The coronavirus pandemic in the UK has not yet passed its peak. Hundreds are still dying every day, and yet the pressure is mounting for the Tories to announce an ‘exit strategy’. But where is that pressure coming from? Not from ordinary people. Even though many are really struggling financially - three million are going hungry according to the Food Foundation.

Of course, most would like to be free to leave their homes and go back to their normal lives. But despite the frustration, they also understand the health reasons behind the order to ‘stay at home’. We have to fight for working-class people to have the financial means to feed themselves adequately and pay the bills while they are doing so (see Workers’ Charter p16).

There are genuine concerns among many people about the effects of a prolonged lockdown on jobs, mental health, education and domestic abuse. But here, as in other countries around the world, it is big business and their representatives in government who are baying the loudest for a way out of lockdown - and their main concern is not the health and welfare of working people but preserving their profits.

A credible exit strategy “would no doubt go a long way towards reassuring investors”, said an editorial in the Times. The former head of the British Chamber of Commerce also wrote, “the cost both in human terms and to the economy mean that the cure is worse than the disease”.

Unnecessary deaths

In Italy, the bosses’ union Confindustria is complicit in causing unnecessary deaths because of its insistence on keeping non-essential industries going at the start of the lockdown there. Now its spokespeople in the four regions in the north hardest hit by the coronavirus crisis have banded together to once again pressure the government into prematurely lifting restrictions on business - effectively playing Russian roulette with more workers’ lives.

In Spain, the government has accepted the demands of big business, and manufacturing and construction workers are being sent back to the factories and sites. And the government has made it clear it expects workers to make up for lost hours with overtime and not taking paid holidays.

Here, construction, manufacturing and logistics industries have been sent new watered-down and dangerous guidance from the business secretary, Alok Sharma, saying that work could continue if done in line with social-distancing rules “wherever possible”. And if it’s not possible? They can get advice about how to still stay open!

It’s clear from all the reports from workers that we have carried in the Socialist over the past few weeks that social-distancing rules are being constantly flouted by employers who prioritise profits over health.

We only have to look at Royal Mail, and the numerous local walkouts that have taken place there because of threats to workers’ health and safety. Or workers in the Passport Office, callously told to go back to work by the Home Office because; “You are no more at risk at the workplace as you would be in your home or at the supermarket. It is about minimising it. We are working on the assessment that 80% of us, if we haven’t already, will get the virus. We cannot hide away from it forever” (see also p6).

Although the lockdown is continuing for now, workers have to prepare to resist any future attempts to put lives at risk. Such as a possible “youth first” strategy, for example - one of the proposals being touted for a ‘phased’ exit - where 20 to 30 year-olds who don’t live at home would be sent back to work like canaries down the mine. Continued on page 2
the Socialist

Editorial

DO YOU HAVE NEWS FOR US?
The Socialist is written, read, sold and bought by ordinary workers, trade unionists, young people and Socialist Party supporters. We want you to write for the Socialist. Send us reports of your workplace and community campaigns, short letters on working-class issues, or ideas for other articles.

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editors@socialistparty.org.uk 020 8988 8777 - ask for the editors

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Friday before publication, or Monday morning for urgent news, unless otherwise agreed with the editors. The Socialist goes to press on a Tuesday night. We publish online on Wednesday and in print on Thursday.

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“Those philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point is to change it.”
Karl Marx

WHAT WE THINK

Continued from front page

There are enormous tensions within the government over the way forward. Rishi Sunak, backed by Boris Johnson, most clearly reflects the calls from big business for an early exit, while health minister Matt Hancock has been more cautious about the health implications of such a move.

But the ‘Boris’ strategy has been one of zig-zags and confusion from the very beginning of this crisis as it has tried to weave a path between profits and health.

This, and over a decade of austerity, have added to the number of both NHS staff and patients dying in hospitals, as well as the terrible tsunami of deaths in care homes, which do not even feature in the daily official statistics.

These divisions are likely to intensify as the crisis continues. The “jam tomorrow” testing policy, as it has been called by NHS chiefs, can only increase the difficulties of finding a way out. Epidemiologist Julian Peto has said that 10 million antibody tests a day would be needed for the lockdown to be lifted.

