

SECTION 3

GENERAL COUNCIL STATEMENTS

01. Safety first – working people on the frontline of Covid-19

Everyone has the right to have their health, safety and wellbeing at work protected. But all too often throughout this pandemic, the government has failed to take the tough action needed to keep workers safe. And the public health crisis has exposed the depth of health inequalities in the UK today, including along lines of class, race and gender.

The government's decision to delay implementing lockdown led to thousands of tragic, and unnecessary, deaths. The failure to plan, prepare and deliver proper PPE supplies to the NHS and social care left frontline workers exposed. The absence of an effective test and trace system and the scandal of patients being discharged from hospitals untested into care homes cost lives and livelihoods. Too many women, black workers and disabled workers found that when they were issued PPE, it failed to fit properly and to provide adequate protection. That is why the TUC has called for an independent public inquiry.

It was only due to TUC and union pressure that government guidance on safe working provided for proper risk assessments, union safety rep rights, and requirements on PPE. The TUC also fought for and won guidance on equality, including protection for pregnant workers, those shielding and the most vulnerable.

All employers must conduct a risk assessment and those with more than five employees must produce a written assessment, and there is a legal duty to consult with union reps. We have argued strongly for the government to require employers to publish their Covid-19 risk assessments so that companies can be held accountable by their workforce and local communities. But instead ministers chose to say that they would only "expect" risk assessments to be published. The TUC has exposed how this 'expectation' is routinely flouted. Outbreaks in sectors as diverse as food manufacturing and textiles show that too many employers are still failing to keep staff, customers and public safe.

We know that unionised workplaces are safer. Research shows that, on average, the presence of union safety reps cuts risk of accidents and injuries by half. But the government has rejected our offer to use experienced, trained union safety reps to provide advice and guidance to workers or employers without union recognition arrangements, or to work with employers.

Safety reps have a critical role to play, but they cannot replace the regulatory and enforcement role of HSE inspectors. Our campaigning secured an extra £14m for the HSE. But welcome though this extra funding is, it only amounts to one tenth of the value of government cuts to HSE resources over the last ten years. Such savage cuts stopped the HSE from investing in critical inspector roles, instead opting for an increased and outsourced call-handling service and conducting workplace inspections

by telephone. And there were no additional resources for hard-pressed local authority inspections, despite their responsibility for high pandemic risk industries such as retail and distribution.

While workplace safety has shot to the top of the public agenda, too often the government's approach has been found wanting. Government engagement with trade unions has been, at best, last minute and inconsistent. Too often guidance has been published without proper consultation. In education for example, the prime minister announced plans to re-open schools before advice had been published setting out how schools could be made safe for pupils, parents and staff alike. The prime minister urged a return to work before a Covid-secure public transport plan was in place for an increase in passenger numbers.

Government communications about safe working and measures to minimise infection have been confusing, inconsistent and ill-timed. In aviation, travel corridors have been opened and closed with very short notice and without clear advice, causing chaos to holidaymakers, airlines and the wider travel industry.

The TUC urges the government to be more open in sharing Covid-19 data, including using RIDDOR measures to report data, and develop a clear and consistent communications strategy focusing on clear evidence of Covid-19 cases and explaining appropriate measures to minimise infection.

Throughout the pandemic crisis trade unions stepped up to the plate. Emergency measures have been agreed across public transport, from rail to light rail, buses and aviation. And trade unions have led on measures to keep services operating, while protecting the safety of staff and passengers alike. Trade union expertise and action has served to save lives, and not just those of our members, but of the wider public too.

Tragically, many of our members have also lost their lives, exposed to risk as a result of inadequate safety measures or simply poor safety management by their employers.

The pandemic has dramatically exposed the direct link between poor quality employment standards and risk of exposure. In Leicester, the appalling conditions endured by textile workers in the fashion industry, on precarious contracts, low pay, with little or no sick pay arrangements and in crowded conditions, were exposed not by enforcement agencies, but by a huge spike in coronavirus cases.

The meat processing and food manufacturing sector also suffered clusters of cases. In too many cases staff – often migrant workers – suffer exploitative working and living conditions, alongside oppressive management regimes designed to silence concerns and avoid unionisation.

