

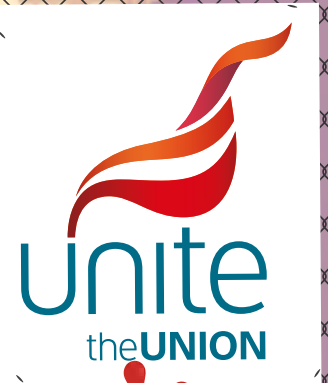
buildingWORKER



UNITE: PROTECTING YOU DURING COVID



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DANGER**



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buildingWORKER

A warm welcome to the thousands of construction workers who have joined Unite this year. Union backing is important even in the best of times yet now more so than ever. Unite's message safety, jobs and pay guides our work to support members and their reps in workplaces across the UK and Ireland.

In this autumn's issue of *buildingWORKER* we provide further advice on health and safety. Unite's health and safety experts have produced a bespoke guide for construction sites risk assessment that sets out Unite's standards of what constitutes 'Covid-safe'.

Any member or rep fearful that their workplace is unsafe should contact Unite and to avoid delays a dedicated construction helpline and email are in place. Help is on hand, Unite members are not alone. Email construction@uniteunion.org or call [020 7622 2442](tel:02076222442).

With sites being forced to operate at reduced capacity and the worsening economic climate affecting new projects, we're seeing job cuts and every cut is a disaster for the worker and their family.

So in order to preserve existing skills and protect workers, Unite has been working with other bodies to create the Talent Retention Scheme which is designed to help construction workers locate and be recruited for employment opportunities in the industry. Further information can be found on page 18.

Unite is not just committed to protecting existing skills and workers we are also passionate about developing the highly skilled workers of tomorrow, without a skilled workforce there is no industry.

A particularly unpleasant side effect of the pandemic is that many apprentices are at risk of losing their placements, unable to complete their courses. On page 20 we provide practical advice on what apprentices can do to protect their apprenticeship if problems develop.

Despite the pandemic it is vital we do not become defeatist and defensive, we need to be supporting opportunities of developing high quality directly employed work and forge relationships with others with the same commitments.

On page 14 we discuss the need for the government to urgently give the go ahead for the Sizewell C nuclear power station, so that the skills learned at Hinkley Point can bridge across. A failure by the government to demonstrate such joined up thinking, risks the UK losing the knowledge of how to build a nuclear power station.

Meanwhile on page 16, former bricklayer now Labour mayor of the Liverpool city region Steve Rotherham lays out his challenge to Boris Johnson, that the PM's statement to build, build, build must be worth more than the paper it is written on. Steve's ambitious plans will create thousands of construction jobs.

In these uncertain times Unite remains here for you. By working together and staying united we will overcome the challenges we face.

Gail Cartmail,
assistant general secretary



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for advice during the coronavirus crisis
go to uniteunion.org/coronavirus

Front cover picture: Getty Images

Deaths increase linked to reduction in inspections

Unite has discovered that a sharp decrease in construction inspections being undertaken by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), coincided with a large increase in fatalities.

There was an increase of a third in deaths in 2019/20 with a total of 40 construction fatalities compared to the previous 12 months when there were 30 deaths.

Following a Freedom of Information (FOI) request made by Unite it was discovered that unannounced inspections have decreased by at least 25 per cent during the same period.

The sharpest decreases in inspections were in the South West (a decline of 54 per cent), London (a decrease by 50 per cent) the West Midlands (49 per cent decrease), the South East (minus 48 per cent) and Eastern England (a decline by a third).

Unite also discovered the number of enforcement notices issued by the HSE concerning breaches of safety law has declined by 30 per cent, while the number of prosecutions undertaken for serious safety failures was down by 24 per cent.

Since 2010 the HSE has suffered huge cuts to its funding which have declined by over 40 per cent.

Unite national officer for construction **Jerry Swain** said: "It is simply no coincidence that the drop in inspections has occurred at the same time that there has been a steep rise in deaths.

"Unite has called on the government for investment to train and deploy a greater number of HSE construction inspectors."

No build, build, build without apprenticeships

Unite has warned that the government's plans to build, build, build the UK out of the recession caused by the COVID-19 pandemic are doomed to failure unless action is taken to avert the looming skills and apprenticeship crisis.

Unite's analysis shows that due to the pandemic and employers long-held reluctance to train apprentices, could result in there being 20,000 fewer construction apprentices.

Around 50 per cent of electrical construction apprentices were furloughed, with concerns that as the job retention scheme was wound up they would be made redundant and potentially lost to the industry.

Unite has written to the chancellor Rishi Sunak to "implement without delay economic policies that can help save existing construction apprenticeships jobs and ensure the 2020 intake of construction apprentices is of a level to meet the industry's future needs."



Getty Images

For decades the construction industry has been failing to train sufficient apprentices, this has been masked by a heavy reliance on migrant labour but with changes to immigration policies this option is no longer easily available. Unite is calling for the government to adopt the following measures:

- Extension of apprentice wage support to safeguard jobs
- Public sector procurement policies that ensure the recruitment of high quality apprentices

- The extension of the job guarantee scheme so that apprentice opportunities are delivered in public-funded infrastructure projects.

For further information on support and advice for apprentices go to page 20

STOP PRESS: As *buildingWORKER* went to press Unite has now received a detailed response from skills minister Gillian Keegan and its contents are currently being assessed.

New Crossrail blacklisting case launched

The flagship but troubled Crossrail project is at the heart of a contemporary blacklisting scandal being pursued by Unite.

The scandal involves Daniel Collins an electrician who worked for the Costain/Skanska joint venture on the Bond Street, Crossrail project.

Soon after beginning work on the project, he noticed some serious safety issues and followed the site procedures to report them. Shortly afterwards, he was asked to leave the site “due to a reduction in work” despite being told there was three years’ worth of work. Mr Collins remained keen to work on Crossrail, despite being fully qualified,

every time he sought work he was either rejected or offers of work were withdrawn.

Mr Collins then made a series of subject access requests and found a large number of contractors and agencies as well as Crossrail itself were involved in a conspiracy to deny him work.

The companies involved were: Crossrail, Costain, Skanska, NG Bailey, T Clarke and the agencies were: OnSite and Beaver Management Services Ltd.



Unite has launched a case against contemporary blacklisting on Crossrail

Unite assistant general secretary Howard Beckett said: “It is truly sickening that a worker who raised legitimate safety concerns to protect their fellow workers has been forced out of the industry.”

