



PROTECTING YOU THROUGH THE PANDEMIC

YOU HAVE toiled through the coronavirus pandemic and lockdowns, keeping Britain and Ireland moving. And our union, has fought extremely hard for better rights and protections for you all the way through, with some significant successes.

In **Network Rail (NR)**, we were instrumental in changing the position on where and when staff can have the track and trace app turned on when in the workplace, ensuring greater safety and better reporting. Our work on 'covid secure' workplaces challenged complacency around washing hands, wearing face coverings, and social distancing. We got NR to change the term from 'covid secure' to 'covid controlled', helping to maintain vigilance in the control measures to combat spread of the virus.

A significant win in NR at the beginning of the first lockdown was when our reps and paid Organisers secured an agreement that all clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV) staff could shield at home on full pay - as could those with CEV householders.

In **Transport for London (TfL)** our reps secured company investment in information technology for those of you working from home. Many non-operational roles found themselves using personal laptops and balancing equipment on knees, but following well-argued representations from our reps, TfL rolled out company laptops and other equipment.

Thanks to paid Organisers, our reps and our campaigning, the use of facemasks for customer-facing staff was rolled out earlier than government guidance in many operators. **Eurostar** was a notable early adopter of facemasks and other protective equipment for station and on-board staff.

And we argued for and secured an opt-out from in cab training and assessment carried out by **Driver Managers** which was adopted by all train operators

after the union's work on social distancing measures.

Our 'Remote Respect' campaign successfully sought to leverage the benefits of homeworking to enable greater flexibility for you in the future. Over 1,700 of you responded to our NR survey and enabled our union to make the case that agile working should be the norm and not the exception, with the company adopting almost all of the recommendations made by our reps.

But it was through discussion and decisions at the highest levels of our British rail industry and government that our union has secured some of the most significant wins for you. "When lockdown was on the cards, we immediately called for transport workers to be designated as key workers and receive appropriate support and protections – and we were successful" explains TSSA General Secretary Manuel Cortes.

Our union has a seat on the **Rail Industry Coronavirus Forum (RICF)**, established early in the pandemic. Through this forum we have secured the agreement of all rail employers in Britain that Covid-related absences do not count towards 'managing for attendance' monitoring. We also secured recognition of the increased risks of Covid-19 being experienced by Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic members (as well as all employees with increased vulnerabilities and underlying health conditions) and agreed a set of principles for these groups.

Through RICF, we pushed for more and better protective equipment, industry-wide standards on social distancing, demanded that our TSSA reps are involved in risk assessments, and much more.

As we embrace the vaccine rollout and grapple with new variants of the virus, our union will stay one step ahead and keeping fighting for the highest safety measures for you at work, wherever you work. If one of your colleagues is not yet part of our TSSA family, please get them to join online today: tssa.org.uk/join

How do I work safely during the Covid-19 Pandemic?

Remember these may change as lockdowns are eased:

- Follow Government rules about face covering, hand washing and social distancing.
- Stay at home if you can.
- If you have to go out to work, your employer should have carried out a Covid-19 risk assessment of your workplace and the work you will be doing. Measures should be in place to eliminate, control, or reduce the risk.
- At all times, abide by Covid-19 control measures where you work. Any complacency can allow the virus to spread, even if you or colleagues have had a vaccination.
- Raise any issues of concern about working arrangements with your TSSA rep. If in doubt, call our free legal helpline on: 0800 328 2673 (UK) or 1800 805272 (RoI).

More information and guidance documents related to Coronavirus are available on the legal section of our website: www.tssa.org.uk/en/help-legal-advice/coronavirus/index.cfm