And social care has been exposed as a sector blighted by low pay, insecure work and long hours. Privatisation, fragmentation and poor employment standards are all structural challenges to maintaining good safety and employment standards. Investment in a national care service, with dignity for old and vulnerable people and decent work at its heart, must become a national priority.

The disproportionate impact of Covid-19 on BME workers is an appalling indictment of the inequality and discrimination in UK workplaces. BME workers are more likely to be in precarious work and occupations with poor risk management and at the back of the queue for PPE when working in service roles that have been outsourced across the public and private sector.

We are yet to understand the long-term health impacts of Covid19, a virus that is mutating and developing quickly and has already cost the lives of hundreds of thousands of people worldwide. The government must undertake research into these impacts and adapt a workplace and public health strategy to prevent future infections and fatalities.

The evidence of the link between decent employment and regulation and the safety and wellbeing of working people is now all too clear. Working people who experience virus symptoms or are required to self-isolate want to do the right thing. But too many simply cannot afford to. Almost two million workers are excluded from any sick pay at all, and even those who do qualify will receive just £95.85 a week.

The TUC successfully lobbied to ensure SSP was paid from day one for those absent due to Covid-19. But the TUC is urging the government to do its moral duty and boost statutory sick pay to at least the real living wage.

We can reopen the economy safely if government takes the right actions to control the pandemic. But the so-called "world beating" test and trace service became a national embarrassment. The impact of deep cuts to public health infrastructure, the chaotic patchwork of private contracts, 'commercial confidentiality' and a failure to share data, and millions wasted on a useless App have failed to instill confidence and makes the case for sustained investment in public services across the economy.

The TUC urges government to resource public health services at a local level to deliver effective test, track and trace services and urgently introduce a mass testing programme properly integrated with local public health provision. In order to ensure we make workplaces Covid-19 secure and secure the health and well-being of working people, we call on the government to:

- › as a first step, fully restore resources to key health and safety regulatory agencies, including HSE and local government that have suffered a decade of austerity cuts
- › introduce a new regulatory requirement for all employers with more than five employees to publish their risk assessments online easily accessible to all, following the model of gender pay gap reporting
- › introduce a new right for accredited trade union safety reps to access all workplaces where they have members to provide advice and guidance on health and safety at work
- › commit to working positively with trade unions and employers identify and tackle sectors where there is evidence of increased risk of Covid-19 exposure and where there are increased risks to workers, such as increased risks of violence to staff working in retail and public services
- › work with trade unions to regularly review the impact of local increases of Covid-19 cases, including on clinical staff, key workers and vulnerable groups, and be prepared to re-introduce shielding for those groups
- › establish an independent public inquiry into the failings of government to have an effective strategy covering the purchase, storage, supply and distribution of PPE in emergencies
- › remove the earnings threshold for SSP, make it payable from day one as a right, and increase the level of SSP to the weekly rate of the real living wage.

02. The unequal impact of coronavirus

The coronavirus pandemic has shone a stark light on the deep and persistent structural inequalities that cut across our country.

Working-class families have been hit hardest by Covid-19, facing the greatest health risks and now on the frontline of rising job losses. Millions continued to travel into work right through the peak of the crisis, often doing vital work that remains underpaid and undervalued. Across the NHS and social care, from transport to retail and cleaning to refuse collection, too many working class people have faced the highest risks of exposure to the virus while struggling in low-paid, insecure roles without proper protection, decent sick pay or safe working conditions.

As too many now face the prospect of looming unemployment, the same workers who put their lives on the line during the crisis are at greater risk of losing their jobs, facing devastating impacts on household finances. Our broken social security system is already leaving too many unable to make the most basic of ends meet. And as job losses grow across the economy, younger and older workers are on the frontline. Without further extensions of the furlough scheme, millions more will find their essential service to the country rewarded with destitution.

We are proud of today's diverse working class. We also know that within it, Black workers, women, disabled people and LGBT+ people all disproportionately affected by the coronavirus crisis.

During the pandemic structural racism is a matter of life of death

Black workers have seen some of the UK's highest coronavirus death rates. Black workers are literally dying on the job. Systemic inequalities mean Black workers are overrepresented in lower paid, insecure jobs where the risk of contracting coronavirus is far higher. Systematic institutional and structural racism also mean Black workers face poorer health, poor housing and education. Migrant workers have some of the highest risks.

