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# Independent Workers Union of Great Britain



Dear David,

I am writing to ask for greater safety measures to be put in place and for increased financial security for your fleet of couriers. If you aim to continue to operate as the health crisis worsens, I believe more concerted actions need to be taken to not only guarantee the well-being of your couriers, but also the health and safety of the wider society.

## **Full pay for self-isolation**

At the moment the statutory sick pay on offer is simply not enough to compensate a courier for having to self-isolate. The lack of full pay for couriers could accelerate the spread of the virus. With little or nothing currently on offer, you are putting the courier in a position where he does not have a choice but to work through potential early symptoms in the hope of it not being Covid-19. TDL couriers come into contact with hundreds of people and patients while they deliver or pick up specimens and it is therefore a matter of social responsibility and public health that TDL takes actions to avoid this health crisis getting any worse.

It is irresponsible to ask a worker to self-isolate when giving little to no money to maintain themselves or their family. TDL should not put this burden on a precarious worker and the company should relieve them of this stress and offer full pay so responsible action can be taken. **Self-isolation should not be a privilege for only those who can afford to take it**. If we want to avoid spreading this virus, everyone should be able to self-isolate when they feel any symptoms. The current situation could undermine all the actions of working from home and self-isolation and unless everyone is able to take responsible action, everyone remains at risk.

We would also ask for TLD 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.

## **Regular testing for Covid-19**

TDL couriers are in contact with hundreds of people every day. A lot of these people will be considered high risk. As medical couriers we enter cancer hospitals, old people's homes and places in which there is a high concentration of high-risk people. For this reason, it is essential for TDL couriers to be tested on a regular basis to make sure we are not unknowingly spreading the virus in places it could be fatal.

## **Enhanced pay during reduced workforce/probable lockdown**

As the virus spreads and more people self-isolate, the workforce is likely to decrease, and the demand is likely to increase. TDL couriers are going to be paramount to the tackling of this virus

and to monitoring the spread. When everyone is being told to stay home and keep safe, TDL couriers will have to be out and expose themselves to the risks others are able to avoid.

I believe that the TDL couriers should be compensated for this and their pay should also reflect the important role they are playing during a time of crisis. The general public will be told to stay at home and only leave for the most unavoidable reasons, but the job we are doing is fundamental during this time and so we will continue to work and be more exposed to the virus. Couriers should not have to shoulder this additional burden for free while the company profits.

### **Temporary leave payment to be funded by the company when needed**

We are heading into a time where demand is uncertain and could ultimately result in business having to close short term. Couriers should still be paid if this happens. They still have bills to pay, families to feed and various other overheads and the business has a responsibility to these workers. They should be paid for this time and as soon as business picks up again, they can return to work.

### **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. Specimens should be left near entrances or as close to entrances as possible.

### **Safety equipment available for riders**

TDL should be offering couriers the equipment that makes them feel safe working while the Covid-19 spreads. On top of hand sanitizer and protective gloves you should offer:

- Protective masks
- Full body protective outfit
- You should make sure that communal surfaces, door handles, access buttons etc are disinfected regularly
- You should make sure that Covid-19 samples are packaged in accordance with PHE guidance (even at this late stage there is still confusion)

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.

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 Covid-19 while accommodating society while it is in desperate need. You have a duty of care towards your workers and the wider members of the public so we trust you will do the right thing.

I look forward to hearing from you by,  
Alex Marshall

