



**Covid-19
UPDATE**

THE VERY FIRST...

...DIGITAL CONFERENCE EDITION



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CONFERENCE OPENING SPEECH

"I want to start by saying how immensely proud I am of each and every one of you ... for continuing to work throughout this pandemic, feeding the nation, putting yourselves at risk in factories with hundreds of people and serving the public daily"

sarah.woolley@bfawu.org

IT IS AN ABSOLUTE HONOUR and a privilege to be able to address you today as the first female General Secretary our great union has ever had – and hopefully not the last! And I want to thank everyone who supported me in the election process, especially my old branch 580 and those who have continued to do so over the last 12 months, including my family, especially Tony and Paul, because they are the ones who have had to deal with off-camera Sarah.

Hitting the ground running in a new position in a global pandemic has not been smooth sailing. I have gone through numerous hair dyes and bottles of Gin! And whilst its not the same speaking to little squares on a screen as it is being together in a Conference Hall, the pride I'm feeling is still very much there. I'm conscious that we don't have the same amount of time as we would normally do, so I won't rattle on too long.

I want to start by saying how immensely proud I am of each and every one of you here and those members and representatives back at your workplaces, for continuing to work throughout this pandemic, feeding the nation, putting yourselves at risk in factories with hundreds of people and serving the public daily, and fundamentally changing your ways of work in order to keep safe. **You truly are collectively the key workers that we have always known our membership to be.**

You have done an amazing job challenging employers and making sure that the safety measures that have been put in place are tweaked so that they are effective and haven't impacted negatively on other health and safety aspects. That is why, as a union, we haven't seen the catastrophic death levels that other areas of the economy and non-unionised workplaces have.

That isn't to say we haven't lost any members throughout the pandemic. We certainly have and our thoughts go out to all of their families, but because of the hard work of our reps on sites many more families have been spared the heartache of losing a loved one.

As an organisation we have managed to continue to function during this global pandemic, through a change in General Secretary without the ability to have a proper handover. With closed offices and staff working from home, we have had to adapt to meeting *virtually* due to restrictions and pulled off organising our first ever *digital* conference, complete with multiple fringe meetings open to all members.

Can you imagine having that conversation 2 years ago? We would have deemed it impossible, yet here we are!

We have continued to run national campaigns such as the *Right to Food* campaign and raising *Statutory Sick Pay* which we will continue to build on as we are committed to improving our industry across the board.

And Conference I couldn't address you today without mentioning a few things. Firstly our *retirees*, 2020 saw **Ronnie, Steve and Dave** retire after decades of individual membership and hard work supporting members in their workplaces. At the beginning of 2021 **Pauline and Grace** also retired, again after years of supporting branches and officials. I have said this in print a few times but I know you will join me in wishing each and every one of them a long and happy retirement. It's such a shame we aren't together in person so that we can celebrate properly, but I'm sure that, once out of the pandemic when we are together again, we will have the opportunity to do so.

We felt the loss of **Dennis Nash** in August, a shock to many of us. While I didn't have the pleasure of working with Dennis, the stories I have been told about him have always been positive and full of admiration and, of course, without him we wouldn't have the Credit Union. Our thoughts are with Dennis' family and those from his old branch and region who remained close to him.

Lastly the **English Learning Project** was cruelly taken away from us this year. We still have fantastic projects in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland which continue to flourish and support workers in our industry developing themselves, but it has left a hole in England. The team were fantastic and I know they have all remained members of the union. We thank them for everything they have done, certainly over the last 18 months through the pandemic and we are working on structures and support for the ULRs in England so that all the hard work over the last 20 years doesn't fall by the wayside. You are *never* too old to learn, no one ever knows everything and there are always opportunities to try something new and develop yourself. Education is a passion of mine, I have received a vast amount through my trade union membership and I want to ensure that members for generations to come can also do that.

...as a union, we haven't seen the catastrophic death levels that other areas of the economy and non-unionised workplaces have

Conference, the food industry is the biggest manufacturing unit in the UK. We are the biggest contributors to the economy, yet are at the bottom of the pile when it comes to investment in upskilling and education. Across the board, new technologies are bought by *employers* rather than an industry invested in by the government and we know throughout the last 12 – 18 months you have been the forgotten keyworkers, recognised in name but hidden due to working behind the scenes producing the food everyone needs in order to survive. Ian and myself have been talking over the last few months about the way our industry is dumbed down and, I'll be honest, *it frustrates the hell out of us!*

People talk about the food industry like it's the place to go when there's nowhere else, an industry that doesn't need skills, doesn't need a university degree so *deserves* low pay and precarious contracts. Well, I am *proud* to have worked in the food industry, I'm proud to have worked at Greggs.



Top table looks a little different this year!

I wonder how many people can make 64 sandwiches an hour, knowing the recipes off by heart – I still do, well from when I was making them (I'm sure some have been changed slightly since then). I wonder how many people know the correct temperature to keep sausages in a hot hold and for how long without putting customers at risk, what to do if a fridge or self-selector breaks down. How many have the ability to crowd control queues of customers especially at Christmas where everyone's grumpy because they are rushing around and nothing's done fast enough?

I wonder if people knew the training that was required to be a *mixer*, to ensure the right ingredients are used and allergens that can literally kill people aren't added incorrectly, or the physical toll of standing on the end of an oven tipping bread out of hot tins takes on a person, how challenging it is to keep up with boxing fondant fancies or Yorkshire puddings, or putting cherries on top of a Bakewell Tart or having the ability to know a line isn't running right just by the noise it is making, or having to clean down intricate parts of a machine to ensure that a new product can be made on it with no cross contamination, I wonder if they would still see our industry as *unskilled*.

Because I know and we all know that not everyone is cut out to do those jobs, and yes a university degree may not be *needed*, but one mistake can be *catastrophic*.

So going forwards we want to **change the narrative** about our industry. We want people to feel proud to work within it and for the wider public to understand the skills that are needed and used every day to produce the food they eat.

Then they can join us in putting pressure on the government to increase the standards in pay, terms and conditions and, of course, *investment* as a result. ***Because you deserve more.*** We shouldn't be in a position where people in our industry are going hungry because they are paid too little to survive.

Conference I am not going to speak for much longer – you will hear enough from me over the next few days, I just want to end with this:

I am committed to this union still being here long after I have retired, but in order to do that we all need to work *together*. I am not the union – *you and the members* are! We have to stop *third partying* the union and remember that we are powerful when we come together, *we force change as a collective* and the more in that collective the more change we force because we are the union. *Just look at what has been achieved in the last month at Hovis in Belfast!*

We need to strive to get to **100% membership in our workplaces**. It's not going to be easy, no-one is pretending that it will be, but it is possible and we mustn't be afraid of trying something different because what we have always done has stopped working. Membership *is* and *has been for a while* in decline and we need to turn that around.

There's no magic wand to do that, one thing won't work for every workplace, and it will be hard. But if we want to remain an independent trade union for the next 100 plus years ***we must try***. We have to share with each other what has worked well and what hasn't and lift each other up, not tear each other down.

I'm going to end with an ask, Conference. *Please*, engage with the branch mapping, engage with the many different digital meetings we will plan in to talk to you and your members about the issues you face, and engage with the different ideas that they generate, so that we can support you going forwards in local, regional and national campaigns designed to make your lives and our industry *better*.

Things will look differently going forward. I'm not Ronnie, I'm not Joe and I stood on a platform of *change*. We have come a hell of a long way in 12 months, mainly because of the situation we have found ourselves in, but we still have a long way to go.

I can't wait to be able to come and meet those of you I don't know yet and work with all of you to build our union together.

Solidarity and enjoy the rest of conference – and the fringe events

**Sarah
General Secretary**



NATIONAL PRESIDENT IAN HODSON

“Digital will never replace the meeting of people in real life but I believe the 2021 conference changed people’s minds about what can be achieved going forward – improving our online presence as an organisation and ensuring we create more opportunities to come together as representatives”

IN RECENT WEEKS I have visited some incredible people who are supporting so many people in our communities. **Sunshine House** is at the forefront of fighting poverty and offering vital support for the residents of Wigan, such as self-help and support groups, as well as educational opportunities, support for addicts, help for the unemployed and assistance to ex-offenders. In addition, it supplies meals to those in need and, during Covid, offered shopping deliveries for vulnerable adults who had to self-isolate or were too unwell to leave home.