These inequalities have been compounded by the discrimination and racism Black people face within workplaces and across society. Black workers have been singled out for higher-risk work, denied access to PPE and appropriate risk assessments, unfairly selected for redundancy and furlough and faced hostility from managers for raising concerns. Black agency workers and those without permanent contracts, many of whom are migrant workers and Black women, have been exploited through threats to cancel work or reduce hours, both to silence them and force them to work in higher-risk situations.

For the UK's Black workers, racism remains a matter of life and death.

The burden of unpaid care is costing women jobs and pay

Of the UK's 9.8 million key workers, who kept the health care system and our country moving as the pandemic hit its peak, nearly two-thirds are women. And 2.6 million of these women key workers earn less than £10 an hour. The pandemic has highlighted the endemic low-pay and occupational segregation faced by many women workers, particularly those in vital frontline jobs in sectors including social care and retail.

Discrimination has left many female key workers at disproportionately high risk of exposure to Covid-19, working without proper fitting personal protective equipment (PPE) or access to PPE at all. Pregnant women have faced escalated workplace discrimination over this period, losing pay or work, with their health and safety poorly protected.

Before the Covid-19 crisis, discrimination towards pregnant women and new mums was at unacceptably high levels, with 54,000 women forced out of the workplace each year due to pregnancy and maternity discrimination. Since the crisis began that discrimination has worsened with one in four pregnant women experiencing unfair treatment and discrimination at work, including being singled out for furlough and redundancy.

Women have also faced a disproportionate burden of unpaid care during the crisis. As schools and childcare providers shut it was women who were left to juggle paid and unpaid work, with mums providing around two-thirds more childcare a day than dads. The lowest-paid women paid the highest price, having to reduce their hours at work and experiencing substantial loss of income. Working parents face ongoing difficulties with childcare due to rolling school closures, local lockdowns and requirements to self-isolate. When social care services were closed, and millions were asked to shield at home, it was women who were left to fill the unpaid care gap. For too many women the impacts have been paid job loss and pay cuts.

The restrictions on movement introduced during lockdown to stop the spread of Covid-19 meant that for nearly half of the workforce, the workplace became the home and the home the workplace. This created another crisis for women: a rise in domestic abuse. Women faced increased risks as they were required to stay at home with their abusers, separated from their support networks. Tragically, at least 16 women have been killed in domestic abuse related incidents since the pandemic began.

Existing inequalities have been compounded for disabled workers

Even before the Covid-19 crisis, benefit cuts and austerity hit disabled people the hardest. Changes to the welfare system over the past ten years have left disabled adults four times worse off financially than non-disabled adults. And as the economic fallout of the pandemic hits, disabled people look set to face some of the highest rates of unemployment with many being unlawfully targeted for redundancy.

Disabled workers who have been asked to shield have been particularly badly let down by government, with many now at risk of losing their jobs and livelihoods as they cannot safely travel to work or undertake their job roles safely, but have been denied continued access to the vital job retention scheme.

Disabled people have experienced particular health challenges during the pandemic. Shortages of PPE and medical equipment meant that many disabled people were left without vital supplies both for themselves and their personal assistants. And emergency powers taken by government during the crisis have removed key safeguards for disabled people, threatening their human rights. Mental ill health has been exacerbated during the pandemic, with those with the highest levels of mental distress pre-crisis facing some of the greatest challenges.

LGBT+ workers are facing hostility and isolation

LGBT+ workers have faced unprecedented pressures during the pandemic, often because of being isolated from support networks and specialist services. Some have endured the lockdown period with hostile and discriminatory family members. LGBT+ workers have also reported experiencing higher levels of hostility and abuse from the public and co-workers throughout the pandemic and that these homophobic, biphobic and transphobic workplace hate incidents have had a negative impact on their mental health. LGBT+ workers have also faced increased risks of domestic abuse over the lockdown period, with scarce support services available.

LGBT+ workers are also at particular risk of redundancy, given their overrepresentation in sectors of the economy where it is often easier for LGBT+ people to be openly out about their sexual orientation, such as arts and culture, travel and tourism and hospitality, which have been badly affected by the pandemic. Given high rates of bullying and harassment at work pre-pandemic, it is inevitable LGBT+ workers will be at higher risk of redundancy in the tough times ahead.

