

Preliminary STUC survey results reveals unparalleled level of fear and insecurity in and out of work during COVID 19 crisis.

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Preliminary STUC survey results reveals unparalleled level of fear and insecurity in and out of work during COVID 19 crisis. Survey predicts further massive growth in applications for Universal Credit as uncertainty has yet to feed through to numbers applying.

STUC releases early results following preliminary analysis of the first 1100 responses received to the survey (conducted between 27th March and 1st April 2020).

Over half of respondents required to work didn't feel safe with 42% saying they did not have access to adequate personal protective equipment (PPE).

Half of respondents were not sure they would have a job to return to, with this split evenly between those who were clear that their job was at risk (24%) and those that did not know (27%). In total nearly two thirds of respondents are worried about their own and their family's employment in the future.

Workers with more precarious forms of employment contract reported the highest levels of insecurity • Two thirds of zero hours contract workers saying they have stopped receiving any hours and most don't know what will happen to their pay, and have not been told what to do if they are off sick. • 70% of agency workers say there is not a clear policy on Covid 19 from their employer and 60% they are not being kept informed by their employer. • Most self-employed workers are depending on friends and family for support. None has had any support from an insurance company and 40% think their business will collapse if they are ill and can't work

The survey, conducted after the announcement of the Government's Pay Guarantee scheme and across the period of the announcement of the Self-Employment Pay Guarantee scheme, suggests that large numbers either will not be covered or do not yet know if they will be covered by the schemes.

The survey shows that despite these levels of uncertainty over three quarters of people have not yet contacted the DWP suggesting that the reported 1 million (95,000 pro-rata in Scotland) making fresh claims over the past fortnight was likely to surge higher.

Rozanne Foyer, STUC General Secretary Designate Rozanne Foyer said:

“The initial findings of just one part of our survey reveals a dangerous storm out there with a combination of safety fears for those who are going to their work alongside massive anxiety from those who are not about losing their job.

“As things stand, we are predicting a further surge in applications for Universal Credit which will strain a system desperately in need of additional resources. Let us be in no doubt, workers in the DWP are at the front-line of a life-line service.

“The most effective way of limiting the numbers of those resorting to Universal Credit this will be to ensure that every employer is pushed to use Job Retention Guarantee scheme to its fullest and to provide clarity and support for the self-employed.

“Our survey also confirms the lack of resilience in a labour market with such a high proportion of insecure work. Even where employers are technically able to use the Job Retention Guarantee scheme, it seems that some are not yet planning to do so for zero hours and agency workers. That is why it is so important that workers join a union now and contact the STUC for support.”