Number of CIS workers over a million

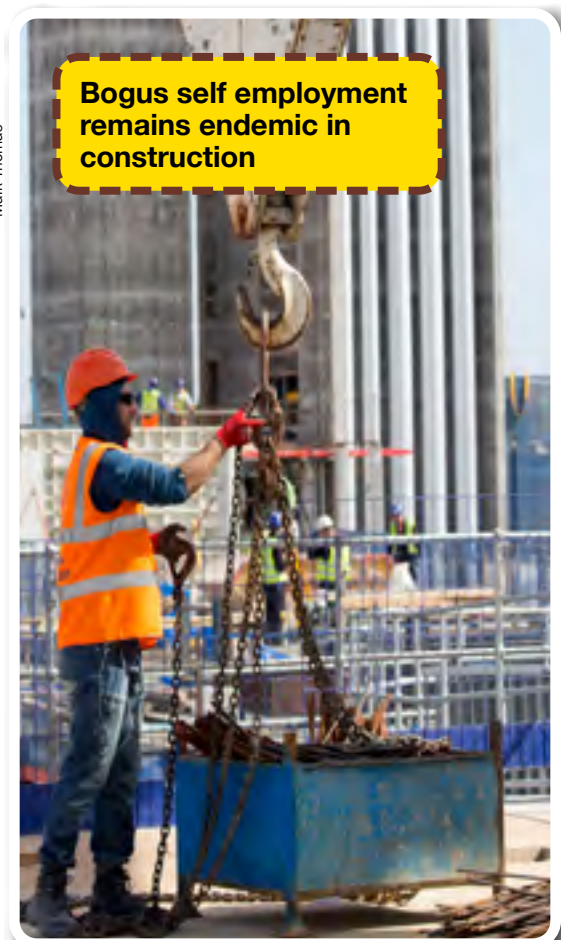
A Freedom of Information request undertaken by Unite has confirmed that the number of construction workers being paid via the Construction Industry Scheme (CIS) is over a million.

Workers paid via CIS are usually classified as self-employed, unlike all other forms of self-employment they are taxed at source. In the majority of cases the workers operate like an employee (they have set working times, have to obey orders, can’t refuse to do tasks and don’t supply their own materials or large equipment) resulting in them being bogusly self-employed.

In total in 2019/20 1,031 million sole traders were paid via CIS, 8,000 partnerships were paid in this way and a further 145,000 limited companies were paid via CIS.

In 2018/19 a total of 1.03 million workers were paid via by CIS and the figure for 2017/18 was 1.12 million.

The figures demonstrate the huge challenge of tackling bogus self-employment in the construction industry.



Bogus self employment remains endemic in construction

Mark Thomas

Cetty Images

North West improving electrical contractor work



Unite in the North West are involved in an exciting project to promote and ensure that fully qualified electricians are operating on sites.

ECS Check will improve the quality of electricians working on sites

Unite is working together with the Joint Industry Board (the national agreement for electricians) and the Electrotechnical Certification Scheme (ECS) to promote [ECS Check](#), a new online system that allows main contractors and clients to check the qualifications and training of electricians working on their projects.

As part of the initial roll out of the project Unite has

been working with local authorities to get them to adopt the system.

By using the system clients are not only able to monitor that workers are fully qualified but it will improve quality. Unite hopes that the online system can be used to encourage the recruitment of apprentices and the training of existing workers. It can also be used to ensure that targets for local labour are being met on a project.

Unite organiser **Jason Poulter** an electrician by trade said: “The online system helps promote social value in procurement as well as allowing clients to specify the expected levels of qualifications and competency for their projects.”

East London crane collapse

Unite has raised its members very real concerns that the Health and Safety Executive had been unable to provide an initial report into the factors that led to the collapse of a tower crane in Bow, East London.

The tower crane collapsed on Wednesday, 8 July onto residential buildings, killing one elderly resident. Following the accident Unite wrote to the HSE calling for an initial report to be published by late August.

The HSE investigating officer has subsequently been in contact with Unite and explained the reasons why an interim report is yet to be published.

In August, over a month after the accident, Tower Hamlets council admitted that the tower crane will take four to six months before it can be safely removed. The operation to move the crane will involve one of the most complicated lifts to be carried out in the UK in the last 20 years.



Mark Thomas

Unite is concerned at the HSE's delay in investigating the East London tower crane collapse

While Unite appreciates the challenges that the HSE is facing with producing a report into the accident, the union still believes initial observations should be issued.

Unite believes this would assist in lifting the cloud of doubt which is hanging over Wolffkran Ltd., the

company that owned the crane and the workers involved in its installation and operation.

Unite national officer **Jerry Swain** said: “This was a tragic incident and the aftermath is not only affecting local residents but is having a profound effect on Unite members who operate these type of cranes.

“Unite understands the challenges that the HSE faces with this investigation, which of course must be conducted safely.

“It is hoped that some form of initial findings can be produced without further delay.

“Unite is the recognised union at Wolffkran. Our members are already having to operate in difficult conditions due to the COVID-19 pandemic; it is simply unfair to have unanswered questions about this accident hanging over them.”

Scottish Fair Work Inquiry

Unite's deputy regional secretary for Scotland Mary Alexander has been chosen by the Scottish government to co-chair a major inquiry into the construction industry.

The inquiry which is part of the Scottish government's [fair work convention](#) is based on a piece of research undertaken by Strathclyde University.

The inquiry will focus on the issue of procurement and what measures can be taken to ensure that fair work in construction is enshrined during the procurement process.

The inquiry is scheduled to last between 12-18 months and it will be taking evidence from a wide variety of interested parties.

Irish Unite workers stick together and secure pay deal

Unite construction members in the Republic of Ireland have demonstrated extraordinary levels of solidarity to secure a pay deal which was under threat.

The affected workers primarily plumbers, pipe fitters and welders are covered by the Mechanical, Engineering and Building Services Construction Agreement (MEBSCA). The relevant national collective agreement.

Under the second year of a two year pay deal the workers were due to receive a 2.7 per cent pay increase in September. However employers indicated that they were not prepared to pay it blaming the COVID-19 pandemic. That was despite all the current work in the sector being priced before the pandemic began and which included the agreed pay increase.

Unite along with the Connect union made it clear that it would not accept any delay or cancellation of the promised pay increase.

The membership immediately conducted a consultative ballot which showed over 95 per cent of members were prepared to take industrial action.

At this point several major employers indicated they would pay the increase. Unite then began to target major employers not prepared to honour the pay increase and major sites including the National Children's Hospital.

A meeting was held with national employers on Tuesday 15 September, where employers refused to honour the pay increase. On the Wednesday ballot

papers were issued, workers received them on the Thursday and on the Friday the employers capitulated and agreed to honour the pay increase.

James McCabe the secretary of the all-Republic of Ireland Unite construction branch said: "The construction team in Unite have been brilliant. From the reps, the branch, organisers, officers and the admin workers, everyone's dedication was vital in order to win this dispute."

The focus now turns to the Construction Sectoral Employment Order, the collective agreement for all construction workers apart from mechanical and electrical workers. These workers are due to receive their pay increase in October and if there is any attempt not to honour it, further action is possible.

The mechanical dispute was highly important as it occurred in the wake of the high court's decision to strike out the Electrical Sectoral Employment order (the national collective agreement for electricians). Electricians now have to rely on local agreements.

However, Unite was not directly affected by the high court decision as it does not represent electricians in the Republic of Ireland. Electricians are represented by the Connect union.



The active approach of Irish workers ensured a pay increase was secured

Qatar worker improvements welcomed

The Building and Woodworkers International, the global body of construction unions has welcomed a significant development in workers' rights in Qatar.

From 30 August migrant construction workers will now receive a minimum wage equivalent to \$275 dollars a month when food and accommodation are provided. For some workers this amounts to a 25 per cent pay increase.

Also from this date migrant workers are now free to change jobs without requiring their employer's permission. This measure means that the virtual

servitude that workers in Qatar have experienced will greatly reduce.