Government must promote equality in their recovery plans

The government's coronavirus response has not only failed to adequately address these structural inequalities, in many cases it has made them worse. The public sector equality duty means that when government is developing policy they need to be aware of the impact that their decisions will have on different equality groups and use this information to ensure they promote equality, eliminate discrimination and promote good relations – but too often during the pandemic equality has been an afterthought, if not completely forgotten. Ministers' approach to sick pay has left many workers unable to afford to keep themselves safe if they are unwell or are asked to self-isolate. The required earning threshold for statutory sick pay means that insecure workers miss out because they earn less. Around a third (34 per cent) of those on zero-hours contracts do not meet the earnings threshold compared to 6 per cent of permanent employees. Of the two million workers that don't earn enough to qualify for sick pay, 70 per cent are women and many are Black or disabled. And even for those who do qualify, statutory sick pay is paid at an extremely low rate. This should be raised to the level of the real living wage so that workers don't bear an unacceptably high financial cost for being sick.

Although too many were excluded from its reach, the job retention scheme has provided vital income protection to millions of workers. But its design has so far failed to recognise that caring responsibilities and health conditions mean many workers cannot yet return safely to work. As the UK faces the worst recession on record, it is younger and older workers whose jobs are being lost most rapidly. Mass unemployment cannot be allowed to take hold, and employment gaps already faced by too many Black, women and disabled workers cannot be allowed to grow further. But by insisting that the scheme will remain closed to new applicants and that it will close completely this autumn, the government is leaving too many people at unnecessary risk of redundancy. Safety at work also needs to be urgently addressed. Union lobbying means that government safe working guidance at least references the Equality Act. But far more is needed. It must be mandatory for all employers to publish their Covid-19 risk assessments, and for all assessments to take full account of how to ensure those with protected characteristics can work safely.

The continued underfunding of care services continues to have disproportionate impact across equality groups. Frontline workers who have put their lives on the line to care for others are left with poverty pay and insecure work. Women and disabled workers who want to return to work find they cannot as vital services and support are not available. These workers need a day one right to flexible work and a day one right to ten days paid carers' leave to enable them to maintain paid employment and balance work and care. As the economic consequences of the crisis grow, a lack of government investment in good public sector jobs is holding our recovery back.

Government must act now to tackle structural inequality

There are many wider changes we also need to see. The pandemic cannot be an excuse to roll back existing workplace initiatives on equality, nor to pause future progress.

Government must now act to tackle gender, race and disability pay gaps with new mandatory requirements on employers to report on pay gaps experienced by Black and disabled workers alongside action plans focusing on all three groups to address the causes of these gaps. The government must not only ensure that full equality impact assessments are undertaken across its work, but should also enact the public sector duty on socio-economic inequalities contained in part one of the Equality Act and ensure equality impact assessments are carried out and acted on in the private sector too. The government must legislate to deliver on its promise of making flexible work the default.

The government will fail in its efforts to tackle these grave inequalities if it doesn't also tackle insecure work. It must use the forthcoming employment bill to abolish zero-hours contracts, give workers rights to a contract reflecting their usual hours, notice for shifts and compensation for cancelled shifts. Statutory rights for trade union equality reps are needed now more than ever.

The pandemic has set out the scale of the structural inequality we face, and the case for change is stronger than ever. The government's woeful response has failed to promote equality, and too often has further undermined it. But unions know that a fairer economy will also be a stronger one. By organising on the ground, and forcing government to act, we will not rest until equality has been achieved for everyone.

03. Preventing unemployment and building a better recovery

The economy is facing unprecedented economic challenges. But ordinary working people shouldn't be the ones bearing the burden of the pandemic. Unions will fight for the decent jobs with fair pay that Britain needs to get out of this recession and prevent the devastation of mass unemployment.

We need action now to prevent mass unemployment

Covid-19, a health crisis, has presented the biggest economic shock in decades. Trade unions supported the lockdown of the economy as the right thing to do. We can be proud of the part we played in shaping the Job Retention Scheme and Self-Employed Income Support Scheme.