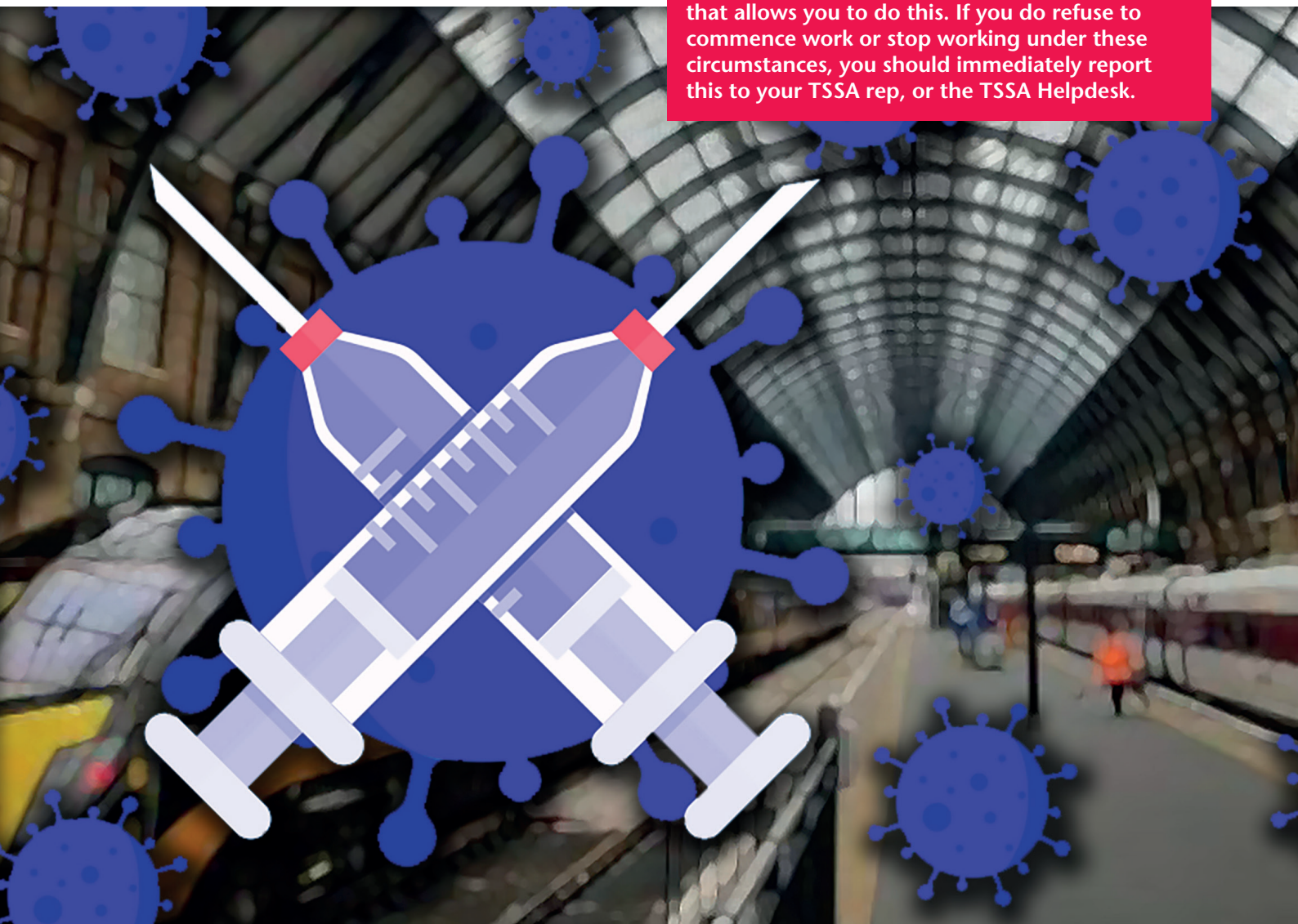
FACT BOX

Following lockdown #1 in March 2020, passenger numbers hit the lowest levels since Victorian times. The Office of Rail and Road (ORR) estimated that just 35 million journeys were taken between April and June 2020, a fall of 400m on the previous year's Q1 figures. A year and two more lockdowns later, and travel and commuting habits may have changed permanently.

FACT BOX

RIGHT TO REFUSE

You have the legal right to refuse to begin a task or continue with a task if you believe that to do so would place you or your colleagues in serious and imminent danger of potential infection by the Covid-19 virus. The general right originates from Section 44 of the Employment Rights Act 1996. You must follow your employer's procedure that allows you to do this. If you do refuse to commence work or stop working under these circumstances, you should immediately report this to your TSSA rep, or the TSSA Helpdesk.