Rebuilding lives

It was incredible to see the fantastic workers and volunteers who are making such a difference to people’s quality of life. You can’t help but be impressed listening to inspirational stories told by support workers and volunteers, rebuilding the lives of those who had lost loved ones or supporting adults with learning difficulties and how during this crisis they have been able to bring them together with others who would have been isolated and alone.

To witness, and briefly experience, the joy that these people got from each other was really heartwarming.



The reason for my visit to Sunshine House was to present certificates to both young and those of a more mature age who had taken up learning opportunities via our Union Learning Services, delivered by our ex-VP and former Learning Project worker **John Fox**. He has done a tremendous job in bringing young people who would otherwise have been failed by our educational system back into learning. Due to the support and encouragement of both John and Lorraine many have found themselves back in education with a real hunger for learning. Age is no barrier to a life of learning as another student, Mary, explained that even at the of age 72, learning had given her a new spur in life.

#righttofood

As we have launched our *Right to Food* campaign it’s been important to engage with those at the forefront of the campaign. I saw the lengths that people are prepared to go to, to ensure people didn’t starve to death in the 5th richest economy in the world.

When I visited **Ian Byrne MP** in Liverpool, we listened to a young mum explain how if it wasn’t for the purple bus that was set up in her community, her family wouldn’t have been able to eat. She worked for the Home Office, her husband is a teaching assistant and they relied on his pay as a part-time referee to be able to afford to buy shopping – but Covid meant there was no football to referee. She had had her hours cut and he was furloughed. Her voice was breaking and she held back the tears as she told us. It was a really powerful statement about the state of the society we live in today.

Whilst Covid has shone a light on injustices, it didn’t *create* them – rather it *exposed* them. As a union of *people*, we need to recognise that the society we live in is *failing* us. People are not receiving the support they need and yet we live in a country that has increased the wealth of those at the top while so many are left looking for handouts and charity.

We’re a country that is going to spend **£200 million** on a yacht to sail around poor countries (whose aid funding we have cut) so they can look out to sea and see the might of the British economy sailing by. In fact *‘behold the power of the British state’* will probably be emblazoned on the side – pretending our country is a beacon to the world, that our streets are lined with gold instead of homeless people and queues at the foodbanks. *We must work together to end the misery and suffering so many face.*

Digital success

Conference was an unexpectedly engaging experience. Going by the comments made both at the conference and on social media, it was an experience that was warmly welcomed and enjoyed. More conversational than barnstorming, although you could feel the passion of the speakers. It was more interactive than we could have hoped for.

For the Executive, it was important after being unable to hold Conference in 2020 that we did something this year. We know there was a lot of concern about how it would work – if it would stop people from taking part. Would they be able to contribute and would they be able to access the technology?

Digital will never replace the meeting of people in real life but I believe the 2021 Conference changed people’s minds about what can be achieved going forward.

Improving our online presence as an organisation means that we create more opportunities to come together as representatives going forward. The format of motions and fringes was also something that made the event feel fresh and something the Executive should seriously consider for the future.

Our Conference has served us well but sometimes we need a fresh approach. I would like to thank (and *congratulate*) our General Secretary for the incredible work undertaken in preparation for the event.

Building back better

On the Monday of our Conference, our General Secretary laid out a vision for our union that is about building our sector back better, changing the narrative for those who work in our industry being seen as unskilled and low paid to where you should all rightfully be – not just keyworkers in a crisis but *essential frontline workers all the time*.

In our workplaces, we need more representation from women and those from a BAME background. We need to up our game in understanding why there is a lack of engagement and encourage development in these areas to fully represent our membership. To assist this, we have set up a **BAME Network** and a **Woman's network**. The aims are to ensure that barriers holding people back are *removed*, to ensure our training is relevant and to provide the skills to all our reps to ensure they can truly represent our incredible members.

Hurrah! Covid's over!

The announcement from the Government removing all restrictions is quite disturbing. After more than a year of restrictions there is to be a removal of all protections – all without consulting business or Trade Unions. We will be discussing and issuing further guidance following our *National Safety Meeting* but would remind our representatives that we should not accept somehow a life-threatening virus has suddenly become 'the flu' and that we should not be reducing safety measures until proven safe to do so.

Covid must continue to be part of any absence procedure and if an employer attempts to weaken or remove payments to those needing to isolate, *we will support you in balloting for industrial action*. We will not tolerate our members being put at risk.

Wear a mask – *when we protect each other we all win!*

SOLIDARITY

Ian Hodson
National President



CONFERENCE: MOTIONS CARRIED

The full list of motions debated by Conference can be found in the Final Agenda 2021

Motions lost are not included here, but some motions were remitted for debate on a future occasion.

For a copy of the Agenda, please visit the new website (www.bfawu.org) and search for **Conference Documents – Agenda** is first on the list. If you can't find it, email info@bfawu.org to request a link.

Rule Changes and New Rules

2 Rule 14.8

Branch 253

This Conference agrees to amend 14.8 by adding Environmental Representative to the list of Branch officers and shall read as:

- L) Environmental representatives shall be elected from the Members of the Branches. The duty of Environmental Stewards is to implement changes on sites, inspect sites and report opportunities for environmental savings to the branch committee and employees. They shall forward best practice to the EC for discussion. Environmental stewards to stand for re-election after 2 years' service, and credentials to be progressed through the RC.

13 Rule 22.7

Executive Council

Insert at the end of the rule 'In the case of a digital meeting being held, the deadline, delivery and collection of nominations and ballot arrangements may be amended as determined by the National President and SOC.'

15 Rule 22.19

Executive Council

Remove the first sentence and replace with:

'Nominations, which should include a short biography of no more than 200 words why the nominee should be elected to the EC, should be handed to the General Secretary in writing on the first day of meeting and the election to take place on the second day.'

Insert at the end of the rule: 'In the case of a digital meeting needing to be held the deadline, delivery and collection of nominations may be amended as determined by the National President and SOC'

16 Rule 22.20

Executive Council

Insert at the end of the rule: 'In the case of a digital meeting being held the deadline, delivery and collection of nominations and ballot arrangements may be amended as determined by the National President and SOC.'

17 Rule 2

Executive Council

Replace Rule 2 with;

2.1 New Branches and Administration

Any ten or more members employed in the same workplace or for the same employer who desire to form a branch of this Union, must apply to the relevant RC. No expense shall be incurred until authority has been obtained from the RC.

18 Rule 4

Executive Council

Remove the following:

'Each RC shall elect from these nominations three Safety Representatives to sit on the Regional Safety Committee. The Regional Safety Committee shall meet at least one week prior to the Regional Council on a quarterly basis.'

Replace with:

'The regional Safety Committee shall become agenda item to the Regional Council.'

Remove the following:

'Meetings of the National Safety Committee shall be held at least one week prior to the EC meetings on a quarterly basis.'

Replace with;

‘Meetings of the National Safety Committee shall be held at least one week prior to the EC meetings.’

19 Rule 14.13 Executive Council

At the end of the first sentence insert after ‘document’: ‘or social media content’

Insert ‘Regional or’ between ‘all’ and ‘appeals’.

20 Rule 15.4 Executive Council

Insert before the last sentence:

‘In accordance with rule 22.5’

Insert at the end of the last sentence;

‘The £5.00 fee will not be payable where food is supplied by the Union.’

21 Rule 17.1 Executive Council

Insert at the end of sentence 5, after the word ‘industry’: ‘and refer to the person specification and selection criteria’

22 Rule 18.1(a) Executive Council

Remove ‘within the Region’ from sentence 2.

23 Rule 21.1 (a) Executive Council

Remove ‘at the HO or such place as deemed convenient’

General Motions: Union Policies

24 Branch 405

That this Conference agrees that:

We as a union will not tolerate racist comments made verbally or by the means of social media. As a Union we need to set an example and embrace our diversity.

