time only working: 'If term time only employees are required to undertake work outside of their contracted hours, they must be appropriately remunerated.'

Staff should be paid at their standard hourly rate if they are working on what is a normal working day. However, if staff are required to work on a weekend or a public holiday we would expect overtime premiums to apply.

In addition, we would also expect overtime premiums to apply if you work over the standard working week in any given working week.

We expect schools to seek volunteers in the first instance and to consider any booked holiday or caring commitments. If this becomes a regular working pattern, then consideration will need to be given to the annual leave accrued whilst working additional hours.

What issues would UNISON expect to be put on hold?

We are in the middle of a global health emergency and school support staff are on the front line in the battle to help stop the spread of this virus and save lives. We believe nothing should detract from this effort and UNISON is therefore calling for all redundancies, restructures, TUPE transfers (to academy trusts, for instance) and non-urgent disciplinaries to be put on hold. The battle to save lives must come first. If your school is refusing, contact Derbyshire UNISON via branch@unisondc.co.uk or 01629 582266 immediately.

WORKING FROM HOME

These guidelines are specifically for this emergency and should not automatically be used as best practice in different circumstances (although some are!) There will be some differences regarding homeworking to other normal arrangements, whereby some workers frequently work from home under an agreed regime.

Employers and employees will need to be practical, flexible and aware of the extraordinary circumstances when working from home because of the coronavirus pandemic.

We believe employers should:

- Talk to their workers about how they might improve working from home arrangements
- Continue to consider which roles and tasks can be done from home – this might involve doing things differently and not assuming a role cannot be based at home
- Support employees to adjust to remote working
- Consider individual employees' needs, for example anyone with childcare responsibilities, a long-term health condition or a disability
- Write down the arrangements that have been agreed so everyone's clear

Health and safety

Employers are responsible for the health and safety of all employees, including those working from home. During the pandemic, it's very unlikely employers can carry out usual health and safety risk assessments at an employee's home.

However, an employer should still check:

- Each employee feels the work they're being asked to do at home can be done safely
- Employees have the right equipment to work safely
- Managers keep in regular contact with their employees, including making sure they do not feel isolated
- Reasonable adjustments are made for an employee who has a disability

If changes are needed, employers are responsible for making sure they happen.

Employees also have a responsibility to take reasonable care of their own health and safety.

Anyone working from home should keep in regular contact with their manager. They should also tell their manager about:

- Health and safety risks
- Homeworking arrangements that need to change

Looking after mental and physical health

It's likely that employers and employees are experiencing a high level of stress and anxiety at the moment. It's important for employees to take regular breaks, for example to avoid sitting at a computer for too long. They should also try to do other things to stay mentally and physically active outside of their working hours. This might include things like cooking, exercise, watching favourite TV programmes or other

hobbies. It's a good idea for employers to remind staff about this.

Equipment and technology

Employers are responsible for the equipment and technology they give employees so they can work from home.

The employer should:

- Discuss equipment and technology with the employee
- Agree what's needed
- Support the employee to set up any new equipment or technology
- Check regularly to assess how their systems and temporary arrangements are working and make any improvements.

Setting clear expectations

Changing to homeworking may be a challenge for many managers and employees, particularly if they're used to working together face-to-face. Employers and managers should make sure that everyone working from home knows what's expected of them.

This includes agreeing:

- When employees will be available to work
- How they will keep in touch
- How work-life balance will be managed, for example taking regular breaks and switching off from work at the end of the day
- Rules around storing information and data protection
- How performance will be managed and measured - taking into account people's circumstances where necessary
- Who employees should contact if they have any problems or their circumstances change

It's important to recognise that some employees can find it hard to motivate and organise themselves when working from home. If this happens, the manager and employee should talk about practical steps to help.

Keeping in touch

Employers and employees should keep in touch regularly. This should include regular communication between:

- Individual employees and their managers

- Employees who need to work together
- Team members

This might involve new ways of working, for example using video or conference calling technology.

Pay and terms and conditions of employment

Employees who are working from home must get the same pay, if they are working their usual hours. Their usual terms and conditions still apply, apart from having to work from home on a temporary basis. Employers need to make sure staff working from home follow the law on working hours.

Working from home and childcare

Employees who are looking after children should talk to their employer. The employer should be sensitive and flexible towards the employee's situation.

Employers and employees may be able to agree a more flexible homeworking arrangement.