Everyone is agreed that the coronavirus crisis will have a devastating effect on an economy run on capitalist lines - much worse than the Great Recession triggered by the 2007-08 financial crisis. But workers health and lives must not be sacrificed so that the big business profit system can remain intact. Capitalism is not the only way of organising an economy.

This crisis has shown that billions - trillions even - can be found if necessary. It is a question of who controls the wealth in society and what they decide to spend it on.

The Financial Times on 4 April, 2020

Philip Stephens wrote an article about ‘paying for the pandemic’ in which he summed up the dilemma that the capitalist class is facing. “Low-paid workers in precarious employment took the hit after the 2008 crash,” he wrote; “they will not be working to do so again.” A return to austerity would be madness - an invitation to widespread social unrest, if not revolution.

And he added: “A little more welfare spending here, a touch of intervention here, and a dose of protectionism in strategic sectors are considered enough. They won’t be. We would absolutely agree with that. But the answer is not, as he and other commentators have argued, a ‘new social contract’ on the basis of a bankrupt capitalist system whose failings have been so clearly exposed in this crisis.

A genuine exit strategy - not just from the pandemic, but from the austerity, poverty and exploitation that the capitalist profit system generates - will only be possible in a fundamentally different kind of society.

This would be based on public ownership of industry, services and finance, in which the planning that governments have been randomly groping towards in this crisis - to build the hospitals, secure medical equipment such as ventilators and masks, distribute food, etc - could be extended to the whole of the economy.

Working-class people could then democratically decide and prioritise where the enormous wealth that already exists, and will be created in the future, should be spent.

The Socialist Party is fighting hard to defend workers’ health, safety and livelihoods in the face of the coronavirus crisis.

We are helping to build trade unions and a working-class party - as defence organisations during the pandemic, but also as organisations that can progressively fight for the socialist society we need to combat disease, poverty, exploitation and environmental destruction.

MPs get £10k each for lockdown expenses - where’s ours?

Lindsey Morgan
Leicester Socialist Party

MPs can claim up to £10,000 - on top of their salaries and other expenses - for remote working costs under lockdown. This is on top of the £26,000 a year MPs already get for office expenses!

The thing is, quite a few of us are having to deal with real extra costs right now. The difference is that we have no extra cash - in fact, a lot of us have had a 20% pay cut!

Apparently the idea that we’re all in it together was missed by the ‘Independent’ Parliamentary Standards Authority (Ipsa) when it made the extra amount permissible last month. It’s meant to cover expenses incurred by working more from home, such as equipment and heating, for MPs and their staff.

This follows Ipsa approving another inflation-busting 3.1% pay rise for MPs. That’s £6.5 million pounds extra, presumably found down the back of a sofa. Meanwhile, NHS staff and other key workers have suffered real-terms pay cuts for years, and are dying due to a lack of PPE. It’s obscene.

With MPs working from home, they must be saving money on commuting too. So why do they need an extra ten grand in the budget?

Parents with their children’s home from school are having to pay out more for stationery, heating, broadband and so on, so children can learn from home. Where is our extra money?

The coronavirus crisis is highlighting the huge chasm between the many and the few in society. Money can always be found for war, MPs’ expenses, or failed outsourced IT projects - but not to pay for the PPE, tests and pay rises that NHS workers and many others desperately need.

Makeshift PPE

Some nurses are forced to use bin bags for makeshift PPE. NHS trusts worth £26,000 a year MPs already get for office expenses!

The basic annual salary of an MP will be £81,932 from this month. The gap between this and the average worker’s wage will continue to widen. The Socialist Party demands that elected politicians receive an average worker’s wage to help stem the disconnect between those the people they claim to represent.

Expenses should only be allowable where clearly necessary to do the job, subject to the oversight of real representatives of working people in the trade unions. They should be published and accountable to the working people locally who have elected that representative.

And the government should guarantee all workers - key workers, other workers, self-employed, unemployed - 100% of their usual pay, plus whatever more is needed to cover lockdown costs and guarantee a real living income.
We need you to support the Socialist by sending May Day greetings. You now have a full extra week to do it. There is no other consistent, independent voice for workers and for socialism during the pandemic.