But there is a growing danger that an international pandemic will give way to a global recession. Devastating levels of unemployment of up to 4.5 million are now forecast. Every day we hear of new redundancies by firms operating across all sectors of the economy.

Trade unions know that this isn't inevitable. With the right action now we can prevent the mass unemployment of the 1980s, and deliver the decent jobs we deserve in the industries of the future. Jobs with fair and better pay, more security, control over working time, and a real voice at work.

The union movement will fight to achieve this, organising and bargaining to protect jobs, pay and conditions, building on the Organise 2020 pledge to grow our movement.

And we'll campaign for decisive action by government at national, international, and regional levels.

Working people have got us through the pandemic, they mustn't be made to bear the burden of the aftermath. Let's choose a recovery built around their work, their needs, their health, and their dreams. We'll fight for the decent jobs with fair pay that Britain needs to get out of recession.

Government must protect and create jobs to drive a green recovery

Government must act now to save jobs. We need targeted sectoral strategies, bringing together unions and business to agree the support to protect decent jobs in our hardest-hit sectors, including manufacturing; steel; retail; the creative industries; the news industry; and transport, including rail, maritime and aviation. We urgently need a revised transport structure that will deliver a green transition and proper governance.

Government must provide support to save jobs in businesses hit hard by virus restrictions with a new Job Protection and Upskilling Plan. Support for business must come with strings attached - with new requirements to promote decent work and protect jobs. And government must invest now to create over a million new jobs in the green industries of the future, with support for decent skills, quality apprenticeships, including enabling current apprentices to complete their apprenticeship, and a right

to retrain. The government should work with business and unions to ensure a just transition for the workers and communities whose livelihoods will be most directly impacted by the drive to net zero as we tackle the urgent challenge of climate change.

Recovery plans must promote decent work and a new way of doing business

The pandemic has shown all too clearly what trade unions have long argued: too many workers lack a voice, and work is too insecure. Trade unions are organising across the country to win better jobs for workers and defend members against the actions of opportunistic employers who are aiming to cut terms and conditions. But we need government to act too.

Government support and public procurement must come with conditions on business to promote new business models based on fairer employment relationships. We need an end to unfair trade union legislation, union access to workplaces and new collective bargaining rights across sectors and industries to make sure that unions can do their job of protecting workers. Government must introduce a higher minimum wage, day-one employment rights, security for the self-employed, an end to unfair trade union legislation, and fair working time, including a ban on the zero-hours contracts faced by too many of our key workers, reduced working time with no loss of pay, more opportunities for flexible work, extended parental and care leave and retirement on a decent pension.

The terrible working conditions exposed in Leicester and elsewhere show we must stop businesses opting out of their responsibilities through complex supply chains, with new laws to allow workers to have the right to challenge their parent employer over minimum wage, sick pay and holiday pay abuses. And a green recovery must be based on good quality employment, including opportunities for workers in existing foundation, manufacturing and supply chains to develop our low-carbon infrastructure.

We must rebuild our public services

A plan to rebuild our public services and public service infrastructure can help bring us out of the crisis, promoting decent jobs and services for all. That means bringing our public services back to full strength, with decent pay for those who looked after us in the crisis, an end to outsourcing and a new focus on good jobs and direct employment in social care.

We need a real safety net

We need decent sick pay for all now. And government must invest in our social security system, not only to reverse the cruel cuts of the past decade but to provide a real safety net and tackle the child poverty and homelessness that scar our society.

Government must agree trade deals and international rules that promote decent jobs and public services for all

We need a global recovery that changes the rules to put the interests of people above those of multinational corporations, financial institutions and hedge funds. But at present, the UK government is pursuing a minimal deal with the EU that will put jobs across the country at risk and threaten our fundamental rights. Instead, we need a good

deal between the UK and the EU that ensures tariff-free trade in goods and low-barrier trade in services, good jobs and high standards of workers' rights. The UK must not negotiate trade deals with the US or any other country or trading bloc that will create pressure for workers' rights to be lowered, lock in privatisation in our public services or operate secret and non-transparent courts.

