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Independent Workers Union of Great Britain



Dear Will Shu,

I am writing as chair of the Couriers and Logistics branch of the Independent Workers union of Great Britain, on behalf of our members, to ask that you implement greater safety measures and increase financial security for all Deliveroo workers in order to ensure they are able to do their job most effectively.

The COVID-19 crisis has spotlighted the precarious situation Deliveroo workers are in. This must be addressed as a matter of urgency, not only to guarantee the physical and financial security of couriers who will very likely be providing a vital service during the crisis, but also to stabilise the delivery industry going forwards during what Deliveroo has predicted will be a time of significantly increased demand.

If you aim to continue to operate as the health crisis rapidly worsens, we believe that more concerted actions need to be taken to not only guarantee the wellbeing of Deliveroo workers, but also the health and safety of the wider public, clients and customers.

Full pay for self isolation

Riders have not been given adequate communication about the Rider Support Fund that Deliveroo has set up. A level of compensation similar to statutory sick pay is simply not enough to compensate a courier for having to self isolate. The lack of full pay for riders could accelerate the spread of the virus. **Riders come into contact with hundreds of people while they deliver their orders and it is therefore a matter of social responsibility and public health that your company takes actions to avoid this health crisis getting any worse.** With little or nothing currently on offer, you are putting the rider in a position where they do not have a choice but to work through potential early symptoms in the hope of it not being coronavirus. **Self isolation should not be a privilege for only those who can afford to take it.**

The current online isolation notes issued by the NHS only cover the previous seven days. A number of riders that, following medical evidence, self-isolated before this period now find themselves unable to access the Rider Support Fund, as this online system was not yet in place. **We demand that you provide full pay from the Rider Support fund to those taking the responsible decision to self isolate.**

Furthermore, we would also ask for Deliveroo to **allow high risk couriers** (those with pre-existing health conditions and over 60 years old) **or those couriers who live with high**

risk people, to self isolate for 12 weeks and receive full pay. Failure to do that could mean that those workers are exposed to life threatening risks.

Communication

We request that Deliveroo sends daily updates to its riders to adequately keep them informed with this rapidly changing situation. **Information should be available in other languages such as Portuguese as English is not the first language of many of your riders.** A helpline should be set up for those that have difficulty with email and/or written communication.

Regular testing for coronavirus

As food delivery couriers we deliver to people who are self isolating due to illness or due to being high risk and not wanting to be exposed to the potential risk of infection. **For this reason it is essential for couriers to be tested on a regular basis to make sure we are not unknowingly spreading the virus in places it could be fatal.**

A halt to terminations from the Platform

At a time of such uncertainty, additional strain should not be put on Deliveroo couriers who will be worried about financially providing for themselves and family. It is clear that Deliveroo headquarters staff will also be stretched and not have adequate time and resources to investigate customer and restaurant complaints which could lead to riders being unfairly terminated. **We are calling for Deliveroo to put a halt on terminations during this period.** This will also enable a larger workforce to cope with demand and help Deliveroo and the public through this crisis.

Social distancing to be put in place wherever possible

We need to minimize the amount of time spent in crowded places or interacting with other people in general. All Deliveries to customers should from now on be made contactless. Wherever possible deliveries should be brought out to the rider rather than the rider having to enter restaurants.

Safety equipment available for riders

Companies should be offering couriers the necessary health and safety and PPE equipment that makes them feel safe working during the coronavirus.

We ask that you therefore provide all riders with:

- Minimum 60% alcohol content hand sanitiser that can be refilled when empty,
- Protective gloves,
- Protective masks, according to the WHO minimum N95 standard,
- Full body protective outfit.

Couriers may not choose to take up the offer of this equipment, however, you are responsible for their wellbeing and should therefore offer what they want to make them feel at ease while working. It is a small cost to pay for couriers continuing to work and keep the business going in the most adverse conditions.

Guarantee the real living wage plus costs during times of low demand

Deliveroo riders work in an industry that will likely remain operative throughout the Covid-19 health crisis. Food delivery and other on-demand supplies are fundamental during this time, **riders will be outdoors and exposed to risks while millions of people will be staying at home to stay safe and we expect this sacrifice to be met with a minimum wage guarantee even during times of low demand.**

Government to guarantee basic pay and conditions

In the event that the government chooses to utilise and subsidise the Food delivery industry to cater for increased demand, **we expect a minimum standards guarantee (real living wage plus costs, holiday pay and sick pay etc) to underline the key work that Deliveroo couriers are carrying out.** There must be a safety net in place to avoid the exploitation of couriers working in a high risk environment and performing a vital service to society.

As couriers we understand the important role we will play in the coming months and we expect the companies we work for to acknowledge that by complying to these basic demands. It is our responsibility to simultaneously do what we can to prevent the spread of the coronavirus while accommodating society while it is in desperate need.

I look forward to hearing from you by **13:00, Sunday 22nd March.**

Alex Marshall
IWGB Couriers and Logistics Branch Chair