The extended deadline for pledges is Thursday 23 April - payment can come later. Please do your best to make a pledge by the deadline. However, if you need more time to agree a donation, please get in touch and we'll discuss an exception.

From day one, the Socialist warned that cuts and privatisation had left the NHS and public services unready. Our frontline reports from workers across sectors have given the hard truth behind the government's propaganda promises (see p4-5).

In the face of the capitalists' short-ages and criminal missteps, we've proposed ways for the working class to fight to overcome them. In fact, nowhere has produced demands as clear and thorough as our workers' charter (see p16).

Meanwhile, some trade union leaders are trying to 'park' the defence of their members' interests or suspend operations just when they're most needed. The right has recaptured the leadership of Labour.

But workers are still fighting, because they have to. The Socialist carries the latest on walkouts, workplace struggle, and the campaign for combative unions (see p6-7).

The government is waging a propaganda war to deflect from its responsibility for the crisis (see p10). Even many 'left' media outlets fell in line behind the bosses and Tories on multiple issues. But the Socialist has carried on the fight.

To maintain that independent voice for the truth and working-class interests, we need finance. It goes without saying that the big advertisers won't touch us, and we wouldn't want any other way. Our funding comes from the workers' movement. May Day greetings are a vital part of that.

Can your trade union branch, community campaign, workplace colleagues, trade union council or student society send us a donation and short message of solidarity? We publish these each year on International Workers' Day to help fund the socialist press.

Dozens of groups in the workers' movement have already pledged May Day money. Unite Community NW/11500 Lancashire branch has even donated £100 to the Socialist, on top of buying a quarter-page greeting for May Day.

Branch secretary and treasurer Jim Leigh said: “We hope this will go a little way in helping the Socialist newspaper navigate through this crisis.” Could your union branch do the same?

Even just a one-off payment for a May Day greeting is valuable and wanted. We will accept any amount of money from any genuine group of workers.

No matter how violent the winds that rise to batter the movement back, workers have no choice but to press on. The Socialist will too. We are your paper. Keep us going send May Day greetings.

For prices, sizes and to book your greeting, visit socialistparty.org.uk/mayday

For help or resources including sign-up sheets and model motions, email jamesivens@socialistparty.org.uk

Deadline extended to 23 April

Donate to the Socialist Party

Coronavirus crisis finance appeal

The coronavirus crisis has laid bare the class character of society in numerous ways. It is making clear to many that it is the working class that keeps society running, not the CEOs of major corporations.

The results of austerity have been graphically demonstrated as public services strain to cope with the crisis. The government has now ripped up its 'austerity' mantra and turned to policies that not long ago were denounced as socialist. But after the corona crisis, it will try to make the working class pay for it, by attempting to claw back what has been given.

The Socialist Party’s material is more vital than ever, so we can continue to report from workers who are fighting for better health and safety measures, against layoffs, for adequate staffing levels, etc.

Our ‘fighting coronavirus workers’ charter’ (see p16) outlines a programme to combat the virus and protect workers’ living conditions.

When the health crisis subsides, we must be ready for the stormy events ahead and the need to arm workers’ movements with a socialist programme - one which puts the health and needs of humanity before the profits of a few.

Inevitably, during the crisis we have not been able to sell the Socialist and raise funds in the ways we normally would. We therefore urgently appeal to all our viewers to donate to our special coronavirus appeal.

Donations are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.

Please indicate your donation is for the ‘coronavirus appeal’

Visit socialistparty.org.uk/donate

or call 020 8988 8777

or make cheques payable to Socialist Party, PO Box 24697, London E11 1YD

Do you agree? Join the fightback!

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Dispatches from the front: NHS staff say give us PPE, not medals!

Johnson’s hospitalisation: a tale of two treatments

Tony Blair’s minister John Hutton, who was appointed to hose down stories on 12 April following treatment for Covid-19, has undergone what was described as ‘a hard week in hospital’. Meanwhile, the Tory Prime Minister was not ill enough to be considered for a Covid-19 ward.

A care worker had the sad experience of returning to work after 71 days in self-isolation. She was sent to a hospital that had been turned into an emergency ward. So they needed staff and they had one or two nurses who were really understaffed. She was extremely concerned that the whole team generally described itself as “we’re not in hospital.”

