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Appendix

Survey about the impact of COVID-19 on the work of trade unions

Questions and summary of answers (all questions were non-compulsory)

Total number of respondents: 146

Responses received between 8/10/20 - 3/12/20

About you

Which union do you work for?	
<i>129 answers provided</i>	Respondents listed 32 unions

Are you in the same role now as you were in March 2020?	
<i>145 answers provided</i>	
Yes	134
No	11

If you are in a new role, what was the reason for your change of role?	
<i>16 free text answers provided</i>	
Main themes:	No predominant themes. Answers included: Internal promotion; Seeking career change; Planned role change from pre-COVID

Your work since March 2020

Thinking about the period since March 2020, which of these statements best describes your individual circumstances?	
<i>145 answers provided</i>	
I have worked throughout this period on my normal hours	126
I have worked throughout this period on reduced hours	2
I have been furloughed/part-furloughed	5
I have had time off due to illness	4
Other	8

Since March 2020, where has been your main place of work?	
<i>144 answers provided</i>	
I have worked from home only	81
I have worked from home and from a workplace	57
I continued to work in my usual place of work	5
Other	1

Since March, in an average week, would you say you have worked...	
<i>146 answers provided</i>	
More hours than usual	80
Less hours than usual	4
Same hours as usual	60
Not sure	1
Other	1

The focus of your job

Which of the following statements best describes your work in the period since March:	
<i>145 answers provided</i>	
The focus of my work has significantly changed	42
The focus of my work has slightly changed	73
The focus of my work has not changed	26
Don't know	0
Other	4

If the focus of your work has changed, could you describe what has changed?	
<i>112 free text answers provided</i>	
Main themes:	Providing COVID-19 related support to members (workplace safety; providing advice, renegotiating agreements; redundancies); More reactive work and less long-term focus; More internal meetings, more online meetings; Providing support to colleagues.

How you do your job

Has the pandemic changed how you do your work?	
<i>145 answers provided</i>	
Yes - there have been significant changes	103
Yes - there has been slight changes	39
The ways in which I do my work have stayed the same	2
Don't know	0
Other	1

If you have answered yes, could you describe the main changes to how you do your job?	
<i>135 free text answers provided</i>	
Main themes:	Working from home; Remote working from colleagues; Online meetings; More emails; Much less/no travel; Much less/no face-to-face interactions; More meetings; Representing and interacting with members online.

Membership and the pandemic

Since March, are you aware of any changes to the level of membership in your union?	
<i>145 answers provided</i>	
Membership has increased significantly	45
Membership has increased slightly	45
No change in membership	13
Membership has decreased slightly	26
Membership has decreased significantly	4
It varies by sector	5
Don't know	3
Other	4

In this period, are you aware of any changes in how members have joined and been recruited to the union?	
<i>97 free text answers provided</i>	
Main themes:	Significant increase in members joining online; Significantly less / no face-to-face recruitment in workplaces; Members joining due to new COVID-related issues (threats to jobs, seeking advice); Members joining due to union activities/campaigns related to COVID.

Is there any other information you would like to share about membership and recruitment since March 2020?	
<i>56 free text answers provided</i>	
Main themes:	Membership has increased; High turnover of members in some areas; More focus on retention; Recruitment has become harder.

Supporting, representing and engaging with members and reps

Members seeking advice: Since March, have there been any changes in the issues that members have contacted the union about to seek advice on?	
<i>129 free text answers provided</i>	
Main themes:	Issues relating to COVID-19; Health and safety / safe working practices; Redundancies / restructuring; Remote working / new working arrangements; Furlough; Support for self-employed members.

Union democracy: what has been the impact of COVID-19 on the union's democratic processes?	
<i>126 free text answers provided</i>	
Main themes:	Meetings held online; No face-to-face meetings; Delayed or cancelled events, meetings and conferences; Increased member participation.

Supporting reps: Since March, how have workplace reps been supported?	
<i>107 free text answers provided</i>	
Main themes:	Online meetings, training and webinars; More frequent contact with reps (phonecalls, emails, WhatsApp groups).

Negotiations with employers: What has been the impact of COVID-19 on negotiations with employers since March?	
<i>103 free text answers provided</i>	
Main themes:	Negotiations taking place online via video conference platforms; Harder and slower; COVID-related focus to negotiations, with new issues being discussed (remote working, pay cuts, job losses, health and safety, furlough); Existing negotiations paused.