Both developments are a result of the continuous lobbying and working with migrant workers that the BWI have been undertaking.

BWI General Secretary **Ambet Yuson** stated, "We have been part of a collective effort that has resulted in these reforms, through campaigning and through engagement with the Qatari State, migrant communities, workers representatives and other stakeholders. We have sought to turn successive legislative changes into real



Joey Coleman

Improvements in workers' rights is vital as Qatar secures more major sporting events

gains for workers and look forward to a sustained partnership with Qatar's government to ensure that the latest legal measures translate into tangible progress for migrant workers."

Preventing violence against women

By Gail Cartmail, assistant general secretary

Unite in Construction and TUC Aid have joined forces with Building and Woodworkers International (BWI) in support of a project that aims to develop trade union activism to tackle violence against women in Brazil.

During lockdown violence against women has been described as the second pandemic. In Brazil the issue is particularly concerning.

Reductions in working hours and layoffs caused by partial lockdowns and limited mobility has reinforced women's isolation and increased vulnerability. In Rio de Janeiro alone, reported cases of violence against women rose by 50 per cent during lockdown. The context is a marked increase in the number of women being killed. In 2019 1,310 women were killed in Brazil, a 7.2 per cent increase on 2018. The situation women face is made all the more dangerous by President Bolsonaro's

government regarding domestic violence as a faultless crime under lockdown orders.

The BWI project is aimed at developing trade union responses to violence against women through campaigning using digital activism. The project starts the discussion among affiliates in the Latin American and Caribbean region but allows for trade unionists in other regions to also participate.

Hundreds joined the project's online webinar launch in September and many spoke of the urgency for unions to take up the issue. Speakers included Unite's Siobhan Edean and the TUC. It was my honour as TUC Aid Chair to open the webinar.

Online training sessions will look at how unions can practically respond to violence against women and build confidence in using digital and online



Andrew

Unite is part of a campaign to help Brazilian women combat domestic violence

campaign tools. Importantly the 10 Brazilian unions involved will develop an implementation plan for their union to implement.

There is enormous enthusiasm to make the project a success, especially welcome is the opportunity to share campaign ideas globally.

■ Women in the UK are also victims of domestic violence Unite provides advice and support for more details click here

<https://unitetheunion.org/media/3238/job-4538-womens-health-and-safety-jan-2018.pdf>

PAY AND BARGAINING

CIJC and industrial agreements pay updates

The union side submitted its pay claim in February 2020 for the Construction Industry Joint Council (CIJC), the largest construction national agreement which primarily covers civil engineering and the biblical trades.

Talks were due to begin soon after that date but they were delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In mid-October employers finally confirmed that they were imposing a pay freeze.

Unite national construction officer **Jerry Swain** said: "This is a missed opportunity to reward construction workers in civil engineering for their hard work and commitment, the vast majority of whom have continued to work throughout the pandemic in very trying circumstances.

"Construction workers ranging from the very highly skilled to those on poverty pay, right across the country will be left shocked and angry to learn that their employers will be rewarding their hard work and dedication with a real terms pay cut.

"Unite will now be consulting with local construction officers throughout the UK to identify the sites where workers wish to take local action to secure a pay increase that they thoroughly deserve."

As *buildingWORKER* went to press Unite was consulting with members covered by the Electrical JIB and the NAECI agreement for the mechanical engineering industry, over the next steps as employers were proposing a pay freeze for both agreements for the coming year.

Mark Thomas



Construction workers have been left up in the air as their pay has been frozen by employers

Demolition Agreement secures pay increase

Despite the challenges faced by other industrial agreements, Unite has successfully negotiated a pay agreement for workers covered by the National Demolition Contractors Agreement. A 1.5 per cent across the board was negotiated for the coming 12 months.

Red Book pay increase update

Local authority craft workers rejected the offer of a 2.75 per cent pay increase for 2020. However after reps met in September, it was decided that in the current climate, national industrial action was not appropriate and local action would be considered instead to tackle pay disparities.

The 2020 pay increase was therefore in either October or November's pay.

Consultation is set to begin on the 2021 pay claim in the near future.

Hinkley workers secure shift pay boost

Unit members were unhappy when a new third (back) shift was instigated on the Hinkley Point C development. In a consultative ballot members clearly indicated they were unhappy about it on its original terms.

Unite sought an increase in the shift length from 10.5 hours to 11 hours in line with the other shifts and an increase in the shift premium from 14 per cent.

Sadly, Unite received no support from the minor union on the site.

With the prospect of industrial action from Unite members looming, the shift was increased to 11 hours and the shift premium boosted to 20 per cent.



Unite members at Hinkley have secured a significant shift increase

KEEPING SAFE AND SECURE ON SITE DURING THE PANDEMIC

The problem

Construction workers continue to be in a vulnerable position during the pandemic, due to the unique combination of characteristics that govern their working conditions, such as bogus self-employment, umbrella contracts and agency work.

This certainly affects their ability to co-operate effectively with the test and trace system, due to the lack of adequate sick pay to support self-isolation when suffering from symptoms, or when you have been in contact with someone who has tested positive.

This makes mass transmission much more likely with outbreaks difficult to control, and puts these valuable workers under an unnecessary health risk.

This is compounded by various environmental conditions that increase the risk of infection, such as sharing living accommodation and the sharing of vehicles getting to work and travelling around larger sites.

The Health and Safety Executive is in agreement with this analysis and states, "HSE will continue to increase the scale of spot checks it carries out across a range of industries where the workforce typically has characteristics which can increase transmission", construction being one of those.

Given the challenges that construction workers face, it is hoped the information below will help to alleviate workers' concerns.

SAFETY MEASURES

Unite continues to fight for construction workers to receive full pay from day one in order that workers can follow the requirements of the site safety system. Unite Principles:

- Unite and reps consulted on all aspects of the system in every workplace
- Workers to receive full pay when self-isolating or when attending test centres
- All workers entitled to the same treatment whether or not they are full time employees
- Workers - including agency workers – able to access testing without detriment
- Ensure home testing is available for workers who cannot travel safely to test sites
- Respect for existing privacy rules
- Employers prevented from having access to data gleaned from any state-run app

On 24 September the government launched the NHS COVID-19 app, which use QR codes to enable people to check-in with their phone on arrival when visiting certain venues, instead of filling out a check-in book or business-specific tool.

Mark Thomas



Social distancing remains vital on construction sites

How Test and Trace workers

Isolate: as soon as you experience coronavirus symptoms, medical advice is clear. You must self-isolate for at least 10 days. Anyone else in your household must self-isolate for 14 days from when you started having symptoms.

1. Test: Order a test immediately at www.nhs.uk/coronavirus or call 119 if you have no access to the internet.
2. Results: If your test is positive, you must complete the remainder of your 10-day self-isolation. Anyone in your household must also complete self-isolation for 14 days from when you started having symptoms. If your test is negative, you and other household members no longer need to self-isolate
3. Share contacts: If you test positive for coronavirus, the NHS test and trace service will send you a text or email alert or call you with instructions of how to share details of people with

whom you have had close, recent contact and places you have visited.

Symptoms of COVID 19 what are they

- High temperature – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature)
- New, continuous cough – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or three or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual)
- Loss or change to your sense of smell or taste – this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal.

