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TUC press office: 020 7467 1248

TUC calls for emergency coronavirus taskforce with unions and business

- **Union body says joint approach is needed to minimise the impact on the economy and public health**

The TUC has today (Monday) called on the government to set up an emergency taskforce to deal with the coronavirus outbreak.

The TUC says ministers should urgently pull together unions, employers and government agencies to come up with a plan for minimising the economic and health impacts of the virus.

The union body says the taskforce's main priorities should be:

- **Designing an emergency support package** to prevent businesses from folding and workers losing jobs and pay
- **Ensuring public services are kept running** and public sector workers are protected from the virus
- **Fixing the UK's sick pay rules** so that every worker has financial support regardless of how much they earn

The TUC points to the recent example of the Carillion taskforce, established by the government, employers and unions in 2018 following the collapse of the outsourcing company.

TUC General Secretary **Frances O'Grady** said:

"We urgently need a national task force to deal with coronavirus. This requires a joint approach.

"Getting unions, employers and government agencies around the table will help contain the damage to the public health and our economy.

"Ministers must do all they can to protect public services, workers and businesses."

ENDS

Notes to editors:

- Currently, nearly 2 million of the lowest-paid workers don't earn enough to qualify for statutory sick pay. According to [TUC analysis](#) this includes:

- 34% of workers on zero-hours contracts
- 1 in 10 women in work
- More than a fifth (22%) of workers aged 16-24

- More than a quarter (26%) of workers aged 65 and over, identified by government as one of the groups most vulnerable to the virus

To address the issue the TUC is calling for government to introduce an emergency support package for workers affected by the virus, including:

- Emergency legislation to ensure Statutory Sick Pay coverage for all workers from the first day of sickness, regardless of how much they earn.
- An increase in the amount of sick pay to the equivalent of the National Living Wage
- A requirement that those asked by their employer to self-isolate on public health grounds remain on full pay.
- An emergency fund to assist employers with the cost and to cover workers not currently eligible for Statutory Sick Pay.

- The Trades Union Congress (TUC) exists to make the working world a better place for everyone. We bring together more than 5.5 million working people who make up our 48 member unions. We support unions to grow and thrive, and we stand up for everyone who works for a living.

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