26 Branch 253

This Conference agrees that all agendas produced by this union shall include ‘Environment’ on the same line as Health and Safety and shall read as “Safety, Health and Environment.

29 Branch 580

That this Conference agrees to recycle the lanyards used at Conference to reduce costs to our union

30 Branch 580

That this Conference agrees to reduce the use of single-use plastic at Conference

31 Branch 580

That this Conference agrees to look at a more up-to-date method to get members to vote in ballots

34 No 7 Regional Council

This Conference agrees that the choice of hotel accommodation at Southport, The Prince of Wales Britannia Group, is not to be used. The hotel is not only a health hazard, the conditions are appalling, the rooms are not clean and it is a disgrace that we are expected to permit our members to stay in these conditions for the duration of Conference.

Furthermore, the Britannia Group should not be used in any capacity whatsoever by our union in the future, due to their treatment of workers in the early stages of the covid-19 pandemic were, widely reported in the media, one of their hotels, The Aviemore Cowlumbridge, on 19th March 2020 terminated employment of staff with immediate effect and many of the employees who lived

on the hotel premises discovered they were homeless as well as unemployed. As a union we cannot put money into the pockets as such companies that treat their staff in a barbaric manner.

Conference we urge you to support.

36 Executive Council

Conference can see that over the last 10 years automation has become more prevalent in our industry. This in turn reduces the number of jobs needed within it. Whilst we understand the need for automation we need to ensure that our members aren’t left behind. Conference therefore agrees the executive should look into the impacts of automation and the likelihood of the process speeding up on the back of the pandemic and put together a strategy to support branches going forwards who will need to deal with the changes automation brings.

Health, Safety and Environment

37 Branch 405

That this Conference agrees to lobby the government to force Care Providers to have holiday and sickness cover staff, so that the patient/customer are not left in limbo over these periods, and there routines are not upset by these issues.

38 Branch 432

That this Conference agrees workers of Britain should never be treated like some of them have been treated during the pandemic, lack of PPE. No pay rises, lack of H&S and poor working conditions. The workers of Britain whatever job they do are all a cog that’s makes the wheel turn, and all workers should stand together and support each other in the fight for better working conditions.

39 Branch 432

That this Conference agrees that all companies should follow the Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations (the Brown Book) and consult H&S reps on matters of Health and Safety in the workplace which sadly has been missing during the pandemic in some of our workplaces.

Education

41 Branch 405

That this Conference agrees to lobby the government to continue its funding for Adults and Children with Autism and Learning Difficulties, as in the Tory manifesto, funding is stopped in 2022 altogether.

42 Branch 405

That this Conference agrees that we lobby the government to stop the postcode lottery on distance learning for adult education. Some people in various postcodes cannot access distant learning with their preferred provider as they are in a postcode that is devolved. This is unfair and discriminatory to the learner.

43 Branch 405

That this Conference agrees to lobby the government for increased funding for Information and Communications Technology (ICT) education to the same as English and Maths as it is only funded at 50%. With ICT now becoming commonplace within the workplace and people requiring these skills to do their jobs.

44 Branch 253

This Conference agrees to source training for Environmental Representatives

45**Executive Council**

Conference recognises the devastating impact the loss of funding to the English Union Learning Project has on our union, members and industry. Over the last 10 years over 30,000 people have utilised the English project alone and the decision by Gavin Williamson to remove funding is no more than a political attack on the trade union movement.

Conference recognises the importance of ULRs in our branches and the union and agrees the executive should continue to fight for the reintroduction of the fund and work with the GFTU and TUC to look into how ULRs receive support in the interim.

Political**46****Branch 405**

That this Conference agrees, that we lobby the Labour Party, that when a person is coming up to retirement age, companies must have a training package in place to aid in retirement.

47**Branch 405**

That this Conference agrees to lobby the government to fund further research into the menopause.

To ensure the ready availability of all medications and treatments. The symptoms of the menopause can have a devastating effect on a person's physical health, mental health work and home life.

48**Branch 405**

That this Conference lobbies the government, to end the consumption of alcohol in the houses of Parliament, and the House of Lords. If we drank in our places of work, we would be sacked.

49**Branch 405**

That this Conference lobbies, the government to ban Fracking. Their phony moratorium is mere smoke and mirrors and a stunt. Fracking can and must be banned for good.

50**Branch 405**

That this Conference agrees, to lobby the government to properly fund our NHS. Our national treasure is under threat from further privatisation and this must be fought tooth and nail.

51**Branch 405**

That this Conference lobbies the government to end the barbarity that is Universal Credit, and restore the original legacy benefits. Under Universal Credit work does not pay. It merely slowly starves people to death.

52**Branch 405**

That this Conference agrees to lobby the government to recognise the rights and freedoms of the people of Palestine, and ends the Israeli apartheid occupation.

53**Branch 405**

That this Conference agrees that we lobby the education minister to put environmental issues onto the school curriculum, so that the young people who get this education can put the mess that this generation has made; right

54**Branch 405**

That this Conference agrees, that this union works with the TUC, Labour Party and Parliament and other interested parties to ensure that no more backdated changes to immigration rules, accidentally cause another Windrush Scandal.

55**Branch 405**

That this Conference agrees that this union works with the TUC, Labour Party and parliament to create a law, where it is proven by the outcome of tribunal etc., that management has been lying during a disciplinary process etc. That disciplinary action must be taken against those who lied, those who knew it was a lie and those directing the lying.

56**Branch 405**

That this Conference agrees that this union works with the TUC, Labour Party and Parliament to ensure that workers get a voice at all levels within a company. From ongoing experiences we are being shown that many management decisions are poor and they are totally ignoring their own procedures and rules – causing unending disputes and stress. If the workers had greater input, the poor decisions may have been stopped and better decisions made, disputes avoided and stress reduced.

57**Branch 405**

That this Conference agrees that this union works with the TUC, Labour Party and Parliament, so that the Department of Work and Pensions, its contractors and their employees, should be held legally responsible for their negligent assessment that have overruled professional medical opinion in the same way and standard as doctors are held.

58**Branch 405**

That this Conference agrees that this union works with the TUC, Labour Party and Parliament, to change the law around criminal action and corruption by the police against protesters and strikers. Where the case collapses – the police involved should suffer the same sentence that those originally charged, were to receive.

59**Branch 405**

That this Conference supports the aims and objectives of JENGBA (Joint Enterprise Not Guilty by Association), a grass roots organisation that campaigns to end the injustices that are largely carried out against BAME and working-class families. The campaign is run by volunteers, many of whom are connected to trade union and Labour movements. Can this Conference agree to help JENGBA lobby cross party MPs through its parliamentary group in support of JENGBA's Private Members Bill on Substantial Injustice due to be launched this year.

60**Branch 561**

Council care workers. That this Conference put pressure on this Tory government to stop the cuts in council and NHS care both in council run homes Hospitals and care at homes and give back some dignity to our pensioners.

61**Branch 432**

That this Conference agrees that there should be a full inquiry into the government's spending of taxpayers money during the Covid pandemic. Especially involving track and trace and the contracts given out.

62**Branch 432**

That this Conference agrees there should be a law which prohibits private health care providers charging the NHS double the price for treatments and beds especially in a national crisis like a pandemic.

63**Branch 432**

That this Conference agrees that we should lobby the government that there should a flexible retirement age for manual workers

64 **Branch 432**
That this Conference agrees that we should lobby government, that when in the likes of the pandemic we are in and people have to self-isolate then 100% sick pay must be paid, people should not have to decide whether to go to work and pay your bills or stay off and not be paid.

65 **Branch 580**
That this Conference agrees to lobby the government to stop the BBC from scrapping free TV licences for the over 75's and scrap the cost for everyone.

66 **Branch 580**
That this Conference agrees to lobby the government to re-introduce road safety lessons in our primary schools

67 **No 3 Regional Council**
That this Conference believes that being an anti-Zionist does not necessarily mean that you are an anti-Semite, and that condemning Israel for its treatment of the Palestinian people is a legitimate political position.

