

The COVID-19 SAFETY PLEDGE



What can Trades Unionists do?

There are a number of simple actions which everyone can do to promote the Pledge and improve Covid safety:

Check if your Union supports the Pledge and, if not, get them to sign up.

Discuss the pledge in your union branch and trades council.

Model resolutions are available on our website
www.covidpledge.co.uk

These will help in raising the issue, in persuading your union to sign up to the pledge, and in organising local action around the Pledge

Approach your employer in order to urge them to sign the Pledge.*

Work with community groups and expert organisations in your locality or region, forming local 'Pledge coalitions' and campaigning together to get employers to sign up.

Provide us with stories of your campaigns and your successes (and also of employers who resist the Pledge) so that we can publicise them and use them to help others in their campaigning.

We know the government and employers are not going to protect us from Covid unless workers collectively demand it. Like every health and safety issue it is down to trade unions to protect workers. Protect your fellow workers: sign up to the Pledge www.covidpledge.co.uk or scan the QR code on your mobile.



Covid safety is a Trade Union issue!

Covid hasn't gone away.

Since protections have been removed infections have been consistently high, we have had three waves in the last year and are likely to have more in the autumn. While deaths and very serious illness are less than before (though still far too high), infection causes misery to millions, puts a huge burden on the NHS, doubles absenteeism in schools and, with some 2 million with long Covid, threatens livelihoods in the future.

It needn't be like this!

Advances in vaccines and anti-virals have saved many thousands of lives, but they do not stop transmission of the virus. To reduce infections and the havoc they cause, we need additional measures like testing, supporting people to stay home when ill and creating safer, well-ventilated environments. In particular, we need to make workplaces safer.

This is a matter of basic health and safety, of employers fulfilling their legal obligation to keep workers safe. The refusal of many to do so is part and parcel of a more general assault on our rights and our working conditions.

Covid is a core Trades Union issue which affects every single one of us.

"We are delighted to support the Covid-19 pledge as it forms what we see as an essential backbone to safer workplaces. People in clinically vulnerable families want to support businesses that take the risks posed by Covid-19 seriously. We hope that many more will sign up to the pledge to protect our lives and liberties."

Lara Wong, founder of Clinically Vulnerable Families

Who is behind the Pledge?

The Pledge is a broad coalition of Trade Unions, Community Groups and expert organisations, who have come together because we all realise that the Government will not act to keep us safe. We need to act in order to keep ourselves safe.

Amongst others, the Pledge coalition includes ASLEF, NEU, PCS, RMT, Unison and Unite; Clinically Vulnerable Families, Covid Bereaved Families for Justice and Long Covid SOS; British Medical Association, Doctors in Unite, The Hazards Campaign, Independent SAGE.

The level of support for the Pledge is remarkable and keeps on growing. The priority now is to campaign together to get as many employers as possible to sign up and begin to implement the necessary safety measures.

For that we need **your** help.

"Thanks to vaccines, we have far less deaths and serious illness than before. But that doesn't mean Covid is over. Over the last year we have had successive waves of covid infection, and the autumn is likely to bring more, which have brought misery to millions, caused huge economic disruption, damaged the education of our children and placed an unsustainable load on the NHS. We must act now to bring infections down, especially in workplaces where we spend so much of our time. The Covid Safety Pledge is a vital initiative in making that happen."

Martin McKee, President, British Medical Association

What is the Covid Safety Pledge?

The Pledge commits employers to three things:

- Protecting workers, customers and service users from Covid
- Assessing the working environment and working practices for Covid safety
- Ensuring that workers who are Covid-positive are given the support they need to stay at home until they are better and no longer infectious.

The Pledge is not meant to be an end point. It doesn't specify all the things an employer should be doing. Rather, it is a starting point which allows workers to discuss with employers exactly what is needed in their workplace in order to fulfill the commitments to safety and support. It is the opening move in pushing Covid safety and the working environment, up the agenda.

The Pledge is also designed to be a public commitment. By displaying the Pledge prominently, both in premises and online, customers and service users can tell which organisations take safety seriously and can make informed decisions about where to go (and not to go).

The Pledge helps in making the more vulnerable members of our society feel able to use public resources and services. It also helps form a coalition between workers and the public in promoting safer working environments.

"The pandemic reminded us of the importance of collective action and solidarity. As the cost of living crisis develops, conditions at work will be under attack further. Trade unions remain the biggest obstacle to the governments' antiquated agenda of individual responsibility. I invite all trade unionists to engage with the Covid Safety Pledge and use it to gain membership support to campaign to make it a reality."

Tracy Edwards, PCS Health and Safety Officer

