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1. Editorial – ‘A stronger, fairer, greener country’

‘We can emerge from this crisis a stronger, fairer, greener country’, says the **#BuildBackBetter** campaign. Ministers are preparing to unveil an economic stimulus package in early July, in an attempt to stave off what is expected to be the biggest recession in living memory following the coronavirus crisis. But the TUC says government must learn the lessons of the coronavirus crisis. It wants *A Better Recovery* programme, combining ‘making work fairer’ with a massive new investment in public services and low carbon projects. A second TUC report, *Cutting Carbon, Growing Skills*, says ‘working people must be equipped with the new skills and training for the better economy.’

The government’s independent climate crisis advisers also say: ‘The actions needed to tackle climate change are central to rebuilding our economy. The Government must prioritise actions that reduce climate risks and avoid measures that lock-in higher emissions,’ says the Committee on Climate Change.



There’s wide consensus on what needs to be done:

- Support reskilling, retraining and research.
- Scale up housing retrofits.
- Build new homes fit for the future.
- Invest in low-carbon, resilient infrastructure – such as broadband instead of new roads.
- Make it easy for people to work from home, walk and cycle.
- Build low carbon energy systems.

At the *Green Alliance* thinktank, Chris Venables says the pandemic is ‘changing the public’s understanding of what is possible in terms of combating climate change, and changing people’s expectations of the government’s role in improving society.’ More than 200 UK firms and investors are calling on the government to deliver a Covid-19 recovery plan as a springboard to propel a green economy.

One thing is for sure. We cannot allow the government, the ruling elite, to think for one moment that pushing back to business as usual is an option.

Sources:

Committee on Climate Change: <https://bit.ly/3cphqzb>

Chancellor’s stimulus package: <https://on.ft.com/2U8D9Fv>

Firms call for green recovery: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-52851185>

2 . Unions are back, but the state is back, too

With renewed confidence and strength of purpose, the TUC launched a report on 20 May calling for 'a greener and fairer economy' because 'there can be no return to business as usual after the crisis.'

A Better Recovery: learning the lessons of the corona crisis <https://www.tuc.org.uk/ABetterRecovery> combines three key demands: 'make work fairer', reinvest in public services, and invest for a just transition to net zero carbon.

Declaring that 'Unions are back, but the state is back, too,' TUC General Secretary Frances O'Grady called for a *recovery programme of measures that deliver benefits both in terms of reducing carbon and increasing jobs, overseen by a new Just Transition commission*. Unions, businesses and others must come together, she argues. Since the crisis struck, the TUC has engaged with government on health, safety and work issues to an extent unimaginable at the beginning of the year.

Launching the report, O'Grady said 'there's a panic on the hard right' over the ideas of a far stronger role for the state, 'but the welfare safety net had to be restrung, and our public services rebuilt...We don't want to the government to reach for the Golden Oldie of austerity and deregulation.' Instead, we need an intelligent industrial strategy, building UK supply chains, and a new business models based on fairer employment relationships.



Frances O'Grady, TUC conference 2019

The TUC clearly sees renewal of our industrial and manufacturing capacity as the key to tackling the climate crisis. The UK has a poor record of delivering green infrastructure and green supply chains. Millions of good paying jobs were lost offshore, with the hollowing out of the UK's manufacturing base in the 1980s. This hollowing out has been exposed in the inability of the UK to source the Personal Protective Equipment needed.

The plan for a recovery must:

- chart a path towards a net zero economy, to deliver a just transition for workers across the economy
- rebuild the UK's industrial capacity, necessary to deliver this transition, including investing in the skills of the workforce
- tackle the UK's regional inequalities that rest on the failed de-industrialisation policies of the past.

The UK could, for example, become a world leader in:

- the development of electric cars: Nissan builds the Leaf at its Sunderland plant.
- the production of low-carbon steel, and the specialist steel that is needed for a new generation of electric car charging points. But Unite has found that the government's own 'Steel Procurement Pipeline,' shows that of the £158m of steel product procured by the public sector less than 43 per cent – or £68m – was actually produced in the UK. Similar questions must be asked of industries such as aerospace, steel and construction.

But too often the new 'green jobs' that are being delivered aren't of good quality: the offshore wind sector in general has four times more accidents per hour worked than the offshore oil and gas industry.

And the government must tackle the massive under-investment in workforce skills. It has left a legacy of poor productivity and increasingly entrenched barriers for people wanting to improve their job prospects. Government spending on adult education and skills halved between 2009–10 and 2018–19. Employer-led training has declined by around 60% since the end of the 1990s.

