

The Gig Economy and Covid-19:

Looking Ahead

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The **Fairwork** Project

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Executive Summary

In March 2020, we began investigating how gig economy platforms were responding to the Covid-19 pandemic. Reports indicated that half of gig workers had lost their jobs; those still working had lost two-thirds of their income on average; and many faced the impossible choice between penury and infection. As summed up by one worker: “either I’m starving or I’m dying of coronavirus.” As those who continued to work performed functions essential to society, the pandemic deepened the fracture lines of inequality: not just between gig workers and those who are currently better served by government support schemes, but also by placing additional pressures on the women, migrants, and minority-ethnic groups who form a core part of the gig workforce.

How are platforms responding? To investigate this, between March and April 2020, the Fairwork Foundation undertook a survey of platform policies, covering 120 platforms in 23 countries across Europe, North America, South America, Asia and Africa. We categorised platform responses according to the five Fairwork Principles that are used to rate platforms against decent work standards, namely: Fair Pay, Fair Conditions, Fair Contracts, Fair Management, and Fair Representation. The results were published in a report in April 2020.¹

Since then a lot has changed. As of September 2020, more than 31 million people have been infected, and almost one million have lost their lives to the virus. The financial, social, physical and psychological toll of the pandemic has been immense. We are entering into a period where not only government financial support schemes are ending, but also the relief packages and policies offered by the platforms and other private initiatives.

In order to track these changes, we present our findings based on 191 platforms in 43 countries across the world. Data for this report was collected through a combination of desk research and outreach to all of the platforms included in our survey. In particular, we expanded the research into low income and middle income countries to understand how gig workers have been affected in the absence of government relief schemes, and where platforms have faced a higher uncertainty of continuing their operations due to financial risks. Our top-line findings indicate that:

- **Fair Pay:** Pay was by far the most important issue for workers, yet 10 percent of the platforms surveyed provided pay loss compensation. Instead, platforms have tended to deflect responsibility to governments in order to avoid future liabilities.
- **Fair Conditions 1 (Prevention):** Contactless delivery is the most widespread policy in this category. However, contactless collection is notably less available. 60 percent of the platforms claimed to provide personal protective equipment (disinfectant or, less often, masks). However, workers often reported problems receiving any of that support.

- **Fair Conditions 2 (Illness):** Around half of the platforms were providing some payment for workers who were ill. When government financial relief packages were extended to include gig workers, some platforms shifted their focus on assisting the workers to access these schemes. However, the accessibility of these schemes (both government and platform) remains unknown.
- **Fair Contracts:** Most platforms have maintained that their workers are independent contractors and not employees, even while taking on more aspects of the role of an employer, such as sick pay provision. These positions are increasingly in conflict, as platforms acknowledge their responsibility for working conditions, despite the fact that their business models continue to rely on asserting the independence of their workers.
- **Fair Management:** Only a small fraction of platforms guarantee no loss of bonuses or incentive levels despite temporary deactivation of workers.
- **Fair Representation:** Gig workers around the world have been striking to demand better working conditions. However, there is no evidence of any meaningful platform engagement with worker associations and unions coordinating the strikes.

The full table of Platform Policies for Covid-19 can be found on pgs. 6-11 of this report.

Overall, platforms have increased their efforts to provide health and safety measures to their workers as the effects of the pandemic have deepened. However, we have identified a number of issues in most of these responses. These are:

- **A gap between rhetoric and reality.** What platforms say they are providing for their workers might not reflect what workers can realistically and feasibly access.
- **A skew in stakeholder focus.** Platform responses to a large extent have targeted shareholders, investors and customers before workers. Some Covid-19 measures, such as contactless delivery on certain platforms are weighed more towards the protection of consumers in their design.
- **Conflating surveillance with safety.** Since March 2020, health and safety measures have been increasingly connected to surveillance measures in the form of temperature scans, selfies, and photos taken at distribution centres or restaurants, without the consent or immediate knowledge of workers. Subsequently, the surveillance of workers by platforms has increased.
- **Widening gap between different types of platforms.** Large platforms have been able to set aside larger funds for Covid-19 health and safety measures than smaller ones. They have also been able to switch to new markets, and diversify their portfolios by teaming up with other platforms/companies to enter new areas of work. Smaller platforms, by contrast, have faced financial uncertainty due to variable (and generally declining) consumer demand and limited

financial flexibility. This has meant that local platforms based in the Global South have faced heightened financial and operational risks, threatening their survival.

- **A gap between needs and policies.** There is a lack of alignment between what workers require in order to stay safe—free from poverty and free from infection—and what platforms are currently providing. However, platforms continue to load risks and responsibilities onto others: onto governments for financial support, and onto individual workers for their own protection from the virus and for their recovery, should they become ill.

This report ends with a summary of policy recommendations to address these issues, which we reproduce here:

Fairwork Principle	Recommended Platform Action
1. Fair Pay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rapid access to a minimum income (equivalent to at least the local living wage) for those unable to work due to fall-off in demand, legislative restrictions, or pre-existing health vulnerabilities • Reduction in costs (e.g. platform commission/fees) or increase in per-gig payments for those still working but with reduced earnings • Additional hazard pay for those facing additional risks while working during the pandemic • Waiver (not deferral) of work-related costs such as loan repayments • Facilitated access to interest-free emergency loans • Plan for post-lockdown income recovery measures which may include higher per-gig payments or lower commission fees • Inclusion in income compensation and financial deferral schemes of all those who have worked for the platform during the past three months
2a. Fair Conditions (Prevention)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular, adequate, free provision of PPE: disinfectants, gloves and masks • Installation of physical barriers between driver and passengers in all ride-hailing cars • Fully contact-free supply chains (both collection and delivery) for delivery workers • Daily sanitisation of vehicles and upstream locations: warehouses, hubs, etc. • Free Covid-19 check-ups for workers and their families

<p>2b. Fair Conditions (Illness)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessible sick pay from platforms that apply universally to all those unable to work while ill or quarantined or while providing essential care for sick family members, and which relate to pre-pandemic average earnings • Sick pay policies that specify precisely and openly how much workers will be paid, with simple application processes which do not impose onerous health documentation requirements that sick workers cannot meet • Extended sick pay for those workers hospitalised by Covid-19 infection • Provision of general medical insurance cover • Provision of life insurance cover or other death-in-service benefits
<p>3. Fair Contracts</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No temporary or permanent alteration of contracts during the period of the pandemic to the detriment of workers
<p>4. Fair Management</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure all Covid-19-related communications are in a form that can be readily accessed and understood by all workers • Set up an accessible communications channel for workers for all issues relating to Covid-19; adequately staffed for rapid resolution of issues • Transparent reporting of policies, actions and funds initiated by platforms during the pandemic • Adhere to data privacy standards in collecting and sharing data about workers • No loss of incentives, bonus levels or future availability of jobs for those temporarily deactivated as a result of Covid-19 • Public statements to customers and others that discrimination against certain worker groups during the pandemic will not be tolerated
<p>5. Fair Representation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal receipt of, engagement with, and action on Covid-19-related demands from worker representatives

Table of Platform Policies for Covid-19

Fairwork has identified the list of policies platforms rolled out during the pandemic. They were identified for inclusion in the survey based on desk research of existing best practice. However we would like to note that certain policies are of more immediate concern to workers we have spoken to - those within the pay category carrying greater weight. The table below represents an interim assessment conducted up to 22 August 2020. We would welcome details of updates to existing platform policies, including for platforms and countries not currently represented. Please provide links to digital sources or analysed tabulation of platforms for assessment via: <https://fair.work/contact/>.