68 **No 3 Regional Council**
That this Conference condemns the imprisonment of Kurdish journalists who have revealed crimes of the Turkish government against the Kurds, is not only egregious but should be condemned in the strongest terms. Furthermore, we believe that the world should finally push for the creation of a Kurdish state.

69 **No 3 Regional Council**
That the treatment of Julian Assange during his imprisonment is a stain on this country's claim that we believe in decent human rights for all. That Julian Assange's crime is that he exposed war crimes that embarrassed the United States, and his extradition is nothing more than a political stunt that could be used to silence journalists in the future who expose the maleficence of the powerful. Also, Assange should be given refugee status in this country that stops the United States from extraditing him to persecute him for performing legitimate journalism.

70 **No 3 Regional Council**
We believe that after the whistle blowers from the Organisation for Prohibition of Chemical Weapons have come forward claiming that their findings in Syria were deliberately tampered with on their investigation means that a fully independent inquiry should be carried out on how the organisation operates, and whether it has become an arm of western policy. It should be a completely apolitical organisation and not influenced by western governments policy whims.

71 **No 3 Regional Council**
We believe that the seizure by the British government of the gold held by the bank of England belonging the Venezuelan government is wrong and an attempt at regime change in that country. Also, we condemn the economic blockade that has been enacted on Venezuela by the United States, Britain and other countries in order to enact regime change, and we stand in solidarity with the Venezuelan people and the government of Nicolas Maduro.

72 **No 3 Regional Council**
That this Conference stands in solidarity with the Indian farmers, and decrees their treatment by the Modi government.

73 **No 3 Regional Council**
This Conference believes that furlough should be increased to 100 percent of pay, it is indecent to for low paid workers to try and live on 80 percent of poverty pay.

74 **Executive Council**
We are seeing a crisis of food poverty born out of the political choices and systemic failings created over the past four decades, which have now reached a tipping point for so many in our communities. The figures are devastating for one of the richest nations in the world and highlight the inequality of the UK in 2020. The Trussell Trust reports a soaring 81% increase in emergency food parcels from food banks in its network during the last two weeks of March 2020 compared with the same period in 2019, including a 122% rise in parcels given to children as the coronavirus pandemic continued to unfold.

This Conference notes the consistent high rates of poverty across our nation. We recognise the growing concern amongst our health and care professionals of the current situation and the likely exacerbation of poverty figures through the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and economic uncertainty as we continue through 2021.

The National Food Strategy is the first independent review of England's entire food system for 75 years. Its purpose is to set out a vision for the kind of food system we should be building for the future, and a plan for how to achieve that vision. It is headed by Henry Dimbleby and next reports to Government in summer 2021. The Right To Food campaign is arguing that the 11 million people in food poverty should be central to this strategy. Enshrining the 'Right To Food' into law would clarify Government obligations on food poverty and would introduce legal avenues to hold Government bodies accountable for violations.

This Conference calls for the 'Right To Food' to be incorporated into the 'National Food Strategy'. And direct the executive council to write to Henry Dimbleby to further this request.

Conference also pledges our full support to the 'Right to Food' campaign led by Fans Supporting Foodbanks and Ian Byrne MP for Liverpool West Derby, which aims to make access to food a legal right in the UK and build on the campaign to ensure no one in our industry is unable to feed themselves or their family.

75 **Executive Council**
This Conference agrees to support the Covid Bereaved Families Campaign's call on the Government to start an immediate public inquiry into the Covid-19 Pandemic and their call for the Government to provide adequate support to those who have lost someone to Covid-19.

The UK has one of the highest death tolls in the world in the Covid-19 Pandemic, with over 100,000 deaths. Gaps in the country's pandemic preparedness, delays to locking down, inadequate supplies of PPE, and the policy of discharging ill-people into care homes have all been identified as having contributed to the high death toll. We also know that BAME and disabled people died in higher numbers. Lack of planning and protective equipment put many frontline workers in harms way. Families have also been left in financial hardship, with many struggling to get benefits or being denied access to the Government's compensation scheme for frontline workers. In addition, there has been little or no recognition of the trauma of losing someone in this way or that there will be additional strain on bereavement and mental health support services. We believe all families should be able to access adequate support wherever they are in the country.

Conference offers its condolences to the thousands of bereaved families throughout the UK.

Conference instructs the National Executive Committee:

- Work with campaign <https://www.covidfamiliesforjustice.org/> and promote it through their usual communication and media channels
- Work with their Parliamentary Groups to promote the campaign in both Houses
- Encourage branch and regional groups and caucuses to promote and support the campaign
- Make a donation to the campaign
- Provide in-kind support to the campaign

76

Executive Council

The Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted further that Statutory Sick Pay is not fit for purpose. Millions of people have been forced to exist on Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) alone if their employers do not provide any company sick pay.

This Conference recognises that the SSP scheme is not fit for purpose.

It excludes nearly 2 million people because they fall below the Lower Earnings Limit (LEL) according to TUC figures.

It pays only £96.35 for up to 28 weeks. This is well below the National Living Wage (NLW) figure of £348.80 for working a forty hour week.

It operates with a 3 day waiting period meaning most claimants miss out on 60% of their first week's payments, unless they've claimed it in the previous 8 weeks, and are now eligible again after having already missed out for those 3 days.

These shortcomings mean those people who most need support are left short of money whilst being off work sick. This is unacceptable to this Conference.

Conference agrees to continue the campaign launched with don't leave organise in 2020 and for the executive to work with our Parliamentary group to call for the following;

- 6 weeks of full pay from day one (average earnings based on the last 12 week for those on zero hours/part time/ low contracted hours) funded by those employers who don't currently pay company sick pay
- Following that 28 weeks of SSP paid at a higher rate in line with statutory maternity pay.
- Because we know that some illnesses don't go away after 6 weeks and support is needed long term.

Conference also agrees that in every recognised workplace when negotiating on terms, conditions and wages, 100% sick pay should be on the agenda.

77

Executive Council

Conference agrees that Supermarkets are in control of our industry which is wrong, over the years our terms and conditions have been forced down. Hundreds of people have been made redundant due to supermarkets putting pressure on the employers we work with to drive down costs in order to maximise their profits. This creates an unnecessary race to the bottom in order to claim contracts with the supermarkets, which in turn impacts members.

The executive ask Conference to agree that we continue to work with our Parliamentary Group to stand up and fight back against the power of supermarkets ensuring that they cannot continue to profit on the back of our members as they have, even more so over the last 12 months and that we protect terms and conditions ensuring they aren't further eroded away because of the pressure supermarkets put on the industry.

Miscellaneous

78

No 3 Regional Council

That this Conference believes that this country is ill served by the mainstream broadcast media and we should support good independent broadcasters such as Novara Media.

Emergency Motions

Emergency motion 1

That this Conference agrees that Long Covid needs to be recognised as a potential life long disability. The symptoms that Long Covid leaves some people can be life changing. Some have had blood clots on their lungs which leaves minor to very severe scarring which, I'm told by NHS staff, never heals. This leaves patients with breathing difficulties, as their lungs are not working to full capacity. We are told by scientists that Covid 19 looks likely to be here for some years to come. Long Covid can and will affect workers all over the UK. Please vote for this motion.

Emergency Motion 2

This conference acknowledges the landfill operation run by Red industries at Walleys Quarry in Silverdale, Newcastle under Lyme is a blight on the locality and must be shut down. The Environment Agency's Enforcement notice issued on 26th March does not go far enough and still allows waste to be dumped in the landfill.

This issue has blighted the local community with an incessant rotten egg reek that is ruining people's day to day lives, and their health. The County Council's Director of Care and Health said, "We cannot exclude a risk to health from pollutants in the area, although we would stress any risk to health is likely to be small and short term – for example temporary irritation to the eyes, nose and throat..."

This is unacceptable, Conference, please vote to cap the tips, close down this operation and to show support and solidarity for the pressure groups calling for it's closure.

Emergency motion 3

That after the Israeli government's latest evictions in the East Jerusalem district of Sheikh Jarrah, the storming of the Al Aqsa compound (the third holiest site in Islam), and the recent bombing of Gaza we condemn the actions of Israel and call upon all nations to stop providing weapons to Israel. We also see the bombing of the AP building in Gaza as another attempt by Israel to stop any reporting of its crimes upon the Palestinian people and shut down any form of descent. As before we stand with the Palestinian resistance.