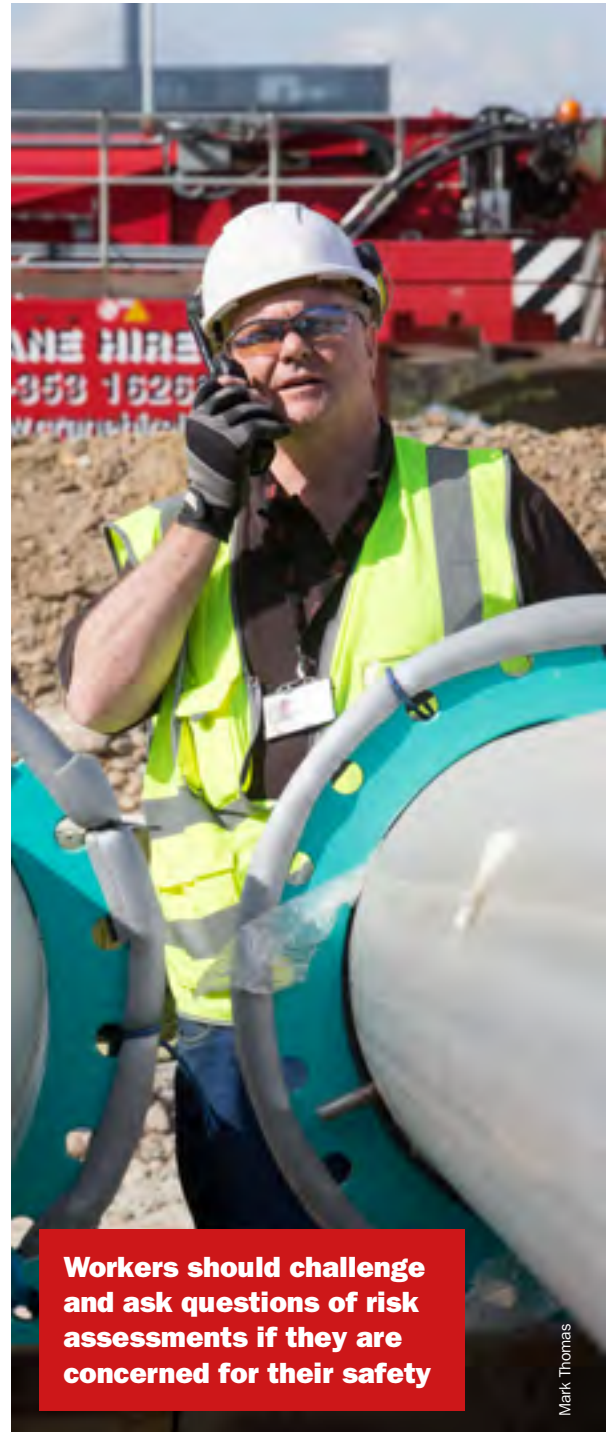
Construction Employers what they need to do

Employers need a standard approach to COVID-19 control measures to eliminate or reduce risk in order to keep their workers safe when on site and travelling to work. Risk assessments that are regularly updated through consultation with Unite safety representatives is an essential step in putting together an accepted procedure to deal with COVID-19 risks on site. It will be well worth setting up a COVID-19 task group, with union reps/workers and management.

Considerations and check list for Construction Projects COVID-19

- Are COVID-19 specific risk assessments in place and regularly reviewed?
- Do reps / workers have access to risk assessments and are able to challenge and question them?
- Mental health issues: Setting up a triage assessment that signposts workers to support
- Consider BAEM groups who are adversely effected by COVID-19

- Take into account disabilities, gender differences, effects on pregnant women, maternity issues
- Ensure all protected characteristics are factored into any risk assessments
- Are layouts in place to accommodate social distancing?
- Are barriers or floor markings in place to facilitate social distancing?
- Are COVID-19 related inductions and training in place?
- Have revised timings and staggering of shifts and breaks been considered to control space?
- Do canteen, welfare facilities, locker rooms accommodate social distancing and are masks supplied free of charge as they now must be worn
- Is PPE adequate, including arrangements for cleaning including overalls?
- Is there enhanced cleaning of workplaces?
- Are there daily talks to encourage and enforce hygiene and social distancing?
- Are there arrangements for screening out workers exhibiting symptoms of the virus?
- Is there a system to carry out temperature checks at entry points?
- Do indoor facilities such as canteens have sufficient ventilation?
- Are face coverings to World Health Organisation standard or FFP2/3 masks supplied by employer?
- Are there sufficient sanitiser stations around sites and at entrances?
- Are there arrangements in place to accommodate welfare facilities for visiting delivery drivers?
- Has the employer considered how workers will travel to work such as on public transport and encouraging avoiding the sharing of vehicles and provide free parking?



Workers should challenge and ask questions of risk assessments if they are concerned for their safety

For further information go to:
www.unitetheunion.org/coronavirus

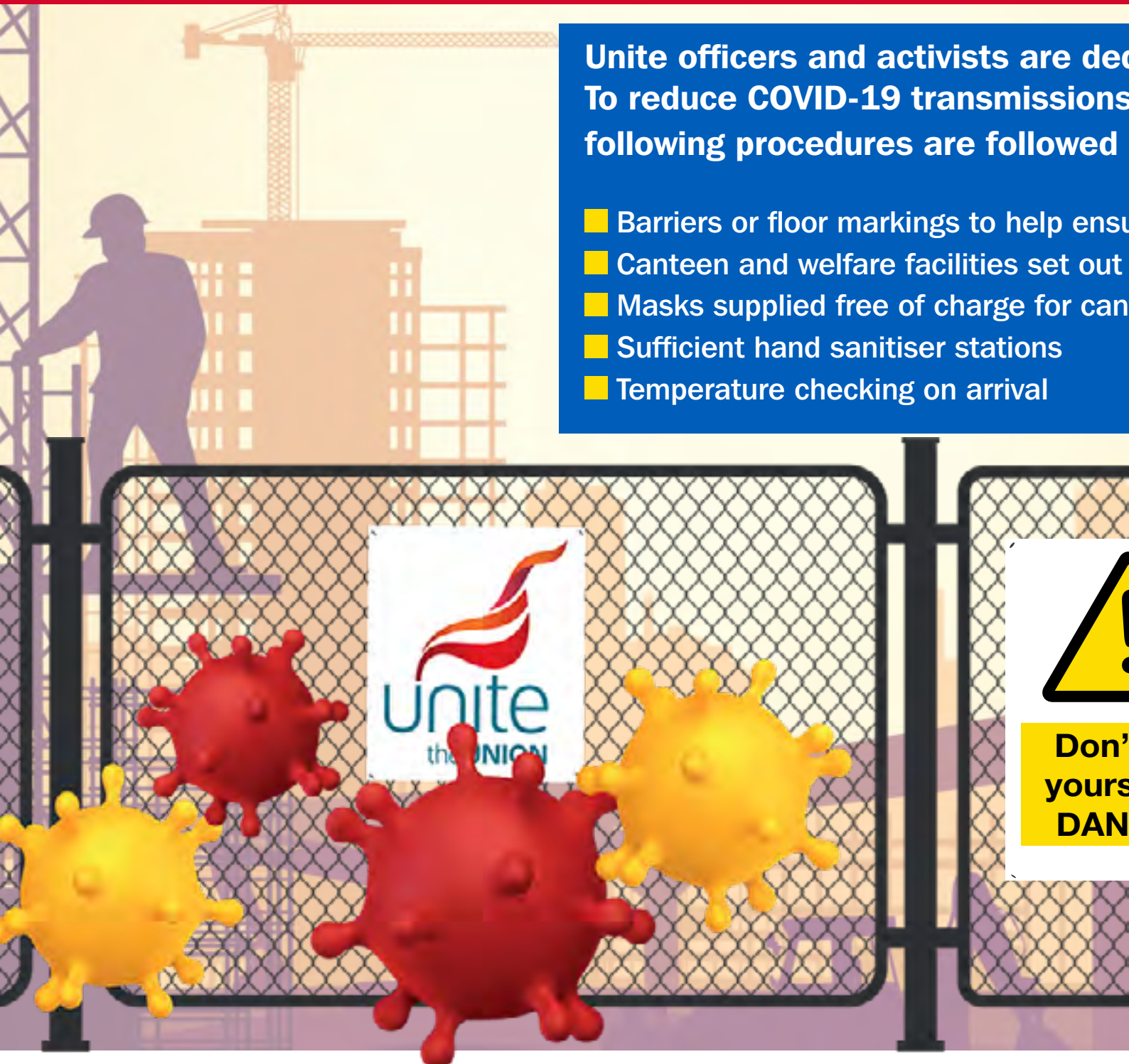
For immediate advice to support on COVID-19 concerns call 0207 622 2442 or email: construction@unitetheunion.org Your concerns will be dealt with in the strictest confidence