	Policy Category	1. Fair Pay		2a. Fair Conditions (Prevention)				2b. Fair Conditions (Illness)			3. Fair Contracts	4. Fair Management		5. Fair Representation
		Sub-Category	Pay Loss Compensation	Financial Deferral	Physical Protection	Personal Protection	Virus Safety Knowledge	Healthcare Assistance	Sick Pay	Insurance	Death Benefits	No Policies	Penalty Protection	Anti-Discrimination
UK	Deliveroo			●	●	●	●	●						
	Uber		●	●	●	●	●	●				●	●	
	Uber Eats			●	●	●	●	●	●			●	●	
	JustEat			●	●	●	●	●						
	DPD		●	●	●	●	●	●	●					
	Hermes			●	●	●	●	●	●			●		
	Kapten			●	●	●	●	●						
	Syft			●	●	●	●	●						
	Bolt			●	●	●	●	●	●			●		
Spain	Glovo		●	●	●	●	●	●	●					
	Deliveroo			●	●	●	●	●	●					
	Just Eat			●	●	●	●	●						
	Uber		●	●	●	●	●	●	●			●	●	
Italy	Uber Eats			●	●	●	●	●				●	●	
	Glovo		●	●	●	●	●	●	●					
	Deliveroo			●	●	●	●	●	●					
	Just Eat			●	●	●	●	●						
	Uber		●	●	●	●	●	●	●			●	●	
DK	Uber Eats			●	●	●	●	●				●	●	
	Wolt			●	●	●	●	●	●					
Germany	Just Eat			●	●	●	●	●						
	Uber		●	●	●	●	●	●	●			●	●	
	Clevershuttle			●	●	●	●	●	●			●		
	Lieferando			●	●	●	●	●	●			●		

	Policy Category	1. Fair Pay		2a. Fair Conditions (Prevention)				2b. Fair Conditions (Illness)			3. Fair Contracts	4. Fair Management		5. Fair Representation
		Sub-Category	Pay Loss Compensation	Financial Deferral	Physical Protection	Personal Protection	Virus Safety Knowledge	Healthcare Assistance	Sick Pay	Insurance	Death Benefits	No Policies	Penalty Protection	Anti-Discrimination
France	Uber		⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙				⊙	⊙	
	Uber Eats			⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙				⊙	⊙	
	Deliveroo			⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙						
	Frichti			⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙							
	Glovo		⊙	⊙			⊙	⊙	⊙					
	Just Eat			⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙							
US	Amazon	⊙		⊙	⊙		⊙	⊙				⊙		
	Uber		⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙				⊙	⊙	
	Uber Eats			⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙				⊙	⊙	
	Lyft		⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙				⊙	⊙	
	Postmates			⊙		⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙					
	Doordash			⊙		⊙	⊙	⊙						
	Instacart			⊙	⊙			⊙						
	Grubhub			⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙				⊙		
Australia	Uber		⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙				⊙	⊙	
	Uber Eats			⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙				⊙	⊙	
	Deliveroo			⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙		⊙		
	Menulog			⊙										
	Coles			⊙	⊙									
Chile	Uber	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙				⊙	⊙	
	Uber Eats			⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙				⊙	⊙	
	Didi			⊙	⊙			⊙						
	Cabify			⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙							
	Beat			⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙					⊙		
	Rappi			⊙	⊙			⊙						
Turkey	Yemeksepeti			⊙	⊙									
	Banabi			⊙										
	Bitaksi	⊙												
	Istegelsin			⊙	⊙									
	Migros Hemen+			⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙							
	Getir	⊙		⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙					
Egypt	Uber	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙				⊙	⊙	
	Otlob			⊙	⊙	⊙		⊙						
	Swvl			⊙	⊙	⊙		⊙						
	Jumia			⊙										

	Policy Category	1. Fair Pay		2a. Fair Conditions (Prevention)				2b. Fair Conditions (Illness)			3. Fair Contracts	4. Fair Management		5. Fair Representation
	Sub-Category	Pay Loss Compensation	Financial Deferral	Physical Protection	Personal Protection	Virus Safety Knowledge	Healthcare Assistance	Sick Pay	Insurance	Death Benefits	No Policies	Penalty Protection	Anti-Discrimination	No Policies
UAE	Uber		⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙				⊙	⊙	
	Deliveroo			⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙							
	Talabat			⊙	⊙			⊙						
	Careem			⊙	⊙			⊙				⊙		
	Zomato			⊙	⊙	⊙								
Morocco	Careem			⊙	⊙			⊙				⊙		
	Yassir													
	Jumia				⊙	⊙	⊙							
Lebanon	Jumia Food				⊙	⊙	⊙							
	Careem			⊙				⊙				⊙		
Algeria	Zomato				⊙		⊙							
	Toters			⊙	⊙									
	Temtem				⊙									
Tunisia	Yassir			⊙	⊙									
	Wesselni													
	Careem			⊙				⊙				⊙		
Jordan	Yassir													
	Founa			⊙	⊙									
	IntiGo			⊙	⊙									
	Jumia			⊙										
	Jumia Food			⊙										
India	Careem			⊙	⊙			⊙				⊙		
	Uber		⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙				⊙	⊙	
	Talabat			⊙	⊙									
	Basket			⊙	⊙									
India	Amazon	⊙		⊙	⊙		⊙	⊙				⊙		
	Uber		⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙				⊙	⊙	
	Ola		⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙						
	Zomato			⊙		⊙	⊙	⊙						
	Swiggy			⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙						
	BigBasket			⊙	⊙									
	Grofers	⊙		⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙						
	HouseJoy				⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙						
	Dunzo			⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙							
	UrbanClap			⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙					
	Flipkart	⊙		⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙					
	Shadowfax			⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙					
	Rapido			⊙	⊙		⊙							