Composite Motions

Composite motion 1 – 9 and 12

22.6 (b)

Replace the first 5 lines of the rule with:

To elect from Conference delegates on the following basis;

- 1 executive member per 3000 or part thereof members in each region.

For this rule change only upon agreement the rule would be implemented straight away and would implement the change to the 2021 incoming Executive.

Remitted Motions

The following motions were remitted for later discussion in the EC:

1 Rule 14.8.a

Branch 405

That this Conference agrees that in rule 14.8.a we delete the first sentence and replace it with: ‘Shop Steward shall be elected from members of the branch, on the basis of one steward for every 50 members or under.’

5

No 7 Regional Council

This Conference agrees to ensure an appeals process can be accessed when Emergency Motions are not permitted to proceed to Conference by the Standing Orders Committee. As with any democratic process, an appeal should always be an option however the current position is that if the Standing Orders Committee deem that an Emergency should not proceed there is *no* next stage of appeal.

Within the rule book, **Appendix 1, section 2.g) To consider Appeals**, this section does not clarify if the appeal is regarding the suppression of Emergency Motions and clarity around the right to appeal a decision taken by the Standing Orders Committee needs to be addressed.

The appeals process should also look to nominate the Standing Orders substitute or one experienced delegate from each region to conduct the appeal stage as the Standing Orders Committee have already been involved in the process at the first stage of the Emergency and will not be permitted to influence the appeal stage. The mover and seconder of the Emergency to have the right to address the appeal panel and put forward the case of why an Emergency should proceed.

We should always strive for a democratic process within our union so we ask for your full support of this motion.

8 Rule 22.1

Executive Council

Replace the rule with: ‘A physical Conference of duly-elected Delegates shall be held at a venue nominated by the EC every two years. Arrangements and expenses of a nominal sum shall be determined by the EC. In the interim years a Digital Conference shall be held to deal with elections and rule changes.’

14 Rule 22.11

Executive Council

Remove Rule and replace with:

‘Resolutions involving alteration of Rules shall normally take place at the digital Conference except in exceptional circumstances. In which case they would have precedence over all other Conference resolutions and shall be debated on the first day of Conference. Any change of Union Rule shall stand for a period of at least two years.’

24

Branch 405

That this Conference agrees that:

We as a union will not tolerate racist comments made verbally or by the means of social media. As a Union we need to set an example and embrace our diversity.

40

Branch 405

That this Conference agrees, that when a person is reaching retirement age, they are given time to train an apprentice, so skills are not lost; two years prior for six months and one year prior for 3 months.

CONFERENCE FRINGE MEETINGS

Branch Secretaries, how the role has adapted over time

LONG GONE ARE THE DAYS of physically collecting subs from members and keeping accounts of who has and hasn’t paid, the session was designed to look at the role of a branch secretary in 2021 and the support branch secretaries need from their branch, region and wider union to help them fulfil the role.

We met on Sunday afternoon, focusing in the first instance on the challenges of being a branch secretary:

- Keeping all members happy all the time
- Attendance at branch meetings being poor or even nonexistent.
- Facility time
- Coming into the role without knowledge of the role itself
- The difficulty in a shop-based branch to have the ability to organise the branch and organise stewards.
- Trying to do everything.
- Juggling own issues as well as the branches and members of it
- Looking after multiple branches
- Encouraging people to become reps and activists in the branch.
- Understanding all areas of the business where members work from day one can be a challenge.

These issues were experienced by the majority, if not all of the branch secretaries that attended the meeting. We shared a number of documents with them to review and feedback to us about and we will continue to meet with them and other branch secretaries who want to be involved and shape the role, the induction into it and training for it going forwards.

We also touched on the idea of holding digital branch meetings to encourage attendance, but will discuss that more at the next meeting.

For more information on the network and future meetings please look at the **Branch Secretary Network** page on our website or email info@bfawu.org.

Why Politics is engrained in everything we do

WE LOOKED AT THE RESULTS of the Political Survey we held (that has been emailed out to members) and discussed what they mean, and invited **Richard Burgon**, MP for East Leeds (and BFAWU member), to talk to us about some of the work he is doing in his constituency and Parliament.

We looked at the future of our industry and, as the General Secretary mentioned in her conference speech, we need to change the narrative around working in the food industry as well as the investment needed from the Government to support the biggest manufacturing unit in the UK. It was suggested that the Leader of the Labour Party should meet the General Secretary, National President and a delegation of Stewards to talk about reconnecting the Labour Party to its members rather than relying on Focus Groups!

Women’s network

WHILST NOT AN EXCLUSIVELY WOMEN-ONLY space, we want these meetings to be a safe space for women members to discuss issues that affect them and the barriers that prevent women from being more active in our union. At the meeting during conference we discussed issues that affect women such as the menopause, sexual harassment, the impact of periods and period poverty, domestic violence, flexible working and maternity pay.

We discussed at length how menopause is seen as almost a joke until actually going through it – where it can be devastating mentally and physically and doesn't just impact the woman herself but her partner and family. This is why it is so important to make sure we are discussing menopause openly and have it on the agenda in workplaces when talking about health and safety and implementation of policies.

The women who attended wanted to remove the 'old mans club' environment of the trade union movement and felt that often if they were in a room and felt confident to speak, were more often than not just seen as 'gobby' rather than it be taken on board what they were speaking about, which doesn't really encourage involvement.

We covered the poor state of Maternity Pay for those who aren't working full time and the impact that can have on life in general. We also talked about building the network going forwards and whether we could run a women reps induction course – so support networks can be built from day one of being an activist.

For more information about the network and future meetings, please look at the **Women** section of the website or contact Women@bfawu.org

The importance of workplace organising

ANDY BIRCHALL, who has run our organising courses in the past, led this session – designed to encourage attendees to think about organising in their workplaces and the importance of *branch mapping*.

We know the pandemic has hindered our ability to organise and recruit members as we would normally. We know how tough it is to get around Greggs shops or hold a traditional road show in a canteen whilst adhering to social distancing measures, though there have been successes over the last 12 months at sites such as *Balliol* and especially *Greencore*.

Andy focused on the importance of solidarity and empowering members to act together, we covered how important language is, talking about what 'WE' are going to do about things and not third partying the trade union and that communication is vital to engagement – if members aren't *aware* what's going on behind the scenes or nationally then they won't think anything is!

BAME network

WHILST NOT AN EXCLUSIVELY BAME members-only meeting, this fringe (and subsequent meetings) are a safe space for BAME members to come together and discuss their experience of being in our union and look at issues such as *racism, the impact of Covid-19* and *inequality*.

At the meeting during Conference, members spoke to us about their experiences in the workplace and wider society. We discussed the importance of awareness and diversity – workplace HR teams are not always as aware as they should be to help and support employees when issues arise, and this can also be an issue within branches too. We spoke about *unconscious bias* and that going forwards we want to engage more with our BAME members to ensure we are truly supporting them if issues arise. We are developing campaigns and policies that reflect their needs too.

It was also proposed that we have an agenda item at regional councils and every meeting that encourages discussion around these issues to build awareness and solidarity.

For more information about future meetings and the network please see the **BAME** section of the website or email: BAME@bfawu.org

Right to food campaign

IAN BYRNE MP joined us to give an update on the wider campaign in Parliament and talked about the *National Food Strategy* and the work of *Fans supporting Food banks*.

We looked at the Report produced after our survey of food workers and heard some real life examples of food poverty and its impact.

We recognised the importance of removing the stigma attached to using foodbanks – it isn't anyone's fault that they are being paid too little to survive on and rather than using slurs and questioning why someone has an expensive-looking mobile phone, we should be focusing on the Government and their role.

Ian was clear that we need a *movement*, not one person to solve this crisis – a problem long before Covid, but magnified through the pandemic. Foodbanks should be about *mutual aid*, not *charity* and in fact if the **Right to Food** was enshrined in law, foodbanks would no longer be needed. All they are doing is sticking a plaster on a gaping wound which the Government is quite happy to leave bleeding whilst we are doing everything we can as a class to support each other, even keeping others alive in some cases.