Examples of this could include:

- Working different hours
- Agreeing that the employee may not be able to work a full day or a full week

The same approach may be needed if an employer is caring for someone else, for example an older relative or someone who's ill.

Costs

Employees may want to talk to their employer if they run up costs through having to work from home. Employers may have their own policy on this. If you need assistance in this matter, contact Derbyshire UNISON via branch@unisondc.co.uk or 01629 582266.

WHAT SHOULD I BE PAID?

There is no one answer to this question. It will depend on a number of factors including your employer, contract of employment and the hours you work.

Therefore, we can't give a definitive answer to cover all 10,000 members in Derbyshire UNISON! If you don't think this document specifically covers you and your employer either can't or won't give you the details you require (or you don't like the details they've given!), then contact Derbyshire UNISON via branch@unisondc.co.uk or 01629 582266 and we will do our best to help.

If you work for a local authority, school or are otherwise covered by the Green Book (National Joint Council for local government services 'terms and conditions')

You will be paid at full pay, whether working in an essential service, from home or unable to work. If you are told differently, point your manager in the way of the advice from 17 March, which is available [here](#).

The penultimate paragraph states:

"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".

Some local authorities are dragging their heels over this with, reportedly, individual chief executives trying to set out their own conditions. Derbyshire UNISON is continuing to pressurise these councils; it is not for individuals to seek to override national agreements, particularly when they are deliberately flouting government advice to stay at home.

If you work for a private company

Most companies locally appear to be doing their best to comply with guidelines and keep non-essential staff out of the workplace. Indeed, many are taking advantage of the new 'furlough' arrangements by closing operations temporarily, laying off staff and applying for the government assistance which will

cover 80% of wages. Some companies have, in fact, guaranteed full pay to staff.

If your company is one of those who will only be paying you at 80% of your normal pay, Derbyshire UNISON will make approaches to your company on your behalf - if you provide us with the necessary details - but we do ask members to realise our chances of success, without a high density of UNISON membership amongst the workforce, is limited.

If you work for a voluntary organisation

Matters are slightly different when it comes to voluntary organisations as the question of funding comes into the equation. This means Derbyshire County Council may have a say in the issue.

We need to know as soon as possible if you are not being 'allowed' to furlough and, therefore, receive at least 80% of your pay because of council funding issues. Contact us via branch@unisondc.co.uk or 01629 582266 now.

The new furlough scheme

The scheme is intended to apply only to employers who cannot cover staff costs due to coronavirus. These employers can access support to continue paying part of their employee's wage, in order to avoid redundancies.

The scheme is new to the UK but, typically, rumours and misinformation already abound!

Members need not get involved in the legal implications - that's your employer's task - but you do need to let us know if your employer says they won't be paying you.

Most importantly, it is possible you will be asked to agree to an addition to your contract to allow 'temporary lay-offs'. (Strictly speaking, a furlough is not a lay-off but the effect is the same in these circumstances). We advise you to let us see, immediately, the wording of any such contractual variation. In this instance, please email it direct to dave.gorton@unisondc.co.uk

Members may want to take note of the following:

- Furloughed employees' wages are subject to Income Tax and National Insurance as usual.

- The normal minimum wage rules do not apply to furloughed employees, as they are not working.

If you were TUPE'd over from a local authority to a private company

Questions have been raised by members who were transferred out of local authority control as to whether they should be entitled to such things as full pay, like their ex-colleagues still working for a council.

Unfortunately, agreements made between the employers and the unions are not applicable post transfer.

More to the point, your new organisation, particularly if it is in the field of leisure or catering provision, may well have had to close down operations completely and take advantage of the furlough scheme. This is to prevent wholesale redundancies.

It is not ideal but we're sure members would prefer 80% of their pay rather than redundancy and unemployment.

I'm on a zero hours contract; will I be entitled to any pay?

It is possible you may be eligible under the furlough scheme (see above) and therefore receive 80% of your regular earnings. But rather than trying to give a generic answer, our advice is simple - ask your boss! If s/he says "no", contact Derbyshire UNISON via branch@unisondc.co.uk or 01629 582266 and we'll try and assist or provide an update.

Unfortunately, if you're on a zero-hours contract you are not entitled to statutory sick pay unless you can demonstrate that you earn at least £118 per week from your employer.

Sick pay

Depending on your employer and contract of employment you are either eligible for your employer's sick pay scheme or statutory sick pay. You should already know which is applicable in your situation.