	Policy Category	1. Fair Pay		2a. Fair Conditions (Prevention)				2b. Fair Conditions (Illness)			3. Fair Contracts	4. Fair Management		5. Fair Representation
		Sub-Category	Pay Loss Compensation	Financial Deferral	Physical Protection	Personal Protection	Virus Safety Knowledge	Healthcare Assistance	Sick Pay	Insurance	Death Benefits	No Policies	Penalty Protection	Anti-Discrimination
ID	Grab			⊙	⊙		⊙	⊙	⊙					
	Gojek		⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙						
PH	Grab		⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙						
SG	Grab	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙				⊙		
	Deliveroo			⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙				⊙		
China	Didi Chuxing		⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙		⊙		
	Meituan Dache		⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙					⊙		
	Meituan Peisong			⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙				⊙		
	Ele (Fengniao Peisong)			⊙	⊙		⊙	⊙				⊙		
	FlashEx			⊙	⊙		⊙	⊙				⊙		
	Dianwoda			⊙	⊙		⊙					⊙		
	DADA Kuaisong			⊙	⊙		⊙	⊙				⊙		
	Uber	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙				⊙	⊙	
	Uber Eats	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙				⊙	⊙	
	Bolt			⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙							
South Africa	SweepSouth	⊙		⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙		⊙				
	OrderIn													
	Mr D	⊙		⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙						
	getTOD			⊙	⊙									
	NoSweat													
	M4Jam	⊙			⊙	⊙	⊙					⊙		
	Picup			⊙	⊙									
	Droppa													
	Secret Agent													
	Bykea				⊙		⊙	⊙						
Pakistan	Foodpanda			⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙			⊙		
	Careem			⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙			⊙		
Iraq	Careem			⊙	⊙			⊙				⊙		
	Careem													
Palestine	Careem			⊙	⊙			⊙				⊙		
	Careem			⊙	⊙			⊙				⊙		
Bahrain	Talabat			⊙			⊙							
	HungerStation													

	Policy Category	1. Fair Pay		2a. Fair Conditions (Prevention)				2b. Fair Conditions (Illness)			3. Fair Contracts	4. Fair Management		5. Fair Representation
	Sub-Category	Pay Loss Compensation	Financial Deferral	Physical Protection	Personal Protection	Virus Safety Knowledge	Healthcare Assistance	Sick Pay	Insurance	Death Benefits	No Policies	Penalty Protection	Anti-Discrimination	No Policies
Qatar	Careem			●	●			●						
	Talabat			●	●									
	Carriage													
Saudi Arabia	Careem		●	●	●			●						
	HungerStation			●										
	Lugmety			●	●									
	Carriage			●										
Oman														
	Talabat			●										
Kenya	Jumia Food			●	●		●							
	Bolt			●	●									
	Lynk				●									
	Sendy			●	●	●	●		●					
	Uber	●	●	●	●	●	●	●				●	●	
Nigeria	Jumia Food			●	●		●							
	Bolt			●	●									
	Uber	●	●		●	●	●	●				●	●	
	Uber				●	●	●							
New Zealand	Uber Eats			●	●	●	●							
	DeliverEasy			●	●									
	MenuLog			●	●									
	Zoomy			●	●	●	●							
	Ola				●	●	●							
Argentina	Cabify			●	●	●	●							
	Beat			●	●	●	●					●		
	Glovo	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●					
	Uber		●	●	●	●	●	●				●	●	
Armenia	Yandex.taxi			●	●			●						
	InDriver													
	GG			●	●									
	Menu.am			●	●									
	Sovats.am			●	●									
	Bolt				●									
Georgia	Yandex taxi							●						
	GG			●										
	Glovo			●	●	●	●	●						
	Bolt				●									

	Policy Category	1. Fair Pay		2a. Fair Conditions (Prevention)				2b. Fair Conditions (Illness)			3. Fair Contracts	4. Fair Management		5. Fair Representation
	Sub-Category	Pay Loss Compensation	Financial Deferral	Physical Protection	Personal Protection	Virus Safety Knowledge	Healthcare Assistance	Sick Pay	Insurance	Death Benefits	No Policies	Penalty Protection	Anti-Discrimination	No Policies
Russia	Yandex taxi			⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙						
	InDriver			⊙	⊙									
	Maxim				⊙									
	YouDo				⊙									
	Delivery Club	⊙												
Ukraine	Bolt				⊙									
	Raketa			⊙	⊙									
	Uber				⊙	⊙	⊙							
	Bolt			⊙	⊙									
Serbia	Glovo			⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙							
	Car.Go			⊙										
	alideda			⊙										
Bangladesh	Donesi			⊙										
	Bolt				⊙									
	Wolt			⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙							
Sri Lanka	Uber	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙			⊙	⊙		
	Sheba.xyz			⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙							
	Truck Lagbe			⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙							
Ghana	Uber	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙			⊙	⊙		
	Bolt			⊙	⊙									
	Jumia Food			⊙	⊙		⊙							
Brazil	Uber		⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙			⊙	⊙		
	Cabify			⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙							
	iFood			⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙					

Introduction

The Covid-19 pandemic has infected more than 31 million people across the world, resulting in almost one million deaths to date. The financial, social, physical and psychological toll of the pandemic has been immense. This report provides a review of what has changed for workers in the gig economy since April 2020.

Gig workers have maintained essential public services during the pandemic, including delivering food and household essentials to those self-isolating or practicing social distancing, and providing care services to those in need. So much so that ordering food or groceries via platforms, cashless payments, contactless delivery and using a ride-hailing platform for travel rather than public transport has become normalised, even in countries where it was not previously the case.

A pre-pandemic OECD report (2018) put the global proportion of gig workers to be between 0.3 in developing countries, 0.5 percent elsewhere; with the higher rate reaching up to 1.5 to 3 percent of the working age population in some countries.² Drawing on this, as well as World Bank data, we estimate the size of the world's gig economy to be between 14 to 55 million workers. However, the upper number increases to nearly 440 million workers, when country-specific estimations for the size of local gig economies are incorporated into the calculation.³ This number is likely to have increased further as a result of the pandemic, with the financial downturn causing many around the world to lose secure employment, and seek alternatives. However, conditions of precarity and vulnerability continue in the gig economy.⁴ In our first report in April 2020, we noted that the majority of gig workers lacked employment protections such as health insurance and sick pay, and since they generally worked hand-to-mouth, they may not have had savings to fall back on. At the same time, due to lockdowns, the demand for some services offered in the gig economy continued to decline or become impossible due to rules for social distancing or other government regulations such as care work, domestic work and beauty and grooming services. While some platforms have diversified their offered services to make up for their loss of business, workers still face important pressures and uncertainties as they can no longer be certain that they will have enough work, or that it will be sufficient to meet their needs.

Although more platforms have started offering sick pay since April, sick pay still remains hard to access and is not commonly offered by platforms in the Global South. While government bailout and financial assistance schemes have been extended to gig workers in some parts of the world (e.g. the US, the UK, and Germany), in other parts, these schemes are either unavailable or do not cover gig workers. Amidst this uncertainty, gig workers have continued to find themselves making a dangerous calculation: Stay at home and face financial ruin or continue working but risk getting ill.

Compounding this lack of worker security, the financial assistance and sick pay schemes that *have* been introduced by platforms and governments all come with end dates—but with no end in sight to the pandemic, as yet. This puts extra pressure on workers, and adds to the uncertainty they face.