The recovery plan must promote equality at work: As the General Council has set out, the coronavirus has exposed and exacerbated inequality. Plans to build a better recovery must put equality at their heart, setting out how the structural inequalities faced by Black, disabled, LGBT+ and women workers will be challenged rather than further entrenched.

Workers' voices must be at the table

The pandemic has shown once again the importance of workers having a voice at the table when decisions are made. That shouldn't just be an emergency measure but a new way of doing business. Our organisation and mobilisation strategy will work to grow our movement, ensuring that far more workers have a voice in their workplace.

A National Recovery Council should be established with representatives from government, workers and employers. And the UK government must come together with other governments, employers and trade unions globally to negotiate new global rules and trade deals that promote a recovery based on decent work and public services for all. The TUC will work with our trade union partners across the world to push for this goal.

We can build a better recovery and stop mass unemployment

Some will say that this cannot be done. They will argue that in a time of economic crisis, we must simply batten down the hatches. History proves them wrong. Ten years of Tory and coalition austerity brought us the slowest growth and the worst recovery for the public debt in a century, leaving working people paying the price for the failures of business and governments worldwide.

By creating a fairer society, we will build a stronger economy, in which decent wages create both security for workers and their families, and demand for the products and services of our businesses. The way to do this is through everyone having a decent job, on better pay and working conditions, alongside revitalised public services and a stronger safety net.

04. Tackling racism

The UK trade union movement stands with our sisters and brothers in the USA as they speak out against the catalogue of racist murders of Black men and women including Breonna Taylor and George Floyd by police and Ahmaud Arbery by vigilantes.

The Black Lives Matters protests have renewed a worldwide call for justice for Black people. They have highlighted the need for decolonisation of education and the public space, challenging the symbols, policies and practices which allow systemic racism to thrive.

The protests in the UK have highlighted home-grown racism. The increasing numbers of Black people being murdered in state custody, racist violence, profiling and lack of accountability and the impacts of the hostile environment on Black people have all rightly been at the centre of the UK protests.

Institutional racism is a matter of life or death for Black workers

The coronavirus has also focused public and political attention on structural racism. Public Health England (PHE) has confirmed that Black and Asian ethnic groups are up to twice as likely to die from Covid-19, with these trends driven by Black people's poorer housing, health, job opportunities and access to education. The pandemic has exposed systematic and institutional racism and inequality across society including across the criminal justice system and above all in our workplaces, where racial harassment and pay gaps continue and increasing numbers of Black workers struggle to make a living in precarious jobs. It has also shone a bright spotlight on the increasing number of migrant workers who have died from the virus as essential workers. We have a moral duty to their families to fight for them to be treated with dignity and respect (especially those who may not have recourse to public funds) and to campaign for an end to the hostile environment.

The stark statistics in official reports of those who catch Covid-19 and the disproportionate death rates of Black workers and their families are shocking to read. But each death has a name and a story that deserves to be told. They are our members, friends, family and workplace comrades. Whilst we mourn each death, we resolve to re-double our efforts to fight for the living – and to renew the fight against systematic institutional and structural racism. Black lives matter. Not just the right to live, but to live a life free from inhuman and inhumane human right abuse, racism, discrimination and poverty.

The brutal realities of Covid-19 have exposed the way racism affects where you live and how you work. Increasingly our economy relies on an army of largely invisible essential workers, a high proportion of whom are Black workers and who have come to the fore to save lives and keep society functioning.

The exposure of occupational segregation, fragmented employment, insecure contracts, poverty pay, lack of PPE and lack of sick pay is therefore no surprise. Added to this is many Black workers' fear that raising concerns with managers will only make their situation worse. This is particularly an issue for migrant workers fearful of losing their jobs as their employment status was a condition attached to the visa/work permit whose loss will automatically activate their administrative removal by the Home Office from UK to their country of origin.

Government must act now to dismantle institutional racism

We have witnessed countless inquiries with many recommendations, that if implemented would have improved Black people's lives. Black communities have lost faith in the UK government taking this issue seriously or taking action to protect Black lives. The announcement by the government of two inquiries led by people who have publicly rejected the existence of institutional racism and systemic inequality has done nothing to restore the confidence of Black communities that the government is committed to transformative change.

Continued warm words are not enough and action is needed today. Employers, governments, public bodies and regulators must be held to account for failures in their duty of care and legal responsibilities.