We will keep members updated as the campaign progresses, we are currently working with a group of academics around how we raise the industry up so that food workers aren't in a position where they are producing, delivering and serving food while *not being able to afford to feed themselves*.

ELECTED POSITIONS

As is usual, elections were held over the course of Conference, for the following positions (as nominated under due process):

Executive Council

Region 1	Pat Kelly
Region 2	Nick Mead
Region 3	Dimitru Manole Nicolae Macari
Region 4	John Owens Shaun Welsby
Region 5	Pauline McCarthy Joe Knapper
Region 7	Kevin Flood
Young Members	Lee Burns
Women's Representative	Rachel Mullen

Standing Orders Committee

Region 1	[unfulfilled]
Region 2	Terry Povey
Region 3	Mohinder Badhan
Region 4	John Fox
Region 5	Michael McDonald
Region 7	Ross Grant

TUC delegates

Please note this will be a digital Conference and details will be circulated as soon as finalised.

**Terry Povey
Adrianna Kara
George Atwall**

Labour Party

We hadn't fulfilled the criteria for delegates at Annual Conference, the executive committee met after conference closed and made the decision the General Secretary would attend alongside the National President this year so that, along with the below elected delegates, we fulfil the criteria set to have a minimum of 1 woman in the delegation.

**Terry Povey
George Atwall**



CLOSING WORDS TO A DIGITAL CONFERENCE

CONFERENCE, WHAT CAN I SAY? I'm blown away by the engagement and support this week. I know there were reservations around how we could run a digital Conference and ensure delegates had the opportunity to talk and speak on motions, concerns that it would be boring and dull and that sitting in front of a screen for hours on end each day would be disengaging rather than engaging, especially for first time delegates and then for it to come from you that you wanted to debate on the executive motions and therefore we should reconvene well, that was just *ACE!*

And *Wow!* Collectively we have made a clear stance against racism, we have had an open debate about the menopause, vowed to fight the Tories against their planned cuts to funding for Adults and Children with Autism and learning difficulties, agreed to recognise and train environmental reps, made sure we can continue to function in the future should we ever experience something like this again, agreed to support Jengba and the fantastic work they do to campaign against injustices and we have made it known that we will always support brothers and sisters within our own union and internationally when they are being targeted, oppressed and persecuted, there has been so many fantastic motions moved, debated on and carried.

Alongside that we have had some amazing fringe meetings we spoke to our Branch Secretaries about the challenges they face, which was clear, lack of engagement especially with branch meetings, but also with people joining and feeling empowered to become reps. We invited our women members to talk to us about issues they face and covered the issues with periods and a lack of understanding of their impact on women as well as the menopause and how actually statutory maternity pay isn't fit for purpose especially if you're not a full-time worker.

We had a great session with **Andy Birchall** who talked to the biggest group of the week so far about the importance of branch mapping and organising your workplace. **Richard Burgon** joined us to talk about politics and **Haroon** brilliantly facilitated our very first meeting that focused on and listened to BAME members, their experiences and their issues. And yesterday afternoon **Ian Byrne**, MP joined us to talk about the [right to food](#) campaign and look at next steps around it.

The way you have contributed this week, telling us your stories and experiences has been inspirational. I have felt so proud and honoured at the openness and honesty we have had, with so many of you talking about personal circumstances – whether in the fringe meetings or commenting on motions – and it means the absolute world that you felt comfortable and safe enough to do that, because **it's never easy opening yourself up.**

All the ideas, the points raised and documents touched on will become the foundations in rebuilding our great union. We intend to keep talking to you, we will be contacting the fringe meeting attendees in the next few days to set up the next round of meetings and circulate the documents and resources we have spoken about – asking for feedback and building on those groups to create networks that can support each other, share best practice and raise each other up. We must build on those meetings because, as I said on Monday, you the membership *are* the BFAWU and it is important we hear you to truly represent you – so together we can improve our industry.

What we need now though is for you to go back into your workplaces and take the energy from this week, the discussions we have had, the resources we will circulate and use those to organise your workplace. Aim for 100% density and increase your membership so that our great union will be here for generations to come. I know you can do it, and we are here every step of the way to support you – because that is the only way we remain a powerful independent trade union, one that continues to put larger unions in the movement to shame!

We will get you to link to the new website. We are re-introducing the organising meetings, we have circulated (and will do so again) branch mapping documentation and now we have mastered the art of holding conference digitally, this gives us massive opportunities in the future to try new things and draw in new people from our industry into our union

Conference I don't know about you but I am really excited about our future. We have some amazing activists and reps in our union, those of you that have spoken out this week (but also those back in your branches and also those that don't know their capabilities yet because we haven't reached them!) and I know together as the **Bakers Food and Allied Workers Union** we will create change, we will ensure our industry is recognised for its contribution to our economy, we will get to the point where people are proud to work in our industry and where you are recognised not only in name but in terms, conditions and pay

Thank you for your indulgence and patience this week and your continued support. As I said on Monday I'm looking forward to meeting those of you I don't yet know, and working with each and everyone of you to build and grow our union – together we are going to achieve great things

Solidarity!

Sarah

FINALLY, IT'S THE AWARD WINNERS!

Thompson Trophy for Organising

2020 – **John Martin, Branch 529**

2021 – **Branch 357, Greencore Northampton**

Olive Molloy Youth Award

2020 – **Curtis Smith, Branch 334**

2021 – **Amardeep Singh Dhillon, Branch 104**

Health & Safety Award

2020 – **Nicolae Macari, Branch 357**

2021 – *We couldn't pick out an individual health and safety rep for this year's award.*

Because:

Throughout Covid, *every* health and safety rep has stepped up to the plate – challenging employers when they haven't been quick enough to put safety measures in place or have introduced insufficient measures. Because of that you have saved thousands of lives and *we thank each of you*



LONG COVID

The media has been speaking a lot about Long Covid and we know it become a talking point in workplaces as the emergency motion at conference showed, but what is it, for some people, coronavirus (Covid-19) can cause symptoms that last weeks or months after the infection has gone. This is sometimes called post-Covid-19 syndrome or 'Long Covid'.

About Long Covid

How long it takes to recover from Covid-19 is different for everybody. Many people feel better in a few days or weeks and most will make a full recovery within 12 weeks. But for some people, symptoms can last longer. The chances of having long-term symptoms does not seem to be linked to how ill you are when you first get Covid-19. People who had mild symptoms at first can still have long-term problems.

Symptoms of Long Covid

There are lots of symptoms you can have after a Covid-19 infection. Common Long Covid symptoms include:

- extreme tiredness (fatigue)
- shortness of breath
- chest pain or tightness
- Problems with memory and concentration ('brain fog')
- difficulty sleeping (insomnia)
- heart palpitations
- dizziness
- pins and needles
- joint pain
- depression and anxiety
- tinnitus, earaches
- feeling sick, diarrhoea, stomach aches, loss of appetite
- a high temperature, cough, headaches, sore throat, changes to sense of smell or taste
- rashes

Case Study

The reality for those with Long Covid is that, due to the recent announcements, it's likely *they will not be recognised as suffering with Covid-related illness* and we need to make sure we are raising this at safety meetings.

In recent reports on the media a young woman explained her experience and the fight she faced. She said doctors dismissed her symptoms as *anxiety* until she started being treated by respiratory specialist **Dr William Man** who runs a Royal Brompton Hospital clinic investigating 100 severe cases.

- A lung gas transfer test showed her breathing levels to be 53%, the same level as a patient with lung disease.
- Doctors found blood clots on her lungs which were treated with blood thinners.
- An echocardiogram showed a build-up of fluid around her heart and she was diagnosed with post-Covid heart inflammation.

What can YOU do?

Prof Whitty recently said there was insufficient data about the impact of Long Covid but the vaccine prevented people from getting covid. This is a debatable point as currently data shows over 20% of new cases are people who have had 2 jabs and data released from Israel showed Pfizer is only 64% effective against the Johnson/Delta variant.