Against this background, in March 2020, we started conducting a systematic study and comparison of platform responses to the Covid-19 pandemic. At the time of our first report, published in April 2020, some platforms initially claimed that they were not going to provide any benefits to workers because their status on those platforms was that of “independent contractors.” Many of these responses have changed significantly over the course of the pandemic. To understand this shift, we have created a Fairwork database of Covid-19-related policies from platforms, relying on the published policies of platforms, responses from trade unions and other worker groups, news and analytical reports that include worker experiences, and worker surveys.⁵ Our first report was based on this database, together with collaboration from seven Fairwork country teams and our own network of collaborators and partners. It analysed the pandemic responses of 120 platforms across 23 countries, primarily focusing on platforms we knew had publicly released information about the protections they offered to their workers.

In May 2020, we were awarded a grant from the University of Oxford Economic, Social, Cultural & Environmental Impacts of Covid-19 Urgent Response Fund which allowed us to expand the focus and outreach of our work. In this report, we present our findings based on 191 platforms in 43 countries on six continents.⁶ It is important to emphasise that this report focuses on geographically-tethered platforms only. We especially tried to expand our research into low- and middle-income countries to understand how gig workers were affected when government relief schemes were unavailable and where platforms had differing circumstances and capacities which may impact their ability to undertake some actions. While we have aimed for continuity, the list of platforms featured in this report varies slightly to that in our first report as some of the platforms ceased their operations entirely, some merged with other platforms and some exited the markets they previously traded in.

We have analysed the policies offered by platforms through the lens of just the three of the five Fairwork principles,⁷ that is: Fair Pay, Fair Conditions, and Fair Management (see Appendix 2 for the full list of policies analysed.) Our analysis does not feature policies on Fair Contracts and Fair Representation, as we have not found platform policies that engage directly with these principles. Indeed as we discuss in this report, some companies have taken measures in these categories to actually make jobs less fair.

We have divided the Fair Conditions category into two sub-categories: one relating to the preventive measures platforms have taken to protect their workers from getting infected, and one relating to the measures in case workers get ill with the virus.

While we have aimed for consistency between the two reports, increased financial uncertainty explains why the list of platforms covered in this report is slightly different than those in the first report, as some platforms merged with other platforms and some left the markets they previously traded in. This indicates the volatility and uncertainty of survival in the gig economy during these times of pandemic—not only for workers, but also for platforms.

Despite our wide coverage, gaps in knowledge nevertheless remain. In particular, with platforms that operate in several markets, it has been difficult to verify that the policies they rolled out at the global level have been extended to all the markets they trade in, or to what extent they have been able to ensure that these policies were implemented at the local level.

Findings

The impacts of Covid-19

Half a year on since the initial lockdowns began, evidence on the impacts of Covid-19 on gig workers remains limited, fragmented and uneven. However, existing reports reveal some worrying trends. In our initial research in April 2020, we found that half the platform workers surveyed had stopped work either due to lack of demand for their services or because the platforms they work on had suspended their operations during the pandemic.⁸ According to media investigations at the time, workers who continued to work during Covid-19 lockdowns reported that on average their earnings had dropped to around one-third of pre-pandemic levels in some countries. For instance, in Indonesia, Gojek moto-taxi drivers reported a 70 percent loss of income, and in the US, drivers who work for ride-hailing platforms such as Uber and Lyft reported a 65 percent drop.⁹ For workers who worked on platforms that suspended their services entirely (such as some domestic work, personal grooming, and beauty services), the fall in their earnings was even more dramatic—unless the platform or their governments offered some kind of financial assistance.

Regrettably, the economic situation has not improved since April. In the US, reports show that incomes in the gig economy have continued to fall, with increasing numbers of unemployed workers starting to join platforms, increasing competition and driving down pay.¹⁰ In a report from May 2020, titled “On-demand and on-the-edge: Ride-hailing and Delivery Workers in San Francisco”, researchers from the University of California, Santa Cruz revealed that of the 643 workers they interviewed, 56 percent struggled to make ends meet and relied on public assistance— even while working an average of 40 hours a week.¹¹ The survey also revealed that more than half have lost 75-100 percent of their income since the start of the pandemic.¹² Similarly, worker accounts revealed that Doordash workers in the US were making as little as just over \$3 an hour, because the platform’s interface continued to accept food orders from restaurants even if they were closed; and yet workers were required to bear the costs of cancelled orders.¹³

Gig economy workers in the UK have also had limited options for financial assistance from the government. The Self-employed Income Support Scheme which was rolled out at the end of March 2020 was not initially extended to gig workers who were newly self-employed or who earned less than half their income from self-employment.¹⁴ The Scheme changed its eligibility criteria to include greater numbers of gig workers only in August, but considering that the government plans to close this scheme in October, it is fair to say that gig workers have been doubly disadvantaged in the pandemic: limited assistance from platforms to make ends meet, and even more limited assistance from government.

Workers have also reported a decrease in the hours of work they get on platforms,¹⁵ given the increasing numbers of people joining platforms in search of work.¹⁶ For instance in Spain, a spokesperson for worker collective RidersXDerechos reported that the platform's payments to workers for food deliveries dropped by nearly half from €2-2.50 per delivery, to €1¹⁷, even though their running costs for the work did not necessarily decrease. France has seen a 30 percent increase in the last year in the number of people registering as food delivery workers,¹⁸ and as unemployment figures in the US have grown, gig economy workers have reported the need to join additional platforms to cope with increasing competition in the sector.¹⁹ Competition is likely to continue to affect the drivers in the ride-hailing sector disproportionately, as although the demand for rides has increased slightly during the pandemic—with more and more people preferring personal transport rather than public transportation—it still remains well below average due to fewer people travelling overall. For example, the global demand for rides with Lyft in August 2020 was around half that in August 2019.²⁰

The situation is at least as dire for gig workers in the global South, with significant fall in demand across various sectors. Drivers in Indonesia, Thailand and Vietnam have reported a significant decrease in ride-hailing income, with some turning to food delivery. This has in turn created an oversupply of food couriers, with one driver describing the grim scene of “50 drivers for one order” in Indonesia.²¹ Reduced working hours due to social distancing regulations have also adversely affected workers. Many ride-hailing drivers in Egypt were unable to meet car rental or loan payments after a government-mandated curfew affected their prime earning hours.²²

Across Africa, millions of people rely on the gig economy for their livelihoods. One report on gig workers in Kenya, Nigeria and Ghana found that most workers had no savings, no insurance, and no safety net—and with costs for food and basic medicines going up during the pandemic, many face malnutrition, starvation and long-term exclusion from the labour market.²³ Local platforms have not been able to offer much to workers in terms of financial assistance, and government financial relief schemes were also largely absent²⁴ making it even more difficult for workers to survive the pandemic. Similarly in Brazil, one study which surveyed 298 gig workers found that nearly 60 percent reported that their earnings had decreased by half.²⁵ In India, where there have been strict lockdowns for long periods of time, gig workers now face destitution as they have been unable to work, suggesting that the coronavirus pandemic might be followed by a “hunger pandemic”.²⁶

The picture, however, is varied. Not all demand for services offered through the gig economy has declined: some platforms for food, parcel and grocery deliveries have actually thrived during the pandemic, with online ordering becoming a more normalised and accepted form of service.²⁷ In response to this demand, some platforms have expanded their services, particularly focusing on grocery deliveries (examples include Deliveroo in the UK, and Uber in the US, India and South Africa), and medical supplies (for example Talabat in Bahrain, and Yandex Taxi in Armenia).

