

16 March 2020

To: Each Member of IFUT

cc: IFUT President

Frank Jones, Deputy General Secretary

Fiona Lee, Industrial Relations and Data Protection Officer

Dear Colleagues,

Support and Solidarity of IFUT / Covid-19

I am writing to offer the support and solidarity of IFUT to our members at this unprecedented time for our education system and our entire society.

The efforts to combat Covid-19 have led to the necessary cessation of all direct contacts in our higher education system. It is as yet unclear when these restrictions will end. If best practice is followed and if examples from countries like China, which have had to deal much earlier with Covid-19, are repeated here, then closure of our institutions may be of a medium-term rather than a brief period.

I want to reassure members that IFUT is still functioning fully and dealing with issues remotely by e-mail and phone.

We are in ongoing contact with the Department of Education and universities in relation to issues arising from Covid-19. Many matters still need to be clarified and

we will be insisting that employees and staff are fully respected and treated fairly in the current unprecedented crisis.

In particular we are anxious that all matters related to income of part-time, contract and precariously employed staff are dealt with sympathetically. If you have concerns, queries or information on the situation affecting you or groups of staff in this regard, please e-mail us the details and a contact number and we will work urgently to address this with the relevant authorities.

A further major concern relates to decisions on the holding of exams and the very obvious stress of this situation for our staff and students. We will monitor this also and keep you updated on any information or issues not readily publicly available.

We will continue to monitor ongoing developments in education and expect that 'normal' decision-making will continue. We will also pay attention to issues around formation of a new government and a programme for government.

All scheduled IFUT meetings are being deferred. This almost certainly will involve deferring our 2020 Annual Conference (due in May of this year), which will be considered for a final decision, at the next Executive meeting in April. We will discuss potential alternative contact and networking arrangements once certainty on future likely developments is clearer and would welcome any suggestions any of you may have in this regard.

Once again, I wish to assure you that IFUT is here for you on any matter of concern in the coming period. I wish health and safety to each of you and to your families and IFUT will continue to be in touch on an ongoing basis.

Yours sincerely,

Joan Donegan

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Joan Donegan,

General Secretary.