

Address:
Independent Workers Union
of Great Britain,
St Margaret's House,
Room 1, 15 Old Ford Road,
London, E2 9PJ

Email:
office@iwgb.org.uk

Independent Workers Union of Great Britain



Dear Mayor Sadiq Khan,

I am writing to you on behalf of the Cycle Instructors Branch of the Independent Workers Union of Great Britain (IWGB) to implore you to take urgent action to protect London cycle instructors facing unemployment, poverty and even homelessness under the current self-employment scheme.

We are amongst the great many precarious workers in the Transport for London (TfL) supply chain facing precisely the situation you outlined in a recent Guardian article when you wrote: *"Without further decisive and immediate government action, thousands of businesses will go bankrupt and millions of people will be left unemployed, in poverty or homeless. We have a once-in-a-generation responsibility not to let that happen."*

However, this is the reality precarious workers in the Transport for London supply chain, including cycle instructors. While we welcome the news that Ealing Borough Council has committed to honour 50 percent of wages from booked work up to the end of the summer term in July, it is one step in the right direction and does not go far enough.

As we highlighted in our previous letter, the present self-employment scheme is woefully inadequate because it:

- Requires you to have submitted a tax return in 18/19 meaning anyone who started working on TfL funded bookings after that point falls between the cracks.
- Requires you to make at least 50 percent of your earnings through self-employment, meaning part-time workers also fall between the cracks.
- Is based on profit rather than income and so does not take into consideration expenses that are ongoing during the crisis such as insurance, training costs such as first aid and professional development, accreditation and DBS checks.
- The scheme is based on annual averages but the months between March and July are the busiest for cycling instructors. Most instructors will receive just 40 percent of their earnings for the three months covered by the scheme. Some will get as little as 25 percent and some none at all.

The reality is that cycle instructors, some of whom have given up to ten uninterrupted years service for TfL, will be given a single one off payment of £800-1500 and will then have no access to other benefits or support save for £95 a week Universal Credit - if they qualify.

At the beginning of the coronavirus outbreak, TfL made the welcome move of instructing all London Boroughs to honour the first two weeks of cycle training payments. This shows such interventions are within both the power and the obligations of TfL to its workers. Now it is clear schools will not reopen before July, we demand that TfL instructs all London

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Boroughs to use the budget it already allocated for cycling instructors, to pay the full wage they were due for this period.

Where instructors accept bookings on a flexible basis rather than in advance, an average based on the last 12 weeks of invoicing should be paid instead.

All this can be achieved using ring fenced funds and would protect and preserve London's workforce of cycling instructors through the pandemic, without any additional cost to either the London Boroughs or TfL.

Over the past ten years, we've brought the number of people on their bikes each day from 60,000 to 800,000. If you wish to see that work continue, reducing road deaths and London's carbon footprint, then you must honour the city's existing commitments and make sure its cycle instructors get paid through this crisis. After the lockdown, we want to get more people on their bikes than ever - but we can only do that if we keep our jobs.

Kind regards,

Michael McSherry, Chair, Cycling Instructors Branch IWGB
Jon Pook, Secretary,
Simon Falush, Vice-Chair
Suami Rocha, Comms Officer
Mairam surname tbc, women's officer
Earlyna Edwards, treasurer