It is important to note, however, that although the demand for some gig services increased, and subsequently, the number of available gig jobs might have increased²⁸, this did not necessarily translate into increased worker incomes as we detail later in this report.

Although the opportunity to maintain pre-pandemic levels of work will have been welcomed by many workers during this period, it has also significantly increased the risks workers are exposed to. Several media reports have revealed the difficulties workers face in adhering to social distancing guidelines.²⁹ Even though the majority of platforms have rolled out contact-free (and cash-free) delivery policies to minimise workers' contact with customers, these policies do not allow workers to fully distance themselves. Delivery workers still have to come into contact with restaurant workers as they are picking up orders, with other platform workers as they wait for orders, and with other supermarket workers and customers as they collect groceries for delivery. Ride-hailing drivers and cleaning and care workers, by necessity, must also come into proximity with people outside of their immediate circle, thus exposing them to risk. Around the world, there have been stories³⁰ of these workers becoming sick and tragically passing away due to the nature of their job, although the total extent of the misfortunes gig workers have experienced since the beginning of the pandemic and lockdowns remain unknown.

Despite this, platform responses, as we will describe in further detail in the next section, have been sporadic at best, and difficult for workers to access. Many policies seem to do a good job of protecting businesses and customers, but few are fully tailored to the needs of workers. This means that some workers report that they feel they have to continue working during lockdowns—and even if they develop symptoms— simply because they do not have savings to fall back on. For workers with caring responsibilities, this means that unless they work, they cannot provide for their families. And if they work, they expose them to greater risk of contracting the virus.

Covid-19 has also magnified the lines of social stratification among workers. A substantial proportion of women work for platforms that offer care work, domestic work, and beauty services. Workers report being unable to work either because platforms have suspended their services or because they have to remain at home to take care of their own families. Others report having to combine caring for their own children with care work or domestic work, including taking their children with them to workplaces—exposing both themselves and their children to the risk of contracting the virus. The sick leave or insurance policies extended by platforms rarely include family members, and they do not provide assistance to workers who are unable to work due to caring responsibilities.

Migration background also plays a prominent role in whether or not workers are able to seek health care assistance or report poor health to their platforms. In the UK, for instance, most workers from outside the European Union have no recourse to public funds and need to pay a surcharge to access the National Health Service. Elsewhere, in Chile, the US and in South Africa, where a large share of the gig workers are undocumented migrants, workers feel particularly pressured to work even when they

are ill, and they may not seek medical help for fear of hospital expenses, or their residence status being questioned .

In the following section, we will provide a more detailed analysis of the platform responses to Covid-19. As explained previously, we have structured these responses along the five principles of fair work: Fair Pay, Fair Conditions, Fair Contracts, Fair Management, and Fair Representation.

Platform responses to Covid-19

Fair Pay

There is little evidence of attempts by platforms to compensate workers for the loss of income arising from Covid-19-related impacts. Out of our sample of 191, there were only 21 examples of direct policies by platforms to compensate for lost pay, and 11 of these policies came from five multi-national platforms which operate in several markets and have a global policy on financial assistance (i.e. Uber, Uber Eats, Glovo, Amazon, and Grab). Amazon, for instance, has announced that across the world, including two countries which we surveyed (the US and India), they would increase the hourly pay of all their workers (including part-time and delivery workers) by US\$2 throughout April.³¹

The other 10 policies were from local platforms which provided smaller scale financial assistance or assistance with groceries and other urgent needs of workers. Indian shopping platform Flipkart announced that it would provide double pay to their temporary workers during pandemic.³² Getir from Turkey announced that they would provide payments to their delivery riders even on days when there is a nationwide curfew and they are unable to work. Other measures to compensate workers were seen only very rarely, and included removal of the commission workers pay to the platform,³³ encouraging clients to donate fees to workers where jobs were cancelled,³⁴ and provision of essential goods to workers.³⁵

Some platform workers loan or rent their vehicles either directly from the platforms or from other companies with which they have set up vehicle financing deals. With a reduction in the availability of jobs, workers can struggle to meet these costs. More platforms have started offering deferral of loan or rental costs, but overall the reach of this assistance has remained limited. Only nine platforms in the ride-hailing and delivery sectors were found to offer policies along these lines: DPD in the UK, Ola in India, Gojek in Indonesia, Didi Chuxing and Meituan Dache in China, Grab in Singapore and the Philippines, Glovo in Italy, Spain, France and Argentina, Lyft in the US, and Uber in several markets through third party loans (the UK, Spain, Italy, Germany, France, the US, Australia, Chile, Egypt, UAE, Jordan, India, South Africa (also Uber Eats), Kenya, Nigeria, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Ghana, and Brazil). Some of these platforms, such as Uber in Jordan, Grab in Singapore and Didi Chuxing in China, have also rolled out financial loans for workers, should they need any assistance with health care or other payments.³⁶

More common were policies that sought to maintain the level of business running through the platform. Of the 191 platforms we surveyed, 21 offered such policies. Of these, roughly half waived or deferred client fees, such as delivery services and sign-up fees for restaurants, and the other half deferred fees for existing clients (typically restaurants) on their platforms. The other strategic measures rolled out by platforms were to increase the scope of the services offered. Ride-hailing platforms such as Uber, Grab and Lyft added food or parcel delivery services to their offering, and food delivery platforms such as Deliveroo added grocery delivery services. Uber in India, for instance, has partnered with two other platforms, Big Basket and Flipkart, to provide last-mile essential deliveries. Similarly, Grab in Singapore has partnered with third parties for GrabFood marketing programmes for various restaurants and grocery shops to help them reach more customers and generate additional sales. Platforms have also looked to partner with governments to deliver essential goods (for example, Talabat in Bahrain and Bykea in Pakistan). While primarily beneficial for the platforms, these measures can also help maintain levels of work, and hence workers' earnings.