The TUC's action plan:

1. Set out a recovery programme of measures that deliver benefits both in terms of reducing carbon and increasing jobs, overseen by a new Just Transition commission. Good candidates for this package would include delivering net-zero buildings, energy storage, clean industry, investments in clean transport and greenhouse gas removal mechanisms – including carbon capture and storage.
2. Work with trade unions to ensure that every investment programme comes with an Olympics style plan for decent jobs attached.
3. Support workers to get into new jobs, with a new jobs guarantee, an individual right to retrain, supported by a funded individual learning account, and a new drive for quality apprenticeships.
4. Build UK manufacturing supply chains, by increasing the requirement for UK content in any investment programme. When government invests in new infrastructure, it should ensure that this investment is used to build local supply chains. The government's sector deal for offshore wind

currently requires 60% UK content for construction and maintenance. This is a good start, but the government should require a raising of that target to 80%.

5. Put a Just Transition at the heart of COP26. The UK government will be hosting the delayed global climate talks in 2021. It should use this opportunity to gather best practice, and showcase how best to deliver a just transition to a low carbon economy in the UK and globally.
6. Ensure that trade deals don't undermine UK manufacturing.

The urgency of tackling climate change

The TUC warmly welcomes the government's commitment to move to a net-zero economy by 2050. This commitment is in line with advice from the independent Committee on Climate Change in its report, 'Net Zero: the UK's contribution to stopping global warming' (May 2019).

The move towards a greener economy could deliver good new jobs, and a just transition for those who currently work in carbon intensive industries.

But at present, the UK is failing to achieve these benefits. Jobs growth in the low carbon economy has stalled, with 11,100 fewer 'green jobs' in 2018 (now standing at 220,000 jobs) than four years ago.

FIRMS that avoid paying taxes by storing their wealth in offshore tax havens will not receive handouts from the Scottish government to help them get through the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Scottish Greens tabled an amendment to the Coronavirus Scotland No 2 Bill to legislate for the exemption, which was supported by the government and voted through as the Star went to press last night.

Scottish Greens co-leader Patrick Harvie said: "Any company which avoids its responsibility to contribute to society should not be getting handouts when things go wrong. That's why many European nations and Wales have already made this commitment."



Scotland bans Covid support for businesses that use tax havens <https://bit.ly/36NVkFz>

3. Cutting carbon growing skills

Over 200 people joined the TUC's webinar launching the new report, **Cutting Carbon, Growing Skills** (29 May). Graham Petersen, one of the authors of the report, stressed that, 'this is the moment when unions need to seize the initiative and ensure that workforce skills are placed at the heart of a green economic recovery.'



TUC webinar: Clockwise: Tim Page, Anna Kalsi (Unionlearn), Graham Petersen, Sarah Woolley

Developing green skills at work has the potential to offer a wide range of exciting opportunities to workers across the UK. This new guide from the TUC's Unionlearn operation shows how the trade union movement will be leading the way in supporting the fight against climate change, helping workers build the skills that will be part of the solution.

The guide equips union reps with the essentials to engage their members and consult employers on greening their workplace.

It includes:

- What is a just transition and why is a trade union issue?
- How are new green jobs and skills vital to the economy?
- What are Green Reps and how can they play a part?
- What training is available from unions.



This new publication is a vital resource for the Covid recovery period over the coming years.

Points from the webinar...

- For the TUC, Tim Page: *'Green reps are vital part of the transition to a zero carbon economy. Some jobs will go, but people must find the skills and jobs in the newly growing parts of the economy, through a just transition.'*
- Graham Petersen: *'To be most effective, green reps need facility time to consult with members, assess their workplace and negotiate with management.'*
- Joining the webinar chat line, Jim Mowatt of Unite: *'We favour green reps being accredited health and safety reps to benefit from employment rights and recognition. But this doesn't mean every safety rep wants to be a green rep.'*
- Sarah Woolley, BFAWU General Secretary: *'The way to bring people into the movement is to stand by them, listen to their concerns, show we are on their side.'*

<https://bit.ly/2MhLPoL>

Resources: Unionlearn has also refreshed its green skills website:

<https://www.unionlearn.org.uk/green-skills-work>

A passion for learning

Sarah Woolley joined the Bakers' Union when she started working for Bakers Oven as a weekend assistant. In October 2019, Sarah was elected General Secretary of the Bakers' Food and Allied Workers Union (BFAWU). Union learning has been an important part of Sarah's journey. *'Greggs took us over and it was just after that I became a shop steward. That's when I attended my first trade union course – Shop Stewards stage 1 and my passion for education was re-ignited.'*



<https://bit.ly/2Y3aDGz>

4. GJA Briefing: No return to 'business as usual'

Public investment and support for businesses must focus on delivering vital climate change outcomes. 'Green strings' need to be attached to 'rescue and recovery packages', the new GJA Briefing says, with firms required to set out plans to cut carbon emissions, support decent working conditions and a just transition.