Statutory sick pay is now available from the first day you are off sick, and if you are paid less than £118 a week you will be able to access Universal Credit or Contributory Employment and Support Allowance more easily.

Derbyshire UNISON will make any necessary representations to your employer at a later date should they have taken the - incorrect in our view - decision to add coronavirus-related sickness or self-isolation to any trigger points they apply in sickness schemes.

However, this will obviously be at a later date. Do not put yourself and others at risk by attending work when you're sick or should be in self-isolation just because you fear consequences at a later date. The battle to save lives must come first.

We should point out that we have had no indication from any employer yet that they will be unsympathetic in this regard.

Using/carrying over holidays and holiday pay

In most situations, employees and workers should use their paid holiday ('statutory annual leave') in their current leave year. This is 5.6 weeks in the UK.

During the coronavirus outbreak, it may not be possible for staff to take all their holiday entitlement. They may be getting to the end of their leave year with holiday still left to take.

The government has introduced a temporary new law to deal with coronavirus disruption.

Employees and workers can carry over up to 4 weeks' paid holiday over a 2-year period, if they cannot take holiday due to coronavirus.

For example, this could be because:

- They're self-isolating or are too sick to take holiday before the end of their leave year
- They've been temporarily sent home as there's no work ('laid off' or 'put on furlough')
- They've had to continue working and could not take paid holiday

If an employee or worker leaves their job or is dismissed during the 2-year period, any untaken paid holiday must be added to their final pay ('paid in lieu').

If someone is temporarily sent home because there's no work they'll continue to build up ('accrue') holiday in the usual way.

Bank holidays

If employees and workers cannot take bank holidays

off due to coronavirus, they should use the holiday at a later date in their leave year.

If this is not possible, bank holidays can be included in the 4 weeks' paid holiday that can be carried over. This holiday can be taken at any time over a 2-year period.

Previously booked holidays

If an employee no longer wants to take time off they'd previously booked, for example because their holiday's been cancelled, their employer may still tell them to take the time off.

If the employee wants to change when they take this time off, they'll need to get agreement from their employer. You should inform Derbyshire UNISON via branch@unisondc.co.uk or 01629 582266 if you find yourself in this position and your employer refuses to reach an agreement.

Using holiday for a temporary workplace closure

Employers have the right to tell employees and workers when to take holiday if they need to.

An employer could, for example, shut for a week and tell everyone to use their holiday entitlement.

If the employer decides to do this, they must tell staff at least twice as many days before as the amount of days they need people to take.

For example, if they want to close for 5 days, they should tell everyone at least 10 days before.

This could affect holiday staff have already booked or planned. So employers should:

- Explain clearly why they need to close
- Try and resolve anyone's worries about how it will affect their holiday entitlement or plans

Self-employment

UNISON does not seek to organise the self-employed but as people have a right to join a trade union of their choice, there may be some in our ranks.

The government has announced help for the self-employed which is similar (but not identical) to the coronavirus job retention scheme.

Self-employed people can claim income support worth 80% of their average monthly income, capped

at £2,500 per month. Their income will be calculated by taking the average of their income over the last three years. This income support scheme will be open for at least three months.

The eligibility criteria are that:

- The self-employed person must have submitted a tax return for 2019.
- The self-employed person must have trading profits of under £50,000.
- Self-employed people who earn more than £50,000 p.a. do not qualify.
- The self-employed person must make the majority of their income from self-employment.
- Employees who work for an employer but have some separate self-employed work on the side will not be eligible.
- Self-employed people whose tax return has not been submitted and is still due after the 31 January 2020 deadline, can still submit a tax return for 2019 for a further four weeks from 26 March.

Importantly, the self-employed can claim the new income support payments and continue working for their business, in complete contrast to furlough leave where the employees must not work for the employer.

Self-employed people do not have to initiate the application. It is understood that HMRC will contact them with instructions and then the grant will be paid directly into their bank account.

Self-employed income support is unlikely to be operational before the end of June. So self-employed people may need to borrow money to help with cash flow over the next few weeks until their income support application is processed.

Money problems?

UNISON operates a national welfare scheme - [There For You](#) - which members in serious financial difficulties may be able to access for help.

joinunison.org

HERE WHEN YOU NEED US

 01629 582266

 BRANCH@UNISONDC.CO.UK

 DERBYSHIREUNISON.COM

 UNISON DERBYSHIRE COUNTY

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