NEW LGBT+ ROLE MODEL POSTERS



For LGBT+ History Month we launched the first of three new TSSA LGBT+ role model posters, featuring Dave who works for train operator Southeastern and challenges the stereotypes of “a gay man”.

Dave said: “I hope that when people see my poster they will be reminded how important it is to challenge stereotypes and progress equality for everyone.

I would be happy if it creates conversations about LGBT+ inclusion or enables someone to be out in their workplace.”

The posters feature a ‘Proud’ side about TSSA members’ connection to the union as an LGBT+ person, and a ‘Challenge’ side to challenge stereotypes about LGBT+ people.

**FIND OUT MORE ABOUT OUR INCLUSIVE RAIL CAMPAIGN AT:
www.tssa.org.uk/en/Equalities/-LGBT/inclusiverail/index.cfm**

EUROSTAR SUPPORT VITAL

TSSA has called on the Government to “pull out all the stops” to safeguard Eurostar’s future after Boris Johnson outlined the lifting of Covid restrictions which could permit international travel by the summer.

The call follows a meeting with Treasury officials last month aimed at preventing the collapse of the channel tunnel train operator which has just two services a day as a result of the pandemic restrictions.

“The focus now must be on recovery and we will do everything we can to ensure that Eurostar has a bright future”, said TSSA General Secretary Manuel Cortes.

“Ministers must pull out all the stops and work with us in this urgent task to safeguard Britain’s green gateway

to Europe. I know the company, and all our brilliant members, are ready to get back to a normal service as soon as it is safe to do so. The Treasury should make every effort to ensure that happens. No ifs, no buts.”



#SaveTravel



SAVE TRAVEL CAMPAIGN

Covid-19 has posed an existential threat to the travel trade, and especially to high street travel agencies. In March last year holiday bookings dried up overnight, and, unlike many businesses, travel agencies had to pay out refunds for cancelled holidays.

Throughout all this TSSA has been there for our members in Tui, Hays, Barrhead Travel and many more.

- We led calls on the government for a bespoke support package, including an extended furlough period.
- We called for a Travel Trade Minister to take responsibility for the sector.
- We supported the Travel Trade Gazette's #SaveTravel campaign petition which gained more than 12,000 signatures in a matter of weeks.
- TSSA member Baroness Katy Clark moved a debate in the House of Lords on the future of High Street Travel.

Despite our calls, the government has continued to ignore the crisis in the travel trade and there has been no sector-specific support package. A surge in holiday bookings is expected as we climb out of this crisis, but that is still a long way off and we cannot afford to leave things to chance. TSSA will continue to campaign to save jobs in the travel trade.

Recruit a colleague

With uncertainty ahead for our industry, there's never been a better time to be a TSSA member. From free legal advice, to training events and workplaces representation, we are here for you. Please ask your colleagues to join and strengthen our collective voice for you.

Online: tssa.org.uk/join

Phone: 0800 328 2673 (UK) 1800 805272 (RoI)

Email: membership@tssa.org.uk

BELLY MUJINGA ANNIVERSARY

On 5 April it will be one year since our member Belly Mujinga died from coronavirus – one of the first transport workers to die from the virus.

Belly worked at Victoria Station for Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR). Her death touched the nation and hugely raised awareness of the risks faced by frontline workers. TSSA has written to the coroner asking for an inquest into Belly's death so that her family, including her young daughter, can receive answers to outstanding questions and grieve in peace.



HELP US KEEP YOU INFORMED!

During the pandemic we've cut down our paper correspondence with you. This saves the union money and helps us lower our carbon footprint, as well as allowing our staff to work safely.

We are keeping in touch chiefly via email and we want to reach as many members as possible. So please, take five minutes today to make sure we have your email address – and why not give us your mobile phone number too? Please use your membership number to help us quickly identify you.

Call us: **0800 328 2673 (UK) 1800 805272 (RoI)**

Email us: **membership@tssa.org.uk**

Log in via My TSSA: **www.tssa.org.uk/en/members-area/member-login.cfm**

PLUS! You can follow us on social media:

Facebook  search TSSA union

Twitter  search TSSA union

Instagram  search TSSA union

LinkedIn  search Transport Salaried Staffs Association