<https://bit.ly/2XqXqlh>

5. Build Back Better

'We can emerge from this crisis a stronger, fairer, greener country,' supporters of the #BuildBackBetter coalition will argue in a sign-on letter to all MPs, planned for mid-June. We must 'learn the lessons of the pandemic. Not just that the NHS and social care were dangerously under-resourced. Deep inequalities our society have been revealed. Our key workers - many of them women, and many not born in this country - are among the least valued and lowest-paid.'

#BuildBackBetter is creating a collaborative campaign to ensure that the response to this crisis meets the needs of people and communities, invests properly in public and health services, and rebuilds our economy to be resilient against future shocks. This includes properly valuing workers, prioritising people over big business and rapidly decarbonising the economy.

The Build Back Better campaign will target decision makers over the crucial coming months, to prevent them from replaying the austerity response of the past. 'We will engage with people from all over the UK in online and, when we can, public actions,' BBB says.



#BBB website: <https://www.buildbackbetteruk.org/> for info on activities, webinars etc.

Sign your group to the open letter from civil society (by 10th June). <https://bit.ly/302VWFL>

Key dates:

- 24th June for the ITUC's global day of action on the climate crisis <https://bit.ly/3cwy2oK>
- 5th July: NHS 70th birthday.

6. Covid-19: Return to work, new Hazards guidance

Hazards guide to *Risk assessments* at work because of Covid-19 is essential reading, not just for union reps but for any worker going back in after the lockdown.



It includes a return to work risk assessment Checklist to prevent covid-19 spreading. It covers:

- Access to your workplace
- Cleaning
- Maintaining social distances
- A safe work area
- Safe travel
- Dealing with emergencies
- Vulnerable workers: factors to take into account concerning Black, Asian and minority ethnic staff, age and disability.

In drawing up a risk assessment, Hazards says:

Start from a position of reducing the risk by home working, online meetings instead of face to face, and flexible working. Keep people away from potential infection wherever possible.

We cannot determine the length of time it will be necessary to take additional precautions, there is no known vaccination and clearly until then, the aim is to reduce the spread of the disease. Any controls may have to be in place for months/years, so must be robust. All workers should have testing available to them, to determine whether they are a risk to others if they have been in contact with someone with the disease.

There needs to be policies and procedures for workers self-isolating, protecting vulnerable family members, or taking sick leave or carers leave without any absence penalties. Also, all workers must be made aware of their legal rights to refuse work they feel exposes them to danger.

It's a fast moving situation so keep up to date by following: Hazards Campaign on Twitter:

@hazardscampaign@CentreGreater@hazardsmagazine

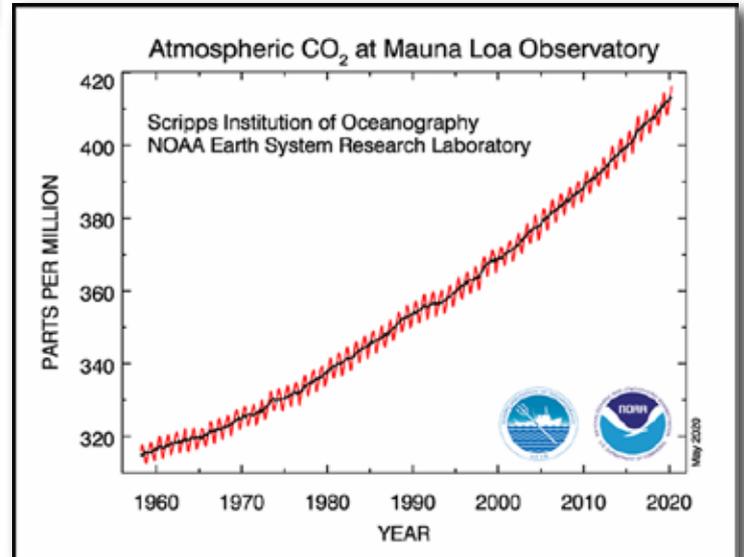
Hazards campaign

How do we approach reviewing the Risk Assessments in the Workplace because of Covid-19?