However, given the increasing competition for jobs on some of these platforms, it is worth noting that only two of the 191 platforms we surveyed stopped onboarding of new workers, in order to preserve income for existing workers (Uber and Deliveroo in Australia). Some platforms also appeared to prioritise the interests of restaurants over workers. In May, Uber Eats in New Zealand allowed restaurants to use their own staff to deliver orders. This had the effect of preserving restaurant income as it meant restaurants would have to pay less commission to Uber Eats for orders, but came at the expense of job opportunities for gig workers on the platform. Users could also use the app to pick up rather than get their orders delivered, which further decreased the work opportunities of the delivery riders.³⁷

Fair Conditions

At the beginning of the lockdowns and as the virus was spreading across the world, some platforms maintained that it was not their role to provide any protection to workers. It was rather claimed that workers should take responsibility for protecting themselves. For instance, ride-hailing platform Bolt in the UK initially announced that:

*Bolt drivers are independent service providers who use our platform. Therefore, we cannot offer provisions for drivers who have to take time off sick.*³⁸

When Bolt updated this policy to provide disinfectant gels and sprays to workers, they still stated that disinfectants were available to workers "if they wanted them", and that they were not distributing masks, claiming that they are "ineffective, so it makes no sense to distribute them."³⁹ In mid-March, however, Bolt's message evolved. On March 19, they started offering sick pay for those infected ("Bolt Driver Assistance"), closed down their hub (physical contact centre for workers), and started featuring advice on their website about the virus and preventive measures.⁴⁰

Bolt's latest policy update features mandatory face coverings (in line with Transport for London requirements) and disabling front seats for passengers in order to establish social distancing between passengers and drivers.⁴¹ These policies indicate some level of protection for the drivers, but also highlight the power asymmetries between drivers and passengers. Bolt does not provide an option for its drivers to cancel trips if the passengers are not wearing masks, whereas this option is available to its passengers—"cancellation fees are waived if a passenger cancels a trip due to a driver not wearing a mask."⁴²

As shifts in policy have occurred, many of the changes implemented by platforms have related to improving the conditions of work. But it is important to mention that such shifts in policy (and rhetoric) have not taken place everywhere. Bolt Kenya's response, for example, has remained the same since 16 March 2020:

Is Bolt offering sick pay or any kind of compensation for drivers affected by coronavirus?

We understand that some drivers may be unable to drive for a certain period of time. However, Bolt drivers are independent service providers who use our platform. Therefore, we cannot offer provisions for drivers who have to take time off.

Source: Bolt Kenya, "Coronavirus: What measures are Bolt taking?" 16 March, 2020. Accessed 23 September 2020. <https://blog.bolt.eu/ke/coronavirus-what-measures-are-bolt-taking>

The only advice the platform offers to drivers who suspect passengers to be ill is that they can "politely explain the situation (...) and end the trip."⁴³

Against this background, we have divided platform responses for Fair Conditions into two, as some were directly aimed at preventing workers catching the virus through physical and personal protection measures, whereas others offered supportive measures for workers, in the event of their becoming ill (e.g. financial assistance and health insurance).

Preventive measures

The most common response, by far, has been preventive measures introduced by platforms, which have largely aimed to decrease the risk of workers contracting the virus. One of the most common platform policies has been to introduce "contact-free services" (60 percent of surveyed platforms have implemented some version of this). Some platforms have also rolled out cash-free services in order to limit physical exchange between platform workers and customers. In Egypt, where cash continues to be the most popular form of payment, food delivery platforms such as Otlob have

continued to push their cash-free payment options. But it should be noted that “contact-free services” are mostly only contact-free for customers rather than workers. Delivery workers on many platforms cannot avoid coming into proximity with the restaurant workers from whom they pick up orders, nor can they refuse service to customers who still prefer to pay by cash. Some of these preventative measures have become compulsory through government regulations. In the UK, for instance, since June 2020, both passengers and drivers are required by law to wear masks, and Uber recently rolled out a policy for drivers to verify if the passengers are wearing masks before accepting ride requests.

For other types of gig work, such as care work and domestic work, contact-free simply is not an option. In our initial report, only three platforms in the ride-hailing sector (Bolt in South Africa, Grab in the Philippines, and CleverShuttle in Germany) were reported to have implemented a policy to install plastic barriers between drivers and passengers. However, as the pandemic has deepened, some of these measures have become more common. In the UK for instance, Uber announced in May 2020 that they were going to distribute 400 plastic shields;⁴⁴ and Lyft in July 2020 announced the distribution of 60,000 plastic shields to drivers to help protect them against the virus.⁴⁵ Another common response has been to distribute disinfectants (e.g. sanitising gels and sprays; 63 percent of platforms) and masks (48 percent of platforms) to workers. It is important to note that since our first report in April 2020, more than 50 countries have introduced laws requiring citizens to wear masks in public spaces.⁴⁶ Platforms have thus had to comply with this legal requirement.

However, several worker accounts reported in the media continue to reveal that not all workers are able to access these provisions. Some have noted that the distributions were a one-off, even though they needed to continuously refill and replace their personal protective equipment. Others added that distribution centres are located very far from their working areas, and it would be too costly for them to pick up the equipment. Similar issues were raised with respect to reimbursements for personal protective equipment. There is evidence that some workers at platforms such as Uber, Uber Eats, Deliveroo, Rappi and Ola have either not been receiving promised supplies or have not been reimbursed for purchases made.⁴⁷ Around 27 percent of the platforms in our study indicated that they provided additional sanitisation measures to protect workers, such as disinfection of vehicles, warehouses and hubs. A smaller proportion of platforms decided to close their hubs entirely; mainly to protect their full-time management and worker liaison staff, but also protecting workers. Others have ordered temporary closures: Turkish grocery delivery firm Getir, for instance, after discovering that some of its workers had been infected, announced that it would disinfect the warehouse that workers had been using, provide 14 days of paid sick leave to all warehouse workers, and would only re-start their operations with a new team.⁴⁸ Platforms that provide bus services like Swvl in Egypt have reduced their services given the difficulty of maintaining distance on public transport. Airlift in Pakistan suspended operations altogether for the same reason.

Nearly half of the platforms we surveyed offered workers guidance on good hygiene practices and social distancing. While some claimed to be monitoring worker hygiene practices, in most cases what was offered by platforms rarely went beyond the standard public health advice being issued by

governments, with little cost incurred by the platform, or value added. One platform, Talabat in Bahrain, offered free Covid-19 testing for its drivers. For some workers, advice to avoid physical proximity and to wash hands was not particularly practical given the need to be in contact with clients or with other workers for deliveries, or the lack of access to bathrooms. Of course, it is important to emphasise that almost all of the above measures also serve to protect the customers of platforms. We did, however, discover policies that were designed to protect customers without safeguarding workers. Some platforms measured the temperatures of the workers and shared this data with customers—a practice which is questionable on grounds of both medical efficacy and data privacy. Other platforms (48 of 191) announced that they would be temporarily suspending the accounts of workers diagnosed with Covid-19. Doing so is likely a necessary step to prevent contagion. However, doing so without offering any financial support for workers during the period under which the account is suspended could have severe impacts on the livelihoods of workers in already precarious situations.

Illness-related measures

Just over half of the platforms we surveyed instituted some form of sick pay for workers. The amounts paid differ substantially across countries but have typically been relatively limited. For example, Uber Eats in the UK has a policy of providing deliverers £30 per day plus an additional payment of up to £100 per week based on average earnings in the prior six months, for up to 15 days of illness.⁴⁹ Based on an eight-hour working day, this is at best around two-thirds of what a worker would earn even at the national minimum wage.