We call on the UK government to:

- › promptly implement all the recommendations from the Windrush Lessons Learned Review
- › urgently act to pay compensation and provide free independent legal support for citizenship applications – two years on and victims of the Windrush scandal are still waiting for the promised compensation
- › fully implement the Lammy Review of the criminal justice system from 2017
- › fully implement the recommendations of the government Race Disparity report
- › fully implement the recommendations from the McGregor Smith report
- › bring into force Section 1 of the Equality Act 2010 – the Public Sector Socio-Economic Duty in England: this is already enacted in the Scotland and Wales
- › introduce mandatory ethnicity pay gap reporting alongside a requirement for employers to publish action plans covering recruitment, retention, promotion, pay and grading, access to training, performance management and discipline and grievance procedures relating to BME staff and applicants
- › ensure all workers, regardless of immigration status, can claim rights at work
- › establish a decent floor of rights for all workers and end to abuse of agency, zero-hours, minimum-hours and other type of precarious contracts
- › ensure all migrants are able to access social security support on the same terms as UK citizens by ending no recourse to public funds
- › ensure all migrants, including undocumented migrants, can access the NHS free of charge
- › establish an independent judge-led royal commission or public inquiry into the government's handling of the pandemic with a particular focus on Black deaths due to Covid-19 and the contributing factors
- › scrap the "hostile environment" Immigration Acts of 2014 and 2016 and document checks on employment, housing, banking and drivers licensing.

Trade unions will continue in our work to fight racism

Trade unions also have an immediate and crucial role to play through organising and bargaining on behalf of Black workers to force employers through all available collective means, including legal action, to ensure that Black workers are listened to and respected and protected in the workplace. Risks must be properly identified, and meaningful measures to address them must be put in place.

We will continue work to build support and solidarity with the wider Black Lives Matter movement, nationally and internationally, and create a positive legacy for the next generation. We will engage robustly with government, holding it to account and making the case for progressive change. We recognise important LGBT+ anti-racist campaigning, and support the Black Trans Lives Matter campaign. We will continue to be proactive and vigilant to voice to the daily burden and worry Black workers face going out to work in public facing roles and returning to their families at the end of their shift fearing they are now carrying Covid-19. We are committed to fighting to prevent this risk, ensure their safety and fighting racism in the workplace.

We also acknowledge that trade unions themselves must do more to tackle institutional racism within their own structures. We are proud that this Congress sees the launch of a new General Council task group on anti-racism. Building on the proud legacy of the TUC's Stephen Lawrence task group, the new group will give voice to the everyday racism Black workers experience across society and will set out how institutional racism continues to manifest itself at work. It will set out an action plan for change, across UK workplaces and within unions themselves, making recommendations that will ensure union organising, representation, education and training and bargaining agendas deliver sustained race equality and tackle under-representation in leadership. The action plan will also address what more unions and the TUC must do to increase recruitment, retention and progression of Black staff and address ethnicity pay gaps within their own organisations. We commit to supporting the work of this group, and to acting on its proposals.

05. A global recovery for working people

The trade union movement is founded on solidarity and internationalism. We know that policies that hurt workers anywhere hurt workers everywhere. The Covid-19 pandemic has shown up the failings of global rules that put the needs of corporations above those of workers. Now we need a global response that puts the needs and the voices of working people at the centre to deliver a sustainable recovery from the pandemic.

The global rules aren't delivering for working people

The Covid-19 pandemic has shown up how a neo-liberal model of globalisation that puts markets above people has let down workers around the world, with rising poverty and hunger in the global south.

Rising trade tensions and shifting UK-global relationships, including the UK leaving the EU and its single market, the threat of no-deal Brexit and the escalating US dispute with China and potential impact here threaten the jobs of workers in manufacturing and beyond, in the UK and across the world.

And multinational corporations, like Amazon and many others, are exploiting the current situation to entrench their power and downgrade workers' rights, terms and conditions.

These failings reflect a global system of rules that has entrenched structural inequality and discrimination. Complex supply chains end in countries where production is cheap because workers are being exploited, often in precarious jobs or in the informal economy, with little access to social protection. Shortages of medical equipment, drugs and PPE created by the pandemic exposed the weakness of these supply chains and led to countries competing at the expense of countries in the Global South.