SITE SAFE

during the COVID

Unite officers and activists are determined to reduce COVID-19 transmissions. The following procedures are followed:

- Barriers or floor markings to help ensure social distancing
- Canteen and welfare facilities set out to reduce contact
- Masks supplied free of charge for all workers
- Sufficient hand sanitiser stations
- Temperature checking on arrival



For more information on safe workplaces
If your workplace is not following these rules immediately
or phone: **020 7622 2442** or email

WORKING D-19 pandemic

dedicated to protecting your health.
As it is essential as a minimum the
on sites.

Ensure social distancing
to allow for social distancing
teens



go to: www.unitetheunion.org/coronavirus
contact your union rep your Unite officer or union office.
Email: construction@unitetheunion.org

SZC – boosting construction

The Covid crisis continues to challenge the economy. Across the UK many thousands of jobs have been lost. Training opportunities are also being cut, leading to a collapse in the number of young people starting apprenticeships.

That's why it's more important than ever that we maximise the opportunities in those parts of the economy that continue to grow, creating employment which can underpin a green recovery. A case in point is new nuclear construction.

At Hinkley Point in Somerset, we are building the UK's first new nuclear power plant in a generation. When complete it will generate enough clean, low carbon electricity to power six million homes for the next 60 years. It is always-on power, will complement renewables and play a key role in helping the UK meet its 2050 net zero emissions target.

Hinkley Point C (HPC) is already transforming lives and businesses across the UK. The project is on schedule and meeting its milestones. The team have done a brilliant job, safely continuing their vital work during the Covid crisis. The construction site in Somerset is an inspiring place to see.

Billions of pounds of investment at HPC is boosting the capacity of the UK's nuclear supply chain. It is providing skills and training for school leavers and strengthening the UK's engineering and nuclear expertise.

In the west country we're working with partners including local colleges and industry training boards to overcome critical skills shortages. Over 12,000

people have been trained and assessed at the construction skills and training centre in Bridgwater. We've created a national college for nuclear and helped establish the energy skills centre, the only facility of its kind delivering engineering, science, low carbon, and nuclear related education.

Because good welders are in short supply, we're also helping to deliver a new, state of the art, welding centre. It will take in new starters as well as upskilling current welders to Level 4 high integrity specialists. The ambition is to provide up to 500 welding qualifications a year which will go some way to plugging a nationwide skills shortage.

After a long gap in nuclear construction, Hinkley Point C has revived the skills and know-how of the UK nuclear industry. However, as a country, we need to go further. Without a nuclear pipeline the workforce at Hinkley will dissipate, and the UK will lose the opportunity to capitalise on their experience. Thousands of jobs in the supply chain could be lost forever.

That's why the proposed new nuclear plant at Sizewell in Suffolk is so important.

Sizewell C (SZC) is a project that delivers for all parts of the UK. It will maintain and/or create around 25,000 on site jobs through its construction period and more than 1,000 apprenticeships both in Suffolk and at supply chain businesses across the country.

It's a British project with 70 per cent of the construction contracts by value earmarked for British companies – that's more than at Hinkley Point.

Billions of pounds of investment will benefit British business and preserve an estimated 70,000 highly skilled jobs across the nuclear supply chain.

It will also transform opportunities for young people in the region like Rochelle Grimmer.

Rochelle first came to Sizewell on work experience at the age of 13. The experience left a lasting impression. It shaped her decision to study science A-levels and ultimately to apply for an apprenticeship in Chemistry at Sizewell B.

"The apprenticeship provided me with on-the-job training in chemistry but also involved studying for an Higher National Certificate with Greenwich University".

Rochelle is now a fully qualified chemistry technician having completed the two-year apprenticeship programme. She's also keen to encourage more girls to think about a career in the energy sector and has been an ambassador for the company at career fairs. "Science doesn't just have to be a boys job" she says.

For SZC we're aiming for a 40 per cent female workforce in line with the industry's target. We're already recruiting apprentices in areas like quantity surveying, project controls and civil engineering.

Over the construction phase we'll need a huge range of skilled workers. And we are already working with local colleges, training providers, universities, and businesses to ensure skills gaps can be filled.

skills in nuclear



Hinkley Point is creating employment and training workers in nuclear construction skills for the first time in a generation

Giving Sizewell C the green light will secure the future for thousands of workers across the nuclear construction sector potentially for decades to come. Sizewell C can be a bridge to new nuclear projects at Moorside in Cumbria, Wylfa in Anglesey as well as to building small modular reactors when they reach design maturity.

As the UK embarks on its economic rebuild post-Covid, the government needs to turn to ready-to-go projects like Sizewell C. It will help the UK build back better, level up the regions, benefit British companies across the country, as well as powering the UK forward on its journey to net zero.

Getty Images

Meurig Thomas originally trained as a scaffolder and is now a Unite convener at Hinkley Point C. He started working on the project seven years ago when the site was little more than a green field. “What you’ve learned here at Hinkley

Point, you can take with you”, he says. “If Sizewell C gets the go-ahead workers here could move across. Lots of people local to Sizewell will also be getting work early on, earning good money in what could be long-term roles.”

Unite appeal:

To sustain jobs in the nuclear construction sector for years to come, please email your local MP and urge them to support a new nuclear power station at Sizewell C. You can find contact details for your local MP here: <https://tinyurl.com/y4e8j9o2>

Hinkley Point C in numbers

10,300 job opportunities created – on track to meet ambition of 25,000 during construction phase
644 apprentices trained – on track to meet ambitions of training 1,000 during construction
Over half our apprentices are taking training at Level 2 and above
20 per cent of our apprentices are women
Over 50 different apprenticeship schemes currently being delivered across the project.