Ride-hailing platform Bolt also issued a similar policy in the UK. Until early July, the platform offered a flat rate of £100 per week to drivers for up to 14 days if they met the conditions of the policy, which included:

- Having completed 150 trips in the six weeks before making the claim
- Having an active driver account in the last six weeks
- Having informed Bolt about contracting the virus or being required to self-isolate (and by whom)
- Having included one of the following documents: a signed doctor's note, a letter / email from Public Health England, or a signed self-certification in the appropriate Bolt format.⁵⁰

Assuming a five-day working week and eight-hour working day (and many drivers work much longer than this), this equated to less than one-third the national minimum wage equivalent.

Similarly, Uber offered a global policy of financial assistance to all delivery riders and drivers, distributing \$19 million to nearly 50,000 workers across the world.⁵¹ But considering that Uber has 3.9 million drivers registered on their platform,⁵² this amount, while substantial, still leaves millions out in the cold.

Indeed, scheme accessibility has been a major topic of contention. Deliveroo drivers⁵³ in the UK and Amazon workers in the US⁵⁴ have pointed out that even though the platforms rolled out financial assistance policies, they have not been able to access them. Some platforms required a medical sick note for workers to be able to access financial assistance: something that was impossible to obtain for anyone who was isolating (the UK has now started issuing isolation notes via the internet). Some of those working for Instacart in the US provided this documentation but then found themselves locked in a cycle of challenges and arguments about what had been provided, at the end of which their claim was rejected.⁵⁵ Finally, those who manage to surmount these barriers often find the rewards scant in practice: some Postmates delivery drivers in the US report receiving only US\$30 in sick pay.⁵⁶

Among the 191 platforms we surveyed, 86 provided a flat-rate payment to workers for up to 14 days and only eight pledged to pay workers at their usual rate. Two platforms extended this financial assistance to the families of the workers. Didi Chuxing in China, a ride-hailing platform, offered a one-time 5000 yuan (ca. US\$700) subsidy to all drivers and their families who tested positive for the virus, in addition to other forms of financial assistance provided to the workers.⁵⁷ Another ride-hailing platform, Ola in India, announced that their “health cover” would provide both eligible drivers and their spouses with a sum of Rs 30,000 (ca. US\$400) for up to 21 days.⁵⁸

A further 19 platforms have set up financial support funds. Some, such as those from Ola in India, have clear goals, but in other cases it was unclear how workers would be supported and how workers could access these funds. Gojek, which provides on-demand services such as transport and food delivery in Indonesia, set up a US\$6 million dollar fund for workers.⁵⁹ The executive team of the platform pledged 25 percent of their salaries over the next year to support the fund and forwent any salary increases. But the platform did not specify how exactly the money would be spent, how much would be available to workers, and how they could access the funds.

In terms of other illness-related benefits, only UrbanCompany in India provided a clear policy that they would help with payments on health insurance or health savings schemes. We found no examples of platforms providing a death-in-service payment for workers’ families.

Fair Contracts

We have so far found no evidence of any platforms making beneficial changes to workers’ terms and conditions or contracts during the Covid-19 outbreak. Quite to the contrary, some platforms have explicitly stated that any payments made during periods of illness did not imply any change in a worker’s employment status, and they conditioned the payments on workers signing statements to that effect. For instance, in the US, one Uber driver stated that in order to upload his doctor’s note to the platform, he first had to agree to “onerous conditions”, such as letting Uber collect personal information and acknowledging that the payments would not change his status as an independent contractor.⁶⁰ Other platforms like Deliveroo have made accessing such hardship funds difficult and have remained opaque about how much funding is actually available to workers.⁶¹ Conversely, in

Germany where many gig workers are already contractually recognised as employees, workers have been able to access a number of benefits—particularly from government—such as formal pay loss compensation.

Fair Management

The number of platforms to have adopted Covid-19-specific fair management policies continues to be limited. The first policy, observed in 59 platforms out of 191, did not guarantee income but instead guaranteed workers no loss of bonuses and incentives, even if they were unable to work during the pandemic lockdown period. Many platforms incentivise workers to commit to high levels of activity. Through their continued engagement, workers can reach certain levels or categories (e.g. Uber Pro) and in return they receive additional payments or benefit from lower commission fees. However, if workers are inactive for a certain period of time—as has been the case during lockdowns—they risk losing their incentive levels. Examples of platforms that have a policy for workers not to lose their incentive status include Uber (e.g. maintaining Uber Pro status); Careem (which froze bonus levels, i.e. preventing drivers from being up/downgraded during the pandemic); Hermes in the UK (which guarantees existing delivery rounds for those returning from periods of sickness); and Amazon in the US (which offers unlimited unpaid time off, without any penalties or loss of status).

Lyft, Uber and Uber Eats continue to be the only platforms to have introduced another important policy: the public issuing of statements that discrimination against particular worker groups by customers would not be tolerated. Such statements have been necessary where workers from particular ethnic or religious groups have been spuriously blamed for being responsible for spreading the virus, and where some customers have reportedly refused to be served by them.

Alongside these public communications, communication with workers has sometimes been problematic, with workers finding it difficult to get responses from platforms, especially given the closure of physical hub offices. Some, for example in the US,⁶² report that it can take days to get a reply. While Careem reported opening a 24/7 Facebook-based support service for drivers, this was available only in Iraq, Kuwait, Qatar and the UAE, and it is unclear if it will be rolled out to the other 10 countries where the platform operates, and if so, when. Other workers have argued that while platforms have communicated new policies and advised them on staying safe during this period, they have little means to follow best practice when they cannot afford to buy sanitising products, and when platforms have failed to provide the promised material.⁶³

A more worrying trend has emerged amongst platforms during this time. In an attempt to maintain levels of business many platforms have resorted to more intense forms of worker surveillance, collecting more (personal) forms of data on their workers. In China, platforms such as Didi Chuxing, Meituan Peisong and DADA Kuaisong rolled out temperature scan policies. This was also true for most platforms in India, with some also requiring photographic proof of workers wearing gloves and masks. Swiggy, a food delivery platform, also required the chef who cooked the meal to share their

temperature.⁶⁴ All of this information was then shared with the customer. Pictures of restaurant staff wearing masks, sanitising the kitchens and washing their hands, as well as their temperature readings, were all made available to the customers to assure them that ordering from their platforms is safe. Similar policies were rolled out by another platform, Dunzo, which offers hyperlocal delivery services. Dunzo asked their workers to upload selfies to demonstrate that they were wearing masks and gloves, and required them to report their temperature every day before they could begin to work.⁶⁵

In reality though, workers could upload these pictures from their phone's gallery and they also type in their temperatures on the app. Platforms thus had no process in place to verify this information. Furthermore, temperature scans do not always provide clear evidence of Covid-19 infection, given that asymptomatic carriers may not demonstrate the most common symptoms associated with the virus.

Another form of worker surveillance we found was an attempt at contact tracing. Several platforms based in India have mandated the use of the *Aarogya Setu* application developed by the Indian government, which uses location and bluetooth data to track users.⁶⁶ These include a variety of platforms (Zomato, UrbanCompany, Swiggy, Dunzo, Grofers, Ola and Rapido) in a number of different industries, including ride-hailing, food delivery, personal services, and courier services.. Other platforms, such as Amazon, Uber, Flipkart and BigBasket, have put out advisories to encourage the use of this app for its Indian users. However, there are serious concerns over the privacy of the individuals who are registered on the app, and concerns about the possible misuse of data being collected at such a large scale. For instance the terms and conditions within the application do not seem to conform with Indian cyberlaw.⁶⁷ Thus platforms collect intimate forms of personal data about their workers in order to create an illusion of safety for their customers.