Therefore, it is more crucial than ever for us to use our voice internationally to defend workers' interests.

International institutions have ignored workers' interests, entrenching inequality

Our international institutions have ignored the example of the ILO and shut out trade unions, driven by the interests of multinational corporations. The WTO, IMF and World Bank, where wealthy countries have more say, have encouraged deregulation and privatisation, meaning that workers' rights and quality public services have been trampled on. They have systemically undermined the very things we know we need to fight a pandemic: public investment guided by industrial strategy, strong social protections, access to free quality healthcare, and decent work.

This degradation of workers' power has entrenched deep global inequalities. That inequality has been seized on by far-right movements and governments, attempting to turn working people against each other in a deliberate strategy to divert attention from their own failings. Migrant workers and refugees, particularly those from BME backgrounds, have been exposed to the most harm in the pandemic, yet their fundamental rights have been denied.

We need new global rules that deliver for working people everywhere

We need a new social contract between business, governments and trade unions backed up by new global rules that put decent work, a just transition to a low-carbon economy, social justice and equality ahead of the needs of corporations.

We need institutions that value human life above profits: unions must take a seat at the WTO and other multilateral bodies to ensure this. We must be at the table when trade deals are negotiated, to embed decent work, gender equality, the protection of public services and the environment and respect for workers' and other human rights into those agreements. A global trade system based on fair rules that protect workers' jobs and rights is the best way to respond to trade tensions, rather than risking jobs through a hard or no-deal Brexit.

We should defend the World Health Organization from President Trump's threat to end US funding for it while calling for the WHO to be reformed.

The wealthy countries of the world should back a global social protection fund, to support protections firmly rooted in the public sector, and promote the nationalisation of health, education and social security.

We will work with trade unions across the world to push for new global rules for business – based on the existing voluntary UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, made mandatory and given new teeth – to be agreed at the UN. The complexity of business operations cannot again be an excuse to abandon workers. This must go hand-in-hand with union organising, so that workers can exercise their power in the workplace.

It is possible to negotiate global deals for workers where collective bargaining agreements are negotiated at international level and set acceptable minimum conditions for workers, especially those working across international borders, such as seafarers. Such agreements would counter the kind of undercutting that is rife in certain sectors.

We will campaign in solidarity with workers facing repression around the world

We will campaign in solidarity with sisters and brothers around the world facing not just the devastation caused by this crisis but ongoing repression and violence. We will continue to stand in solidarity with our fellow trade unionists in Colombia, facing assassination and threats as they call for a lasting peace. And with trade unionists in Turkey who face trumped-up charges, calling for the release of prisoners, including Ocalan.

The TUC will work with our sister organisations around the world to counter the growth of the far right, to organise and build solidarity in our workplaces and communities. We stand together to defend the Black, disabled, LGBT+ and women workers who are too often the targets of their hatred. We will continue to speak out against injustice, authoritarianism and dangerous far-right regimes like those in Brazil.

We will continue to oppose the annexation of the West Bank by the Israeli government, which would violate international law, as does the current occupation, which violates Palestinians' human and worker rights. We will actively encourage affiliates, employers and pension funds to disinvest from, and boycott the goods of, companies who profit

from illegal settlements and the Occupation. And we will continue to advocate for a two-state solution based on peace and security for both Israel and Palestine and justice for the Palestinian people, as well as the need for the British government to recognise the Palestinian state.

We will campaign for global rules and international trade treaties that promote decent work, gender equality, quality public services for all, the UN sustainable development goals and just transition, including throughout global supply chains.

A new social contract is possible

The world missed an opportunity in 2008 to rebuild a more just and sustainable world. In countries across the world, including this one, workers' power is being curtailed instead of strengthened. The results have been disastrous. But each time governments and international institutions need to step in to prop up the world economy is another chance for us to create change.

The TUC's response to the pandemic is to reassert the right of working people to shape our own futures. To rewind the repression and indignities of anti-union laws, attacks on public services and government-sanctioned tax evasion, and to demand a new social consensus where workers' voices are not stifled but instead shape policy, recognising once again that poverty and inequality anywhere is a threat to decent work and prosperity everywhere.