Big pharma’s profiteering holds back drug supply

Jen Deacon
Secretary, Unite Struggles for NHS trusts (personal capacity)

All over the world, intensive research is under way to find drugs against Covid-19. Good options would be finding existing drugs already used to treat other conditions that would be capable of being made or substandard PPE, as they are quite easy to come by in the NHS, but could be made by pharmacists, it is also worth noting that Covid-19 was not the first pandemic that Britain has faced.

Another combination known as the ‘tilorin PPE pack’ costs just £10.40, sold for 35% in the US but costs £16.50 in the UK. All told, it is not a good deal for the UK.

The government has been forced to announce urgent supplies are being sought. The Thursday community radio programme ‘In the national interest’ has been forced to announce urgent supplies are being sought.

An NHS nurse

The statement from Johnson was seen as very odd. He is the kind of person who seems to think that he can do anything. He is the kind of person who seems to think that he can do anything. He is the kind of person who seems to think that he can do anything. He is the kind of person who seems to think that he can do anything. He is the kind of person who seems to think that he can do anything.

NHS staff: we're not wasting PPE, the Tories think we are

The NHS nurse who was approached by the<Any additional content you wish to include here>
Collectively demanding safe warehouse working conditions

Postal workers walk out Pressure on Post workers walked out on 8 April after their depot was not cleaned when a member of staff contracted Covid-19. Postal workers followed guidance by their union on whether their depot should close, but on 8 April their depot was cleaned, even though no one else had tested positive for Covid-19 in the company. A group of workers sent a letter to the union begging to clean the building. O’Leary at the depot, Steve Gill, said: “We need to get our heads round the fact that cleaning is the most important part of the job.”

No going back

The meeting was attended by workers from across the country, including postal workers from among others, several postal workers who had used the unpaid sick pay and hazard pay benefit that compan has paid worked to the end, but was also in place despite the need to ensure we don’t go back to work until it was once again.

In conclusion, Ryan stressed the need to reach out to workers and employers, both with the jobs available and the jobs that have been lost or reduced. In summary, the new report, “Post in the Fight for Jobs,” shows that we need to ensure that the jobs available are paid in full, with proper social distancing and health and safety measures.

Unite the Union opposes all cuts to domestic violence services

i in March last year, Unite Nottingham-

hamshire Health Branch introduced the

Women’s Lives Matter was set up in 2018 by the USW and Unite from women’s refuges fighting back against local councils, and other organisations, including Solvay Trade Union members. It was founded on a motion for trade unionists. This call for union campaign was supported in all domestic ven-

table to work with campaigners and sup-

ports Local councils should reduce in-employs and the government, as part of a campaign to prevent the collapse of the businesses that are too small to be safe, with no health and safety measures.

Sign the petition at change.org/secure

Heathrow airport threat

Heathrow airport has consistently threatened to impose new terms and conditions on its workers, but it is not clear whether these changes will happen. It also has no clear plans for how it will deal with theCollectively demanding safe warehouse working conditions

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London transport workers fighting private companies and TfL to secure health and safety

A life and death battle on the buses

At the time of writing, 21 transport workers have died from Covid-19, 13 of them bus drivers. London bus driver and Socialist Party member Noor varji has been threatened with a death threat by his employer, and his fellow drivers have battled with the private bus companies and Transport for London to secure proper protection.

Transport for London (TfL) and Transport for London Authority under the leadership of London Mayor Sadiq Khan have been accused of putting profit before worker safety. As transport workers are unable to follow social distancing on the buses, they are forced to work in cramped conditions and face the threat of catching coronavirus.

Some bus drivers were struck when the lockdown came into effect. These drivers are stranded without pay. Some of the companies have made any effort to ensure their wages and jobs are protected, instead, they have been forced to stand idle.

In the depot, management aren’t able to social distancing measures, not even in the space after the lock down, hand sanitiser was deployed.

Saferty screen

The mayor said that an enhanced cleaning regime and Perspex screens were in place, but the drivers didn’t trust management or Khan because they had made cuts while dirty. Drivers were clearing themselves, and taking care of their own. Coworth arena vets voiced concern about the state of safety screens in the depot, and suggested keeping the depot closed. As a result of these actions on social media, it came to public attention and exposed the company’s false to action promises.