Developing the HPC workforce

£15 million committed to improving local training, education and skills provision
2,777 workers upskilled in classroom-based training in 2019

11,354 online training courses completions in 2019
12,200 people trained and assessed at the Construction Skills and Innovation Centre in Bridgewater


Sizewell C workforce

3,600 civil construction workers
1,500 Management jobs
550 Support roles
3,300 Mechanical, electrical and heating specialists
900 operational roles when complete

Union learn agreement

A joint union learn agreement was proposed by unions to support the aspiration of the HPC project to leave a lasting skills legacy. It includes literacy, numeracy and ICT courses and will enable workers to acquire skills and improve their employability. In December last year the agreement was signed between HPC’s Tier 1 contracts and the joint unions – Unite the Union, the GMB and Prospect.

TIME TO LEVEL UP



As a former bricklayer who ‘got on his bike’ and went where the work was (including an eight month post-conflict stint in the Falkland Islands repairing the damaged infrastructure), I’m no stranger to massive building projects. Nearly 40 years on, now as mayor of the city region I love, we face a rebuilding job on a similarly massive scale.

This time we face a recovery, not from the visible damage done by a hail of bombs and bullets, but from an invisible deadly virus wreaking illness and death, and from its economic aftershocks.

Even before this virus hit, we faced the huge challenge of rebalancing our country, wrestling power from Westminster and Whitehall and handing it to people on a local level. Our country is among the most regionally imbalanced anywhere in the world, and we have seen that effect exacerbated by COVID-19 in the past few months.

Regions like mine, with higher levels of deprivation and underlying health conditions, have been disproportionately hit by this disease, with more infections and deaths than the national average.

The prime minister has recently announced his intentions to “build, build, build” to help stimulate the country’s recovery. As ever, with Mr Johnson, I am less interested in his words and more interested in his actions – as we await the signs of his promised ‘levelling up’. In reality, the proposals announced so far will simply rob local councils of important oversight on developments and will do little to help tackle the housing crisis.

As mayor, I have a duty on behalf of the 1.6 million people who live in my region to work constructively with government to get the best for us. We recently published *Building Back Better*, our plan for the economic recovery of the Liverpool City Region. Unlike build, build, build, this is more than just a slogan; it is the guiding principle for our recovery.

We do not want to go back to a system that neglects our people and our planet. Instead we are working to build a region that is fairer, greener and more progressive.

But we can’t do it by ourselves. There can be no national recovery

IN THE NORTH WEST



Getty Images

Steve Rotheram Mayor of the Liverpool City Region is determined to build back better

without proper growth and investment in the regions.

We are asking the government to invest £1.4 billion. With that funding, we will unlock nearly £9 billion worth of investment, create over 120,000 jobs (including 28,000 in construction) and establish us a world leader in a number of industries. Investment would allow us to take real action to tackle the housing crisis and the climate emergency, from repurposing brownfield land - to harnessing the power of the River Mersey for clean, plentiful, predictable energy.

Government has called for shovel-ready projects and we have more than answered that call. We put forward a number of innovative and transformative projects, including:

- Glass Futures; a revolutionary £54m project that aims to decarbonise the glass making and energy intensive industries.
- Bramley Moore; work to help remediate and preserve aspects of the Bramley Moore dock site to help enable the construction of Everton's 52,000-seater stadium

We cannot rely on a recovery built on steel and concrete alone. I want our recovery to manifest itself not only in the things that we physically build, but in the opportunities we create for people as well.

I do not want our young people to pay the price of this crisis as they have done in the past. That is why I am developing plans for a young person's guarantee: a guaranteed job, training or apprenticeship opportunity for under-25s within months of them becoming unemployed.

Too often we have seen people locked out of the world of work, not because of a lack of talent, but a lack of opportunity. If someone hadn't taken a chance on me as an apprentice bricklayer all those years ago, who knows where I might have ended up.

For that to work it is vital that we have good employers, who treat their staff well, to take-on our young people. Before this crisis I was working alongside local unions on a fair employment charter, to identify and promote employers who do exactly that.

That means paying a proper wage, clamping down on the use of zero hours contracts and recognising unions. For me, the past few months have reaffirmed the importance of trade unions. As we rebuild, they will only grow in importance.

We saw early on how unscrupulous employers sought to exploit their staff and force them into unsafe conditions. I have been in constant dialogue with unions throughout this crisis to help prevent that happening.

I'll be honest, though. I worry that the Tories' 'build, build, build' agenda

could be an attempt to diminish hard won workers' protections by the back door. What they see as red tape, we know to be invaluable health and safety procedures. I'm not prepared to accept that, and our fair employment charter will be a really useful tool in our armoury.

As a proud scouser I am, by nature, an optimist. In our city region of many accents, we often speak with one voice. We are a resilient and resourceful group, all of which will stand us in good stead as we begin our recovery. These past few months have been some of the toughest of my professional life, but I know that we will do everything in our power to get back on the up again. Piece by piece, brick by brick, we build back better, and grow again.



I agree with Steve Rotheram regarding the fair employment charter. Most engineering and construction workers, prefer to be employed under the terms and conditions of a collective industry agreement applicable to their trade skills.

Stephen Muirhead, electrician

By working alongside politicians and construction companies, Unite can help change the face of construction and elevate it to the level it truly deserves by promoting the apprenticeships, training and skills the new era demands.

Billy Parry, electrician



Staying in c recruitment si

A scheme has been launched by the government to ensure that construction workers at risk of losing their jobs as a result of Covid-19 can quickly find work with other firms.

The Construction Talent Retention Scheme is a partnership between industry and government to secure the skills needed to drive UK construction forwards.

It is supported by trade unions, business associations, contractors, professional institutions and many others.

Individuals who sign up will be able to showcase their experience and expertise and help businesses find the skills they need.

The website <https://www.trs-system.co.uk/construction> supports the redeployment of staff at risk of redundancy from across the sector and enables temporary employee loans between businesses.

It also gives workers from other industries a route to find new employment in construction.

It is free to use, with no hidden costs and gives you direct contact through your online profile and CV, to interested organisations, both regionally and nationally.

It is part of a dedicated programme responsible for facilitating the attraction, development and retention of people and skills across key UK industries.

You can sign up easily to job alerts, save your job search and application history and keep in touch with new opportunities.

A wide range of vacancies at all job levels are being posted on a daily basis across the UK.

How the Construction Talent Retention Scheme works for you

- Promoting you directly, through your online profile and CV, to interested organisations, both regionally and nationally
- Dedicated resourcing platform providing direct contact between companies and individuals
- Automated job alerts and saved searches to keep in touch with any new opportunities
- 24/7 presence providing local exposure to interested companies with visibility and access to their vacancies
- Simple, easy to use system with tracking and management of your applications and any expressions of interest you receive
- To sign up go to <https://www.trs-system.co.uk/construction>

The Talent Retention Scheme will help to ensure skilled workers can remain in the industry



Mark Thomas

Statistics

As of 25 September 2020 the Construction Talent Retention Scheme has:

- 688 registered employers in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland;
- 70 companies have live vacancies
- There are 513 live vacancies
- 85 per cent of live vacancies are in England, 7 per cent in Scotland, 4 per cent in Wales; 1 per cent in Northern Ireland and 3 per cent are international. Of those in England, 34 per cent are in London and the South East
- 800 individuals have registered
- 71 per cent of companies registered are SMEs; 16 per cent have over 1,000 employees; 48 per cent of all live vacancies are posted by SMEs

Construction: The launch

■ 53 per cent of companies registered are contractors; 16 per cent consultants; 5 per cent manufacturers; 4 per cent building merchants; and 4 per cent home builders.

