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# Independent Workers Union of Great Britain



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Room 1, St Margaret's House  
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19 March 2020

Prime Minister  
10 Downing Street  
London  
SW1A 2AA

Dear Prime Minister,

These are extraordinary times, and the low-paid workers we represent are on the frontlines of the Covid-19 crisis. The cleaners are maintaining hygiene throughout London, cleaning offices, buildings, and student residences, which reduces the risk of transmission for others. The security guards are enabling essential buildings to stay open. Couriers are taking food and goods to those who need to self-isolate or are trying to engage in social distancing. Uber and other private hire drivers are providing transportation for people who are avoiding public transport. Foster care workers are looking after children and young people who do not have safe alternatives. Charity sector workers are providing essential support for those most in need, and the list goes on. It is essential, for the well-being of these workers, their families, and society at large, that they are provided with the protection and support they need. For this reason, the Independent Workers' Union of Great Britain (IWGB) is calling on you and your government to immediately move to implement the following demands:

1. Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) should be made fit for purpose:
  - a. Extend SSP to Limb B Workers;
  - b. Abolish the lower earnings limit (£118 per week) to qualify for SSP;

- c. SSP entitlement should be at the rate of normal wages (for those on 0 hours contracts this is based on 12 week averages), at least for an initial period of time, and should never be less than the real living wage;
  - d. A version of SSP should also be available for independent contractors, payable directly by the Government; and
  - e. Self-certification should be allowed for all coronavirus-related absences.
2. Coronavirus-related absences should not count for any capability or disciplinary procedures.
3. All businesses should be compelled to introduce social distancing measures to the extent possible (e.g. providing for working from home arrangements). Those non-essential businesses which are unable to adequately protect the health and safety of their workers should be required to temporarily shut down with workers sent home on full pay.
4. Make it obligatory for employers to pay workers with no guaranteed hours, who would be willing and able to work but for Coronavirus issues (self-isolation, reduced demand, sickness, etc.) their salary based on average rates of pay for the previous 12 weeks.
5. Worker status decisions by the tribunals and courts should be enforced immediately, including in instances where appeals by the companies are outstanding.
6. Licensing authorities should be obliged to make the adequate provision of sick pay a condition of private hire licensing.
7. Clients who currently outsource any facilities services such as cleaning, security, catering or portering should terminate their contracts with their private contractors and hire those workers directly as employees of the organisations or companies where they work.
8. Workers should be entitled to paid time off, at full pay, in order to care for dependents as a result of the pandemic.
9. High-risk workers, e.g. the elderly and those with pre-existing health conditions, should be entitled to full pay during the extended periods of self-isolation they will need to undertake to stay alive.
10. Businesses looking to make coronavirus-related redundancies should be given extensive financial support from Government on the specific condition that redundancies are not made. Those workers who are made redundant notwithstanding this should be entitled to income support from the Government, at rates equivalent to their wages (and never less than the real

living wage) until such time as they are able to find alternative suitable employment.

11. Temporarily suspend all mortgage, rent and bill payments both in residential lodgings and in commercial studios for freelance artists.
12. Put in place a system of financial support and subsidies, where necessary, to further enable businesses to comply with these requirements.
13. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) should dramatically increase workplace inspections, ensuring that those businesses that remain open are upholding the strictest health and safety standards, with strong consequences for those who are not compliant.

These demands are no more than what is necessary to ensure that the low-paid workers who are doing some of the most important work right now are protected, and by extension that we are all protected.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Jason Moyer-Lee  
General Secretary  
IWGB