Gordon was fired up to confront this. The London RMT told London Underground that it wanted an urgent meeting to discuss the new PPE and social distancing measures.

A social media campaign and a meeting had made it clear to the mayor that he needed to act. Khan has never been a leader who proactively engages with the workers. RMT members have been given the right to refuse travel, in the percentage of the cases people have refused travel, in the percentage of the cases people have refused travel.

One nurse summed it up: “Please do more to protect people from the virus after Christmas. A social media campaign and a meeting had made it clear to the mayor that he needed to act.”

The mayor’s office should have heard the demands of the workers, the tube drivers and the patients. Instead, the word ‘chaotic’ has been used to describe what the service is like. But it’s not chaotic. The service is necessary and safer alternatives to mass transit are needed. The transport network was never intended as a limited service, so workers are travelling in more crowded conditions.

Sadiq Khan, the London Mayor paid tribute to the care workers, including the tube drivers. These workers, who will not be paid for the risk they take. The risks they take are not paid for, but the service they continue to provide. They are to be our heroes and we all need to do more to protect the workers.

As the mayor has been accused of putting profit before worker health and safety, instead of taking a leadership role, he has refused the row.

The transport network was never intended as a limited service, so workers are travelling in more crowded conditions. The mayor is a Blairite defender of free-market ideology. He has never been a leader who proactively engages with the workers.

London is the epicentre of the UK coronavirus crisis. It’s a label none of us want. The city has become a magnet for the virus and that’s why the government has placed it under lockdown, firing up a testing programme and had the city on a near-war footing to fight the first battle of the war. The mayor’s office should have taken this seriously, the tube drivers have been at the frontline, along with opposing the attempts to make workers’ pay and conditions worse. They’ve become a target, and the unions have been threatened with fines.

The wars against the virus have been won, but the working class and the London Transport workers have been left to fight the war on their own. The working class has been left to fight the war on their own. The working class has been left to fight the war on their own.

The mayor’s office should have taken the tube drivers seriously. They have been at the frontline, along with opposing the attempts to make workers’ pay and conditions worse. They’ve become a target, and the unions have been threatened with fines.

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**Fight back against the corona propaganda war**

**Feature**

The BBC must be forced to take responsibility for its actions, said its founder Lord Reith during the 1926 general strike. That has certainly been the case during the coronavirus pandemic.

In fact, the BBC might as well have admitted itself the ‘Facts Broadcasting Corporation’. For the most part, it has simply amplified the scenery of crisis as a replay of a frenzy of panic and fear, without question.

‘This’ is a country in which shifting public information is defined by party politics, not public interest. 'The average' hours viewing than there was over any other period. Newsnight was the main beneficiary. In the week from March 16 to 22, viewership at 11pm on the BBC was 20% up on the previous week, as the government acknowledged a blunt warning - ‘the UK is close to overloading the NHS’.

Many of us are not present in our workplace, subjected to violence in the workplace, subjected to the attacks on workers’ health, safety and income. The Socialist has continued its efforts to counter the lack of information and misinformation. We must explain that the view from one that private profit. We give the other side a crackdown on fake news. Damage is being done.

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I’ve been reading comments on political sites and been a bit baffled. Thing is, I’m not an angry, paranoid person, but I’m a bit fed up. Sometimes I wonder if it’s because I’m old or because I’m in a different world. Then I think, ‘Great, let’s keep this going!’

**Join an online Socialist Party meeting during lockdown**

**Swansea:** Valuable donations to Mark Best for and how workers can get organised.

**West London:** Instead of paying for rooms we are encumbered socialists, and a number of new buses, education, housing, and more, attended a fantastic meeting of South

**North East:** We are the working class

**Northampton:** Using technology to keep going: I came away from my own Socialist Party branch feeling entirely new and inspired by everyone’s attendance. I feel enthused and more able to continue meeting and training through this crisis. Forward to socialist victories.

**North London:** Nottingham: ‘Paidoff’

**Leeds:** It is just not good enough - leaving health workers to take extra shifts is not good enough. The NHS and unions should be organising stronger to demand the trade unions to demand the above from a government that says it is not. And if it fails, we need to say that.