With the reckless decision taken to remove protections there is a real fear that despite the Government being relaxed, with more than 100,000 people being infected daily and the possibility of 100s of daily deaths, that the long-term health effects could have a major impact on lives going forward.

Which is why, despite the lack of leadership by those who are elected to prioritise our health and well-being, we urge you to look out for each other and protect your loved ones and those who live in your community.

Our recommendations are to *think of others* – wear a mask in enclosed venues and on public transport.

When we look out for each other we all win!

HAZARDS – COVID IN THE WORKPLACE

April
2021

Hands, Space, Face and AIR, AIR, AIR!

Are all the routes of Covid-19 transmission being controlled?

CONTINUE TO WORK REMOTELY IF POSSIBLE

INCREASE VENTILATION IN ALL AREAS

- Ensure an audit has been carried out in all rooms and spaces to review ventilation
- Improve ventilation to a minimum of CIBSE standards
- Any room not ventilated sufficiently by natural or mechanical ventilation must be closed unless there is single use
- Use CO2 monitors as a proxy measure of air quality

PPE vs Face Coverings

Where PPE is necessary to control a residual risk of infection, it must be at a precautionary standard

FFP2 is the minimum acceptable standard of PPE (surgical masks or visors are not PPE), FFP3 for those in high risk areas or working in close contact with others and PPE must be provided and maintained free by the employer
Face coverings are not PPE but the Govt have made them compulsory in many indoor settings. They should be at WHO/ BSI standard

INDIVIDUAL RISK ASSESSMENTS

Individual Risk Assessments must be available for anyone with additional individual risks. As a minimum – young people, pregnant and child bearing aged women, people with underlying health risks or disabilities or whose jobs put them at greater risk

Covid-19

Controlling risks in the workplace

All risk assessments must be reviewed before anyone returns to a workplace that has been shut for any length of time, periodically to ensure they are still valid and also when new information becomes available which may impact on the risk assessment – change in community rate, new more transmissible variants start to circulate, change in work activity or number of people allowed to mix.

Covid-19 is a serious infectious disease, which has killed more than 150,000 people in the UK and left hundreds of thousands left with long term mental and physical ill health and disabilities.

If you are being asked to return to the office for the first time since the pandemic began or have been working throughout the pandemic in the workplace, then it is important that your employer assesses the risks in the workplace.

If your employer refuses to control the transmission risks then if possible, exhaust internal procedures first, and report it to the Health and Safety Enforcement authorities – Health and Safety Executive and Local Authorities.

HAZARDS
CAMPAIGN

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HAZARDS
CAMPAIGN

What we know about Covid-19 (all variants up to date)

Even with high levels of vaccination, or testing being done, the virus is still circulating in the community. It is still deadly for many and leaves many more with long term ill health and disabilities. Many people are not eligible for the vaccine yet and others may never be able to have it because of health conditions.

People who are **vaccinated** are still a risk of catching and spreading the virus, just as people who are asymptomatic, or have hardly any symptoms when they are infected. People of any age can be infectious with a high viral load, even children.

If the **virus continues to circulate and mutate**, there is a danger of more deadly and more transmissible variants emerging. This means that workplaces (including public transport, shops, schools etc) must control the transmission risks from their work activities. And test, trace and isolate with support is essential to restrict community transmission.

Transmission of Covid-19 occurs mainly by aerosols, but also by large droplet spread, direct and indirect contact on surfaces. This means that when someone is infectious and breathes out, the virus circulates in the air (more than 2 metres), or when they cough or sneeze then large droplets are emitted from their mouth or nose, or via their hands when they touch their own mouth, nose or eyes, or spray on someone else or a surface and others touch it.

Controlling the **transmission of Covid-19**, will stop others being infected. In a workplace or working environment employers have a legal duty to control all risks by 'suitable and sufficient' risk assessments.

This means controlling the risk of transmission by using a **control hierarchy** approach, which is a legal duty on employers to implement. See below for the appropriate laws.

- The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Reporting of injuries, diseases and dangerous occurrences (RIDDOR)
- Personal protective equipment at Work Regulations 1998
- Safety Reps and Safety Committees Regulations 1977

Risk Assessments must be carried out by a 'competent' person and must be 'suitable and sufficient'

What should happen in workplaces?

Employers have a legal duty to assess and control all risks (**suitable and sufficient risk assessment carried out by a 'competent' person**) to peoples mental or physical health by work activities – in a workplace or by the work activity in another place. They do this by:

1. Identifying the risks
2. Deciding who may be harmed and how
3. Assessing how the risks can be removed or reduced to a negligible risk by controlling it using a control hierarchical approach
4. Using the Control Hierarchy approach to Risk of Transmission of the Virus – see above
5. Recording and communicating the controls that have been put in place

Links to more information:

www.hse.gov.uk

www.hazardscampaign.org.uk

www.gmhazards.org.uk

www.hazards.org

hazard.org/infections/venting

A control hierarchy approach

Risk Assessments must be reviewed periodically or when something changes. **If there is risk of transmission because of the work activity, does the work activity need to continue? If not then stop doing it! – this will eliminate the risk of transmission. If the work activity needs to continue then,**

1. Can it be done in a different way to remove the risk? This could be by remote working or using online facilities, meetings, teaching etc. – this will remove the risk of transmission. If this cannot be done then, introduce mitigation using a combination of controls including:
 2. Engineering controls – increase/introduce ventilation to remove or dilute the virus from the air. This must be controlled properly and calculated using measurements, monitors and recorded. In some environments like buses it could be by providing sealed units for the drivers. Also introduce,
 3. Administrative controls – less people in the space for less time, one way systems around buildings, 2 metre minimum physical distancing, increased cleaning, improved hygiene, use of source control masks for school children and public and finally
 4. PPE – at a precautionary level (FFP2 minimum and FFP3 for close contact or high risk areas)

Assess all activities and not just Covid related

A risk assessment must be carried out for all work activities, controls put in place using the control hierarchy approach and recorded and communicated to all staff.

What Safety reps can do in the workplace

Trade Union Safety Reps have additional rights and functions through the Safety Reps and Safety Committee Regulations. This means that employers must consult them on health and safety issues. Safety reps have the right to carry out inspections, investigations, receive information from the employer and the enforcement inspectors. They have the right to be consulted on health and safety issues, including Risk Assessments, sickness and absence information.

HSE BURIES BAD WORK DEATHS NEWS ON ENGLAND EUROS DAY

HSE QUIETLY ANNOUNCED a massive increase in worker deaths on a good day to bury bad news.

On the day, attention was likely focused on the English football team's exploits, HSE announced a massive 25 per cent increase on reports of workplace fatalities. These statistics cover the period when large numbers of workplaces had been locked down and don't include the large number of Covid-19 work-related deaths.

www.press.hse.gov.uk/2021/07/07/hse-releases-annual-workplace-fatality-figures-for-2020-21

Chair of the UK Hazards Campaign, **Janet Newsham**, said:

"Although these HSE statistics only represent a small percentage of the actual number of deaths because of work each year (www.hazardscampaign.org.uk/thewholestory), it is still a huge increase in fatalities reportable through RIDDOR. The Hazards Campaign says this is because HSE isn't carrying out sufficient preventive inspections, isn't holding bad employers to account, and hasn't sufficient resources to carry out the enforcement needed to protect workers and prevent these incidents."

During the pandemic the HSE locked down initially, and then paid a debt collecting company to run their call centre and carry out onsite inspections, without adequate training, skills or knowledge to do the job. The result has been NO Covid prosecutions and a complacent HSE

This week the Government has made it clear they are going to remove the public health measures for Covid-19, that have been protecting people and preventing transmission of the virus.

They are prepared to put young peoples lives at risk, who mostly haven't had the vaccination. The Hazards Campaign will continue to demand that the HSE and other enforcement bodies hold employers to account if they fail to control the transmission risks and putting the lives and health of workers and others at risk.

