

Motion: to be discussed at the NEU OGM on the 10.11.20

This NEU branch endorses the Socialist Campaign Group of Labour MPs statement on Covid-19, notes that Halifax CLP recently passed a motion in support of the statement, believes that a zero covid strategy should be adopted by the government, and calls on the TUC (including Calderdale TUC) to lobby the government for it to be adopted.

For reference, the Socialist Campaign Group statement reads as follows:

**Socialist Campaign Group of Labour MPs Statement - For a Zero COVID Strategy:**

“Britain needs a zero Covid strategy which puts the health of the people first. And rising infection numbers mean that the need for such a strategy is urgent. We are seeing a renewed rise in Covid 19 cases, both globally and here in Britain. The number of cases in Britain is currently rising by 3000 a day. And this is before school and university students have returned to education.

This sharp increase in Covid19 cases is because the government had the wrong strategy. It did not pursue a zero Covid strategy. Therefore, lockdown was started too late and lifted too early – before the level of infections had been reduced to minimal levels. So, we believe that it is reckless and dangerous to continue forcing people back to workplaces and easing lockdown even as cases rise. It is also impossible to force most people to resume their normal social lives while they are justifiably fearful of the pandemic. Reducing the virus to minimal levels is not in contradiction to economic recovery. It is the precondition for economic recovery.

A zero Covid strategy has been successfully implemented in other countries like New Zealand. They have effectively eliminated the virus or reduced it to minimal levels. It is possible here too. In fact, the virus was declining rapidly in this country until easing measures were introduced. We can eliminate the virus if effective lockdowns, and a proper tracing, tracking and isolation system is introduced.

The strategy should include:

- A target to reduce the number of new Covid cases week on week
- Accelerating the development of a comprehensive locally led, but nationally supported, test, track and isolate programme in England
- Screening at airports and other transport hubs such as train stations
- Bringing back daily coronavirus briefings

At the same time, we agree with employers’ organisations and trade unions that the government must extend its support for businesses and workers. The furlough scheme must be extended, as has been done in France, Germany, the Netherlands and Ireland.

Otherwise, we will see spiralling unemployment.

We cannot live safely with the virus. And we should not attempt to. The government must adopt a policy of eliminating it. We need a zero Covid strategy.”