**Sunderland:** We need the trade unions to demand the above from a government that says it is not. And if it fails, we need to say that.

**Bristol:** Clerical workers give themselves pay rise for sacking workers

**Nottingham:** Clerical workers voted extremely reluctantly on £1.25 billion in renunciation pension’s reductions and most terminations, and the Labour Bristol mayor, who is leading on this, has made the mistake of allowing this to happen.

**Birmingham:** This was just days before many workers who would be made redundant on the new scheme. The government wasultimated the duration of the consultation.

**Wakefield:** Electronic agendas have been published by a significant number of councils, and these deeply concerning matters might not be discussed before elected officials.

**Sheffield:** I suspect there are similar stories across the country. People are angry and getting an atmosphere of action.

**Cardiff:** This is a political issue, not an unforeseen act.

**Tragic NHS worker death**

Dr Chowdhury was a locum urologist employed by University Hospital Lewisham. On 18 March Dr Abdul Mabud Chowdhury, a locum urologist, was admitted to Lewisham hospital with Covid-19. He died on 2 April, with his family present. His death is a reminder that the NHS was a ‘first step to turn Britain into a socialist system’.

**Refused Universal Credit**

**Bristol: Contacts tracing app?**

The TRAC is preparing a contact tracing app to battle coronavirus. This has been effective in countries that get this reflected back within a couple of weeks. This is another underestimate by the Tories. It’s not just an app, it’s a real system in place of the NHS.

**Poor people**

**Bristol: Capitalism has failed, again**

Boris Johnson is a farce of a politician. If Churchill had his way more people would be living in near the poverty line. The rich still fly private planes and others need to be in small local hospitals.

**Bristol: Capitalist ideas and socialism ideas are important**

Stoke: Labour’s no longer for me

I’ve been reading comments on political sites and been a bit baffled. Thing is, I’m not an angry, paranoid person, but I’m a bit fed up. Sometimes I wonder if it’s because I’m old or because I’m in a different world. Then I think, ‘Great, let’s keep this going!’

**Search ‘Socialist Party’ on Facebook to watch our talks during the lockdown**

**West London: Socialist Party money’s no joy**

**Nottingham: Workers’ bulletin**

A worker in my local Co-op is putting pressure on the bosses.

**Search ‘Socialist Party’ on Facebook to watch our talks during the lockdown**

**South East London: Worker clashing with airlines**

I attended a fantastic meeting of South East London Socialist Party on 8 April: screen, room, on the day. It was a fantastic meeting.

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Sabotage – the inner workings of Labour’s political machine exposed

Rapacious capitalism, and the spread of coronavirus

Simon Carter

The Committee for a Workers' International (CWI - the socialist international)

Coronavirus, capitalism, and class warfare worldwide

The Committee for a Workers’ International (CWI - the socialist international)

Lessons from history – how the catastrophe of WW1 sparked revolutionary change

Philpott – Anarchist, and Connolly in Ireland.

Edited by William T. Stead, punctuation, and as an implacable fighter against

Sometimes socialists need to take inspiration from how

Lessons from history – how the catastrophe of WW1 sparked revolutionary change

While the current lockdown in Britain and across large parts of Europe makes it difficult to carry out widespread solidarity activity, just now we can take inspiration from the mass political and social actions of the early 20th century.

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While the current lockdown in Britain and across large parts of Europe makes it difficult to carry out widespread solidarity activity, just now we can take inspiration from the mass political and social actions of the early 20th century. The 1917 Russian Revolution and the First World War saw waves of mass action, strikes, demonstrations and occupations.

The CWI is organised in many countries in the world as the socialist organisation which the Socialist Party is affiliated to. If you want to know how to join, or what going-on is happening in your area, get in touch and visit our website. The CWI is the international organisation for the working-class majority.

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Pay and benefits
- Full pay for all workers. Workers, especially those on low pay, can’t afford to lose 20% of their income.
- Any worker who has to self-isolate or cannot go to work should receive full pay from day one and not be forced to take annual leave. Pay should be paid directly to the worker not via the employer.
- Increase benefits to the level of the national minimum wage. No delay in the payment of benefits.
- Increase the minimum wage immediately to at least £12 an hour, £15 in London.
- Workers who follow health advice to be absent from work to avoid potential spread should be excluded from any attendance-management procedures.
- Open the books of any company threatening redundancies or closure to the inspection by the workforce and trade unions.
- To defend workers’ jobs and incomes, industries should be nationalised under democratic workers’ control and management with compensation only on the basis of proven need.