What do you do next?

Sign up and register here https://www.trs-system.co.uk/registration?registration_source=construction

The portal will ask you for your name, contact details and ask you to set up a password.

It will then ask you to enter your current / last employer from the company list and the type of work you do. If you can't find your company, you can enter it in the new company field, or if you prefer you can leave this section blank.

You can then provide your personal profile. This information will help to match you up with jobs and to allow employers to find you. You will be asked questions including any qualifications you hold, and the preferred job titles you are looking for. You can also say where in the country you would like to work, whether you are looking for full or part time roles, and when you are available.

Finally, there is an opportunity to add a CV to the site, so that you can provide more detail of your career to date.

Having done all this and activated your profile, you will be able to search, and apply for, jobs through the TRS. You can also be approached directly by employers who might have opportunities that

match your skills. All roles on the site are advertised by the actual employers, with agencies blocked from using the Talent Retention Scheme.

Supporters

The Construction Talent Retention Scheme has the support of the government, unions, businesses, professional bodies and many others.

“The TRS can be a major force in retaining the talent and skills at all levels that the construction industry so desperately requires.”

Jerry Swain Unite national officer

“It's crucial to retain the talent and skills we have in construction, so government investment in the Talent Retention Scheme is very good news.”

Sarah Beale, Construction Industry Training Board

“People are our most important asset and we need to keep the skills built up over many years within the industry in order to secure construction's long term recovery.”

John Newcomb, Builders Merchants Federation

“The Talent Retention Scheme has the full backing and support of those working in the home improvement sector.”

Anna Scothern, National Home Improvement Council

“This is a great example of what we can achieve when we work collaboratively.”

Andy Mitchell, Construction Leadership Council (CLC)



Trades such as electricians will be covered by the Talent Retention Scheme

Getty Images

Help us make the TRS better

The Talent Retention Scheme was launched in the summer and has had new capabilities added to meet the needs of users. The team running the system are keen to hear from users about how to make the system work better for you. If you have any feedback on the system and how it can help you to find the right job, please let the TRS team know by contacting them at clcsupport@trs-system.co.uk

Construction workers need to keep their travel receipts to make a tax refund

TAX REFUND TIPS FOR GETTING BACK TO WORK

The COVID-19 pandemic has been hard on many parts of the UK economy. The UK's construction sector is the absolute cornerstone of the country's recovery, and with workers gradually getting back on site it's worth making sure you're keeping as much of your pay packet in your pocket as possible. If you're paying for work and travel expenses then you can claim a tax refund on those costs. All it takes to square things with HMRC are a few good habits and the right help. Here's a quick reminder of what you need to make the most of your refund:

Keep records of your journeys

HMRC's approved mileage allowance payment rates mean that every mile you travel for work earns you some tax relief. You need to record your journeys so your mileage refund can be calculated. For example if you have switched to using your own vehicle for work instead of getting picked up in a works van, you are car sharing or claiming the costs of using public transport, this is the key point to remember. Travel accounts for the biggest portion of most tax refund claims so it's worth being thorough about it.

There's more to travel refunds than distance, though

If your work trips are long enough that you end up staying somewhere overnight, keep track of accommodation and food costs while you're on the road. Those expenses can be valuable when you're claiming your refund.

Speaking of food, everything from your morning cuppa to the snacks and sandwiches that get you through the day can add to

your refund. Snap a photo of the menu board or hang onto your receipts to make sure you can get back what you are owed later.

Be equipped to make a full claim

When you're spending your own cash on the necessities of your job, good records can make all the difference. If you've had to replace, repair or even clean your essential tools, equipment or uniforms from your own pocket, you can get a tax refund for your costs. These costs are easily missed by non-specialists when making claims but costs quickly mount up and you don't want to miss out on what you're due.

Level up your skills and your refund

If you've been training up while you've been off site, you could be owed some extra cash back. Travel to your training could well count as essential work mileage if it's an important part of doing your job.

When you claim our refund with RIFT, your free MyRIFT app makes all this book-keeping simple. You can track your expenses as they crop up, and then track the progress of your refund claim. Getting back to work during a pandemic is tough enough without losing cash to HMRC as well. We're the UK's leading tax experts, so let RIFT take the load.

Call us on 01233 653974 or visit riffrefunds.co.uk/unite/ and find out more about member discounts

UNITE PROTECTING APPRENTICES IN THE PANDEMIC

Unite is here to support our apprentice members in these unprecedented times. Apprentices, their parents and guardians are reminded of the assistance, advice, guidance and representation available from our extensive network of workplace representatives and regional offices should an apprentice be experiencing difficulties or the threat of redundancy.

For young workers including apprentices, current UK Government figures make worrying reading:

- Young people are particularly affected by rising unemployment, with 16 to 24 year olds being the hardest hit. From April to June 2020, there were 156,000 fewer young people in employment compared to the previous three months.
- Under-25s were more likely to be furloughed than any other age group.
- In a recent YouGov poll that asked had the coronavirus pandemic impacted respondents' employment, seven per cent of 18-24 year olds said they had lost their job due to the pandemic.

In August, Unite undertook a survey of apprentice construction members, where respondents identified that the completion of their apprenticeship was their overwhelming number one priority. 61 per cent of those responding said that they were currently at work, 31 per cent were on furlough and eight per cent had been made redundant.

Measures are in place to protect apprenticeships and encourage employers to see apprentices through to successful completion of their training, and enable training providers and awarding organisations to ease the impact of the pandemic on learning including:

- Financial incentives for employers to bring back apprentices from furlough.
- The ability to arrange a “break in learning” and extension of apprenticeship duration, including being redeployed to a different job role during the break (if this happens seek guidance from your Unite regional office).
- Flexibilities around assessments and qualifications, including end point assessments, blended and e-learning, moderation policies, calculated results and adaptation of assessments.

Apprentices have additional rights in the workplace, regardless of their length of service. Significant precedents in case law have been established by Unite Legal Services for apprentice members who have been dismissed or made redundant without the correct procedures being followed.

There are obligations on both employers and training providers to avoid the need to make apprentices redundant, or lessen the effects of redundancy, including facilitating an agreed transfer to a suitable alternative

employer should a redundancy situation occur. Until such time as a transfer has been arranged, or it is demonstrated that all reasonable endeavours have been made, the original employer remains liable for all the obligations of the apprenticeship, including wages.

If you've been told that you'll be made redundant, speak to your training provider right away.

You should also speak to your Unite workplace representative, or contact your Unite regional office immediately: <https://unitetheunion.org/contact-us/>

Unite and industry bodies are lobbying for additional enhanced financial support for existing and displaced apprentices to complete their studies. Unite believes that no apprentice should be left behind due to the pandemic, and everyone should have the opportunity to complete their training and become fully qualified in their chosen occupation.