Representing members: how have processes of representation taken place since March?	
<i>113 free text answers provided</i>	
Main themes:	Meetings held online; No / greatly reduced face-to-face meetings; Many were paused/deferred when lockdown started.

Learning lessons for the future

Overall, thinking about the period since March 2020, how much change do you think has taken place within the union you work for?

<i>144 answers provided</i>	
1 - no change	0
2	1
3	4
4	7
5	8
6	10
7	37
8	48
9	19
10 - significant change	10

What do you think are the biggest challenges the union has faced so far because of the pandemic?

<i>133 free text answers provided</i>	
Main themes:	Adapting to new ways of working (working from home; online meetings; isolation from colleagues; Greater volume of work/demand for services; Supporting members with new COVID-related challenges (redundancy, furlough, new advice); Greater member engagement; Recruiting members; Constantly changing situation regarding COVID.

Looking back on your work in the period since March 2020, is there anything you have done anything differently if you could have?

<i>98 free text answers provided</i>	
Main themes:	No; Worked fewer hours/taken more breaks/taken more leave; Moved to online working earlier; Invested earlier in better IT hardware/digital tools; Focused more on mental health.

As a result of the pandemic, are there any examples of good practice or innovation in your union that you think other unions could learn from?

<i>98 free text answers provided</i>	
Main themes:	Training courses developed during pandemic; Use of webinars; Good remote working practices and policies; Good internal and external communications; Pastoral support for staff; Good use of technologies, especially video conferencing platforms.

Looking forward

Thinking about membership, activism, engagement and collective bargaining outcomes, which of these statements best describes the union	
<i>142 answers provided</i>	
The union is stronger in all of these areas than before the pandemic	26
The union is stronger in some areas than before the pandemic	73
The union's strength in these areas is the same as at the start of the pandemic	17
The union is less strong in some areas than before the pandemic	11
The union is less strong in all of these than before the pandemic	1
Don't know	14

Thinking about your last answer to the last question, could you explain why you think that?	
<i>107 free text answers provided</i>	
Main themes:	Increased engagement with members; Greater awareness from members and officials about relevance and value of union; Increased membership; Developed new ways working; Increased activism; Better communication with members.

Looking forward, has the pandemic changed what you think the union should now be campaigning and negotiating on?	
<i>100 free text answers provided</i>	
Main themes:	Health and safety; Flexible working; Longer-term/strategic issues; No (maintain focus on existing priorities); Pay; Issues relating to self-employed workers; Racism/Black Lives Matter; Mental health.

Interviewees

Interviewee	Type of union	Role	Date of interview
Interviewee 1	Single-profession union	Senior national official	29/10/20
Interviewee 2	Union federation	Senior national official	06/11/20
Interviewee 3	Single-profession union	Senior national official	06/11/20
Interviewee 4	Single-profession union	National official	09/11/20
Interviewee 5	Single-profession union	Senior national official	10/11/20
Interviewee 6	Single-profession union	Senior national official	10/11/20
Interviewee 7	General, multi-sector union	National official	12/11/20
Interviewee 8	General, multi-sector union	Senior national official	13/11/20
Interviewee 9	General, multi-sector union	Senior national official	13/11/20
Interviewee 10	Single-sector union	National official	17/11/20
Interviewee 11	Single-profession union	Senior national official	18/11/20
Interviewee 12	Single-profession union	Senior national official	18/11/20
Interviewee 13	Single-sector union	Senior national official	20/11/20
Interviewee 14	General, multi-sector union	Senior national official	23/11/20
Interviewee 15	Single-profession union	Regional official	23/11/20
Interviewee 16	Union federation	Senior national official	24/11/20
Interviewee 17	Single-sector union	Senior national official	24/11/20
Interviewee 18	Single-sector union	National official	24/11/20
Interviewee 19	General, multi-sector union	Senior national official	24/11/20
Interviewee 20	General, multi-sector union	Senior national official	25/11/20
Interviewee 21	Single-profession union	Regional official	25/11/20
Interviewee 22	Single-sector union	Senior national official	26/11/20
Interviewee 23	Single-profession union	Senior national official	27/11/20
Interviewee 24	General, multi-sector union	Regional official	27/11/20
Interviewee 25	Union federation	Local official	30/11/20
Interviewee 26	Union federation	National official	30/11/20
Interviewee 27	Single-profession union	Senior national official	03/12/20