National Health Service
- Emergency increase in funding for the NHS and for social care.
- Adequate protection for all frontline workers.
- NHS to take over private healthcare facilities and staff, and any other private facilities necessary for care, quarantine, and supplies. No compensation to the private fat cats.
- Emergency training of NHS staff to deal with the coronavirus crisis.
- Resources to be mobilised from government and big-business sources so that anyone with flu or cold-like symptoms has the right to a free coronavirus test with results available within hours, as has been the case in S.Korea and some other countries. Requisition private testing and analysis facilities.
- Increase production to meet the urgent need of more protective and medical equipment, including ventilators and virus testing. Take over industries and convert production where necessary, under democratic workers’ control of those industries and in the wider workforce.
- Reverse privatisation in the NHS, remove the privateers and cancel all the estimated £50 billion annual PFI payments.
- Nationalise the big pharmaceutical companies to guarantee research, production and supply of medicines, vaccines and treatments.
- Suspend fees for overseas NHS patients - treat all patients for free without the need to register to control the spread. Scrap prescription charges.

Public services and housing
- Emergency funding to take on more workers in essential services. Resources to protect workers, patients, and service users.
- Councils to coordinate a local response. Scrap existing cuts budgets. Councils to use reserves and borrowing powers to fund necessary jobs and services.
- 24 hour, adequately staffed, local authority helpline for vulnerable and elderly people forced to self-isolate.
- Community and trade union control over local distribution of food, medicines and other supplies.
- Workload demands must be reduced and time made available to prioritise protecting the health, safety and welfare of staff and service users. Workers asked to work from home must be supplied with adequate equipment, and performance monitoring should be scrapped.
- Quality childcare for vulnerable families and children of essential workers must be organised under the democratic control of education and care workers, with adequate protection for all. Emergency local authority provision of meals to children normally in receipt of free school meals under community and trade union control.
- Nobody should lose their home because of coronavirus. Mortgage and rent payments should be suspended. Government funds for democratically controlled local authority hardship funds for landlords in genuine need.
- Councils to take over empty homes to house the homeless and those in inadequate housing. Hotels to be used to provide emergency accommodation.
- Funding for 24 hour helplines and emergency accommodation for victims of domestic violence.
- No action to be taken for non-payment of utilities. Free broadband for all.

Trade union and workers’ action
- Trade unions to establish an all-union health and safety committee in every workplace to agree joint actions required to guarantee safety.
- For the Trade Union Congress and the unions, the biggest voluntary national organisation with over six million members across the country, to prepare to lead national coordinated strike action to protect people should necessary health and safety measures not be taken.
- Democratic trade union oversight over any government or private sector emergency measures taken to contain the virus, such as restrictions on public assemblies or strikes and supermarket supply rationing.
- No profiteering. Prices to be controlled by democratically elected committees of workers and consumers.
- No erosion of workers’ right to organise, including the democratic functioning of trade unions and parties.
- No trust in the Tories and other pro-capitalist politicians who are responsible for the crisis in the NHS and other public services to deal with the coronavirus crisis. For a mass workers’ party, drawing together workers, young people, socialists and activists from workplaces and community, environmental, anti-racist and anti-cuts campaigns, to provide a fighting political alternative to the pro-big business parties.
- The resources are there to deal with the crisis. Introduce an immediate 50% levy on the hoarded £175 billion lying idle in the bank accounts of big business.
- The capitalist market system that prioritises profit and is based on competition cannot keep society safe. We need a democratic socialist plan of production and distribution to meet the needs of the majority in society. Take into public ownership the banks, financial institutions and the top 150 companies that dominate the British economy and run them under the democratic control and management of working-class people so that we can make the decisions about what is needed. Compensation to be paid only on the basis of proven need.
- For international socialist cooperation.

This charter is for discussion and debate in workplaces and communities so that we can organise to defend our health, safety and rights during the crisis. Get in touch if you would like to join a Socialist Party online meeting.