Remember that your union is here for you in these times of need.



Women and young workers have been most at risk of losing their jobs during the pandemic, but Unite will protect apprentices

This page is a counterpoint to the mainstream media and reviews important pieces of work for Unite members.

Television

The Plot Against America



Charles Lindbergh (centre) is the leading villain of the *The Plot Against America*

The Plot Against America is a TV miniseries

made by HBO and recently shown on Sky Atlantic. It is based on the **Philip Roth** book of the same name and is a classic example of alternative history making great and compelling television.

The central premise of the book is that in the 1940 United States presidential elections **Franklin Roosevelt** is defeated by **Charles Lindbergh**, the famous aviator and member of the isolationist America First organisation, anti-semitic and Nazi sympathiser.

Lindbergh keeps the United States out of the Second World War and begins a series of anti-semitic policies.

The story is told primarily through the eyes of a working class Jewish family who live in Newark, New Jersey and shows how they try to cope, adjust and fight back against the increasing restrictions being placed on their lives and the growing intolerance in society.

The fact that it is an ordinary family experiencing and facing this racism make it all the more disturbing and also brings home just how precarious our own democratic institutions and society are.

Would it be such a huge jump for many in our society to become active supporters of the extreme-Right as occurred in the 1930's? I don't think so and that is what makes *The Plot Against America*, so dark and so terrifying.

Barckley Sumner

Mrs America

Mrs America is a TV series set in the 1970's which tells of the ultimately unsuccessful struggle to get the Equal Rights Amendment ratified as part of the United States constitution.

The story features real characters from the battle for and against the amendment.

There is an incredibly strong cast of female characters but the lead is very much **Phyllis Schlafly** a conservative Republican who led the campaign against the ERA and is played brilliantly by **Cate Blanchett**.

Other notable cast members include **Rose Byrne** who plays the journalist and feminist **Gloria Steinem** and **Tracy Ullman** who plays the radical feminist and author of *The Feminist Mystique* **Betty Friedan**.

The series captures the look and the feel of the 1970s as well as highlighting the schisms of the decade between those demanding greater liberalism and the conservative backlash that followed expertly.

A particular strength of *Mrs America* are the characters who are all fully developed individuals, who all have their strengths, weaknesses and personality and moral defects just like the rest of us.

The series is also an excellent way to receive some political education about the struggle and opposition to equal rights and to learn about a little known or forgotten part of American political history.

Barckley Sumner



Cate Blanchett performs a tour de force as arch conservative Phyllis Schlafly

Your Recommendations

Unite members are encouraged to send ideas for future recommendations. We will cover film, television, DVDs and books. The only stipulation is a recommendation needs to be easily available. If you would like to write your own reviews please do but keep your contributions to 250 words. Send recommendations and reviews to barckley.sumner@unitetheunion.org

MEMBERSHIP FORM GB

Please use capitals

This address will be used for the purpose of ballots

Forename _____ Title _____
 Surname _____ Gender _____
 House No./Name _____
 Street _____
 City/Town _____
 Postcode _____ Date of Birth _____
 Home Tel _____ Mobile _____
 Email _____

About Your Job

Employer/Company Name _____
 Job Title _____
 Work Address _____
 Postcode _____ Work Tel. _____

Which membership do you require?
 Enhanced full time (more than 21 hours per week)
 Enhanced part time (up to 21 hours per week)
 Enhanced low pay
 Enhanced apprenticeship
 Year 1 Year 2 Year 3 Year 4
 Date apprenticeship started _____
 Driver Care (a separate Driver Care application form will be sent to you)
 Date apprenticeship due to end _____
 Basic full time (more than 21 hours per week)
 Basic part time (up to 21 hours per week)
 Basic low pay
 Other (eg Unemployed member of the community, under 18, full time student, retired members or permanently disabled members who are not in paid employment)
 Basic apprenticeship
 Year 1 Year 2 Year 3 Year 4
 Date apprenticeship started _____
 Date apprenticeship due to end _____

Authorisation of deduction of your trade union contribution from your pay (check-off)

Note: Not all employers operate check-off. I hereby authorise the deduction of Unite the Union subscriptions from my pay of such amounts as shall be notified to my employer on my behalf from time to time by Unite. I authorise my employer and Unite to share personal data necessary to operate check off and for my employer to inform Unite of any changes of address.

Are you paid? Weekly 2-weekly 4-weekly Monthly
 Payroll No. _____

I agree to abide by the union's rules. (Rule Book is available online)

NI No. _____ Signature _____ Date _____

For Office use only

Mem. No. _____ Employer Code _____ Workplace Code _____

Political Campaigning

Unite fights for our members' interests through political and industrial campaigning on issues affecting you – from pay, pensions, and broader workplace rights to housing, equality issues and our NHS.
If you would like to be part of this, opt-in to our political fund for just 10p per week. (tick here)

Those who choose not to opt-in will not be disadvantaged in any way compared with members who do opt-in, except in relation to control of the political fund.

I support Unite in campaigning on our policies and members' priorities in the Labour Party and I would like to be a Labour Party Affiliate Supporter* (this is free for political fund payers). I authorise Unite to share my personal data with the Labour Party for this purpose. (tick here)

* I agree to the terms listed at <https://support.labour.org.uk>

Equal Opportunities. The provision of this information is to ensure equality for all and is not a requirement

Unite campaigns for equality for all and to ensure that women, black Asian ethnic minorities, disabled members, lesbian gay bisexual trans - LGBT+ and migrant workers are fully represented within the union. To find out more go to www.unitetheunion.org/equalities. Confidentiality is protected. Please complete:

Please tick your ethnic origin: Black/Asian White Please tick if you are LGBT+
 Please tick if you are a disabled person: Please tick if you consider yourself to be a migrant worker

Direct Debit Details – Instructions to your Bank or Building Society to pay by Direct Debit



Service User Number **9 7 1 4 6 7**

Name of bank/building society _____
 Town of the Bank _____
 Sort Code _____
 Account Number _____
 Name(s) of Account Holder(s) _____
 On the selected day of the month: 7th 14th 21st 28th

Instruction to your Bank or Building Society

Please pay Unite the union Direct Debit monthly from the account detailed in this instruction subject to the safeguards assured by the Direct Debit Guarantee. I understand that this instruction may remain with Unite the union and, if so, details will be passed electronically to my Bank Building Society.

I authorise the payment above. I agree to abide by the union's rules. (Rule Book is available online)

When you join Unite, you are also authorising the Union to deduct an additional amount for your subscription to your local branch fund.

Signature _____ Date _____

Branch No. **L E / 1 1 1 7** Job Code _____ Recruitment Code _____

Don't miss out!

Get your *buildingWORKER* every quarter

buildingWORKER is the magazine for all Unite construction workers. In order to keep up to date with what is happening in your industry and your union you need to opt in to receive future editions.

Opting in to receive the *buildingWORKER* is quick and simple.

To receive *buildingWORKER* for free, four times a year. You just need to contact your regional office by email, phone or in writing.

Also by contacting the regional office you can update your address, notify a change of employer and request receiving free copies of *uniteWORKS* (Unite's award winning magazine) and *Landworker* (the magazine for rural workers).

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