<https://bit.ly/2Y344DV>

7. CO2 at record highs despite lockdown

Global carbon dioxide levels have hit a record high despite reports of localised improvements in air quality due to the coronavirus lockdown. Monthly average CO2 concentrations, recorded at the Mauna Loa Observatory in Hawaii, were 416.21 parts per million (ppm) this year compared to 413.33ppm in April 2019. It's the highest concentration since records began in 1958.



The coronavirus pandemic could lead to a temporary drop in global emissions. But without the kind of green recovery plans we report here, any gains will be short-lived. Greenhouse gas emissions dipped in the wake of the 2008 global financial crisis. But they rebounded by over 5% during recovery - as investors went back to the bad old ways of backing polluting industries.

A United Nations report says global emissions must fall by nearly 8% a year to achieve the 1.5C temperature goal set out by the Paris Climate Accords.

<https://bit.ly/2XjNdxo>

8. Barclays' hands are tarred

Barclays is now using Just Transition arguments to justify its continuing tar sands investment. ShareAction, which campaigns for responsible investment, rejects Barclays' claims that investment in tar sands *'takes into consideration the just transition for the workforce and communities dependent on the oil sands industry in Canada.'*

In a review of the bank's 2020 energy policy and *'net zero'* ambitions, the campaign argues that the principle of a Just Transition should not be used to support inaction. For a transition to be just, change needs to be planned for in the first place. Barclays' new tar sands policy is far from being Paris aligned. It is not based on science or a Paris aligned pathway or scenario. *'We strongly encourage Barclays to reconsider this policy given its ambition to be a net zero bank by 2050,'* the organisation says.

<https://bit.ly/2zFY1Nq>

9. ITUC Day of Action

Momentum on climate action must continue despite delay to COP26 climate talks

Global Day of Action, 24 June, to Climate and Employment Proof our Work (#CEPOW) will put focus on recovery and resilience plans

The postponement of COP26 to November 2021 with the UK Government acting as host and President must not derail action on climate over the next eighteen months, warned the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC).

Governments have less than one year to update their climate plans (NDCs), ten years to cut carbon dioxide emissions by at least 45 per cent and just thirty years to reach net zero by 2050.

The ITUC's second annual Global Day of Action to Climate and Employment Proof our Work

(#CEPOW) on 24 June will put the spotlight on businesses to plan for a sustainable recovery.

"Momentum has to continue despite the delay to the climate talks. These are difficult times for many workers – Covid-19 is disrupting lives and livelihoods. We're in a race against time to control the pandemic, and we're in a race against time to respond to climate change.

"Before the pandemic spread from continent to continent, we faced a convergence of crises and the climate emergency is, and will remain, an imperative for action to save human beings from extinction," said Sharan Burrow, ITUC General Secretary.

The promise of global leaders in 2015 with the Paris Climate Agreement and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a road map for recovery and resilience. These global agreements hold an implicit recognition of the fractures that are increasingly leaving people behind and putting democracy, rights, equality and sustainability at risk.

"We know the world cannot go back to business as usual – recovery plans must ensure a socially just future, along with plans to [Climate and Employment Proof our Work](#).

"Covid-19 has put jobs and employment front and centre for recovery plans, and job security is a serious concern for people. That's why we need to have the conversation about climate and employment. On 24 June, take part in the biggest global conversation about our future.

"We must ensure that governments, companies and organisations put Just Transition at the centre of new plans for ambitious climate action. These plans should be coordinated with the urgent economic stimulus plans and workplace measures needed to protect the health and the income of workers and their families to stabilise the real economy.

"Together we can design a future with secure jobs, sustainable economies and a healthy living planet", said Sharan Burrow.

Join the campaign to Climate and Employment Proof our Work, show your support:

1. **Share the video 'viruses and climate change know no borders'** on your social media channels using #CEPOW.
2. **Share these infographics** on social media channels using #CEPOW: <https://trello.com/c/uy9f223s/79-infographics>
3. **Sign up for the Global Day of Action:** <https://www.ituc-csi.org/cepow> and download the 'Climate and Employment Proof our Work' guide for all the information and tools for this campaign.
4. **Tell us about your job:** Send us a photo of you at work that may be at home, in your office, or out on the job and tell us what you do. Let us know if you are worried about climate change affecting your job.
5. **Ask to talk to your employer, a local business or someone from your local or national government on 24 June:** Let us know if you ask for a meeting, and we will keep a tally of all places around the world taking part in the Global Day of Action. Your meeting can be in person or a virtual meeting.
6. **Tell us how it went:** [Share a photo](#) of you in person or virtual meeting and the highlights of what was discussed.

The International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) represents 200 million members of 332 affiliates in 163 countries and territories.

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