The collapse of the **Bosley Mill** corporate manslaughter case has further highlighted the inadequate legal redress and dysfunctional enforcement that exists. The director of the company then pleaded guilty to a lesser charge, and the 4 families devastated by the deaths of their loved ones saw him sentenced to a 9 month suspended sentence and a minimal fine. The deaths of 4 workers doesn't seem to matter and in many other cases employers are quite literally getting away with murder!"

The announcement of the work fatalities by the HSE tries to paint a rosy picture of health at work, we know only too well the terror many workers face in the workplace, with employers ignoring health and safety and placing many young and vulnerable workers at risk. The pandemic has highlighted the risks many employers are willing to take with workers lives."

We need a robust, transparent, accountable and proactive HSE, one that puts workers lives first and holds bad employers to account. As the UK Government forces a return to work without the necessary controls in place to protect workers and prevent further infections and deaths, we need an HSE enforcing health and safety law not cosying up to employers or Government. The Hazards Campaign want the HSE to be independent from pressure from government and big business.

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The **Ron Todd Foundation** understands the struggles of poverty and social injustice. We know what creating meaningful connections, which draw on the principles of the trade union movement are part of the solution.

Looking back to fight forward is a campaign that combines practical hand on action with building resilience .





FOOTSTEPS

RON'S WORDS ARE AS RELEVANT TODAY AS THEY WERE WHEN THEY WERE FIRST SAID. INVITE US TO SHARE RON'S WORDS, SPEECHES & POETRY AT VENUES WHERE HE SPOKE.



RON TODD COMMUNITY

RON TODD HOUSES HAVE BEEN AT THE HEART OF THE ORGANISATION. WE ARE NOW SEEKING INDIVIDUALS, BRANCHES, ORGANISATIONS TO SIGN UP TO SHARE SKILLS, SPACE & SOLIDARITY - TO BE PART OF A CONNECTED COMMUNITY.



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IN RETURN WE OFFER YOU / YOUR BRANCH / ORGANISATION THE CHANCE TO PARTICIPATE EACH YEAR IN ONE OF OUR SOLIDARITEA EDUCATION COURSES.



SAY 'NO' TO FIRE AND REHIRE

THOUSANDS OF BRITISH WORKERS are threatened with being fired and rehired on worse pay and conditions to do the same job. It's not dodgy backstreet companies doing this, it's the biggest names on our high street. *Will BFAWU members be next?*

Tesco and Sainsbury's are both at it. From your morning Weetabix and coffee to your holiday snack at the airport, fire and rehire is everywhere. So far, our members have escaped this growing menace – where long serving staff are fired from jobs they have held for years – but the food industry could be the next to use these tactics to cut their costs.

Many household names have made billions during lockdown, but greedy bosses want even more and it's the workers who have to pay. British Gas, Clarks Shoes and Heathrow Airport are among businesses forcing families into poverty with no regard for loyalty or years of service.

Over the years, cost-cutting employers have copied money-grabbing bosses in other industries. A cost saving idea from manufacturing can soon find its way into the food and drink sector. Many unions across Britain are asking will their sector be next. Even teachers' unions are seeing fire and rehire in schools, *no one seems safe*.

Labour MP, Barry Gardiner says he has *"...travelled the country and met workers who have given their lives to companies. Now they can't pay their rent, go on holiday or sleep – because of worry."* This is the human cost of telling a worker, 'your pay is cut by 25%, you'll work longer hours and your pension is under threat'. Fire and rehire is everywhere.

Barry Gardiner has launched a private members' Bill to stop the practice of fire and rehire.

British Gas, Clarks Shoes and Heathrow Airport are among businesses forcing families into poverty with no regard for loyalty or years of service.

He says, *"It is wrong that workers are being bullied in this way – sacked and told they will only be re-employed to do the same basic job if they accept less money and poorer conditions."*

It is an issue that affects every constituency, every industry – a social evil that is afflicting hundreds of thousands of families. As if the insecurities of the pandemic were not enough companies are now threatening people with the sack so they can pay them less.

Gardiner launched his campaign at food giants, *Jacob Douwe Egberts* in Banbury. Coffee consumption was up 40 per cent during the lockdown and Jacobs Douwe Egberts made record profits, *but that didn't stop them threatening their workforce with the sack unless they accepted a cut in wages of up to £12,000.*

No family should have to put up with that. Gardiner says, *"How do you pay your rent or your mortgage with a cut like that? How do you support your family? Every pound cut is a pound less to pay your rent, to pay your mortgage and the fear of eviction or repossession is very real."*

The Bakers, Food and Allied Workers Union has decided to support Barry's campaign and believe our members should be fully informed about what could easily happen in our industry. We are joining twenty-one other unions to back Barry.

As trade unionists, it is right and good to come together for a just cause. Gardiner will be starting a 60 venue tour to spread the *stop fire and rehire* message, he will be visiting all parts of the country and speaking at some of our branches.

Fire and rehire is just plain wrong and the Government *SAYS* it agrees. Leading Tory Jacob Rees-Mogg told MPs fire and rehire was 'bad practice' and 'no respectable employer would do it'. Even the Prime Minister says it's unacceptable. But it remains to be seen whether Boris will support Gardiner's Bill to outlaw this evil practise.

Tory Business Minister, Paul Scully, promises he will *'issue guidelines'* but many unions believe those guidelines won't protect anyone. Barry Gardiner's Bill is currently being drafted by some of the best legal minds in the country and will be presented to Parliament for its Second Reading on 22nd October.

Right wingers may say bosses should be left to do as they please in a free market, but Barry Gardiner's Bill will not stop struggling firms restructuring or changing outdated practises. *Instead it will stop bad bosses sacking workers to avoid redundancy rules and other workers' rights.*

Gardiner believes his Bill has a real chance of success, although it will be an uphill struggle. He asks BFAWU members to help him convince their local MPs to support the Bill and invites us to visit the campaign website:

www.stopfireandrehire.org

Gardiner adds, *"We are all fed up of Covid but we came together as nation to support each other. I hope we can all stop fire and rehire and make Britain the best place to be employed."*



MAY DAY IN LEICESTER

**BAKERS
FOOD
AND ALLIED
WORKERS
UNION**



George Atwall, BFAWU Regional Officer Reporting on Leicester May Day Protest

On Saturday, the first of May, Claudia Webbe MP joined together with the BFAWU, Leicester Trade's Council and other activists to speak out at a protest against the Government's new bill that attempts to criminalise peaceful protests.

Claudia, the new MP for Leicester East is a strong supporter of the BFAWU's campaign to help get the Samworth Brothers factories unionised, an advocate for the workers who are employed in the Sweatshops in Leicester, the farmers strike in India as well as being a strong supporter of Stand Up to Racism. Speaking to the crowd Claudia declared 'There's power in a protest!' She also said that 'They want to stop us from protesting. They want to stop us from actually making change in this country. So, this is absolutely the right thing to do and be out here and protest.'



Claudia then reminded us that 'Leicester has a proud history of protest' and that 'We want to maintain our history of protest, and that's why it is so important for us to be here today, because our long, historic, democratic history of protest is something to fight for.' Drawing on history Claudia reminded us of the famous John F. Kennedy quote 'That those who make peaceful revolution impossible, make violent revolution inevitable.'

It has now become obvious that through our voices we have made the powerful listen and they are attempting to shut down our peaceful protests with the Government's new Bill. Like Claudia and those who protested on May Day, we must continue to make our voices heard through protest, and force them to scrap this Bill, as Frederick Douglas said 'Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never has and never will.'



40 YEARS AWARDS

High five for BFAWU at Hovis, Erith



CONGRATULATIONS TO **Allan Philips, Baldev Sahota, Gurmeet Nijjer, Sarvan Badan and Paramjit Singh** on achieving 40 Years Service with BFAWU.

We know you have worked hard for this accomplishment and we truly appreciate your dedication. We applaud the determination and effort you have demonstrated during your time with us. We look forward to seeing all of the great things we know you will accomplish in the upcoming years! Thank you for being such a valuable member of our team. *Wishing you the best for continued success!*



... and at Greggs

A big hand for **Michael Adams** (above) and for **Billy Chappel** (below) on reaching the same milestone. *Wishing you the best for continued success as well!*



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