Fair Representation

We have so far found no evidence of platforms engaging with independent worker associations or any other groups that represent the interests of workers. However, since our first report, there has been a significant increase in worker action, highlighting the deepening vulnerabilities of workers across the world.

As we discuss further below, a number of trade unions and worker associations have collected evidence and published summaries of worker needs. To our knowledge, no platform has collaborated with any of these groups or even formally taken receipt of worker demands from them. Indeed there are claimed instances of platforms trying to suppress attempts by workers to organise and communicate their concerns to management.⁶⁸ Platforms have also yet to acknowledge any of the strikes that have taken place during the pandemic period, with thousands of workers walking out due to poor working conditions.

Strikes took place in Latin America in April and May, culminating on July 1 when gig workers across the continent from Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Ecuador and Mexico went on strike to protest against worsening working conditions. Brazil alone drew thousands in support. Brazilian workers organised two country-wide strikes associated with the movement *Entregadores Anti-fascistas* (Anti-fascist deliverers) in order to demand an increase in pay, supply of personal protective equipment, and an end to unfair blocking and dismissal of workers from platforms. Paulo Galo, leader of the Anti-fascist deliverers describes the effect of Covid-19: “the pandemic has tripled the number of deliverers...[The companies] have no responsibility to the worker, they can have as many workers as they want. It's a paradise for them.”⁶⁹ Despite an increase in food orders, many of Brazil's millions of gig economy workers have been working harder and earning less during the pandemic.⁷⁰ The strikers also addressed the consumers, asking them to show solidarity with the movement by not ordering through the platforms on strike days.

The same appeal was made by workers in the US on International Workers day, May 1. Workers from Amazon, Instacart and Shipt demanded hazard pay and personal protective equipment.⁷¹ More than 100 Amazon workers went on strike in New York after reports emerged that several employees had tested positive and that they were still lacking protective equipment against the virus.⁷² Similarly, workers at Instacart, the grocery shopping and delivery service in the US, engaged in a nationwide walkout in March to protest against the platform's not doing enough to protect them against contracting the virus or providing financial assistance in the event of their becoming ill.⁷³ Smaller protests have been ongoing since earlier in March when Amazon fired a warehouse worker in New York for organising a protest around safety measures for workers in the face of Covid-19.⁷⁴ Strikes by Amazon workers have continued more recently. Warehouse workers in Germany protested working conditions for 48 hours June 29 after at least 30 workers tested positive for Covid-19.⁷⁵

Aside from the risks of working during the pandemic, workers have protested additional vulnerabilities. Saúl Gómez, member of the *Ni un Repartidor Menos* (Not One Delivery Worker Killed) movement in Mexico notes that “in over 100 days of the pandemic, five delivery workers have died”.⁷⁶ Many other workers have had to live away from their families for fear of spreading the virus, an additional mental as well as practical burden on their lives. As yet, platforms have done little to engage with the concerns raised by workers in these strikes.

Looking ahead: Gig Economy after Covid-19

Normalisation

Recent policy developments in response to the Covid-19 crisis have shown a growing number of platforms offering preventive measures, as well as increased support in the case of illness for many platform workers. It is important to ask what the longer-term implications of these policies are, to what extent these policies will constitute an important change in the platforms' ongoing practices,

and whether their introduction can constitute a relevant precedent in platforms becoming more involved in the protection of gig workers. Most of the platforms that have introduced policies in support of workers have been adamant that these are extraordinary measures developed in response to the exceptional and unique nature of the Covid-19 crisis—underlining the one-off nature of these interventions, and curtailing hopes that these or similar policies might continue to be rolled out in the future.

The main issue with the one-off policies surveyed in this report is that the majority come with expiry dates, even though the risk of catching the virus continues for workers. For instance, according to their websites, financial assistance was offered by Bolt between March and early July of this year,⁷⁷ while Careem’s sick pay policy was set to end on May 31.⁷⁸ It is not immediately clear how these policies have been, or will be extended. In some countries, Uber also implemented a maximum per-person policy for their financial assistance—despite the possibility that a person might fall ill several times.⁷⁹ It therefore does not seem likely that platforms will uphold and extend these policies into the future, and that the measures constitute a structural change in the protections platforms offer to their workforce.

Many of the measures evaluated in this report, such as social distancing and mask wearing, have also become either common practice or legally enforced by governments in the months since our first report. In several of the surveyed countries (e.g. UK, Germany, France, Turkey, Brazil, and also several states in the US), platforms have had to adapt to these new recommendations and/or laws. Only a minority of platforms have rolled out more encompassing forms of protection, such as the establishment of sickness funds, the provision of health insurance or the reduction of rental costs, with even fewer introducing forms of protection like the right to unlimited time off without penalty.

Nevertheless, there are also elements that point towards more long-lasting changes in the responsibilities platforms are willing to take with respect to their workers, suggesting a longer-term trend towards more protection. First, consumers have become more aware of the importance of the services many platform workers perform in society, and have come to recognise the risks many of these workers face every day, but especially during the pandemic. This may encourage more attention to be paid to the protections offered by different platforms, particularly if consumers put pressure on them to offer improved conditions for their workers. In other words, with increased awareness, consumers might start voting for fairer platforms with their wallets.

Second, governments and policymakers have started to recognise how the lack of protection many gig workers face may have important knock-on effects on public health. In some countries, governments and health authorities have made it mandatory for platforms to provide certain forms of protection, such as personal protective equipment or disinfection of vehicles, whilst other governments have entitled gig workers to furlough or other financial support schemes. With the impending economic crisis and the unknown end date of the pandemic, governments might institutionalise these forms of protection by making them permanent, and/or they may oblige

platforms to share the financial burden of these policies, by having to contribute to their financing, in order to contain the rapid rise of public deficits.

Some governments have already begun to draft stricter regulations for the gig economy. For instance, Assembly Bill 5 which came into effect in January 2020 in California reclassifies gig workers as employees rather than independent contractors. As employees, they are entitled to benefits like annual leave and sick pay. While the bill will be put to a referendum vote in November, platforms have thus far lost each appeal to this ruling.⁸⁰

Third, platforms themselves have begun to take responsibility for things they had been unwilling to until just a few months ago. Although these measures have been framed in terms of temporariness and exceptionality, they nonetheless constitute a turning point in the protection platforms have provided to their workers. There have also been signs of more significant change in the sector. In response to the experience of Covid-19, the CEO of Just Eat announced their intention to move away from the gig economy model by hiring workers with workplace benefits rather than independent contractors.⁸¹ The platform also indicated they would only use gig workers in countries where they could provide benefits, such as insurance, to drivers.⁸² Plans for how this would work for the platform, which currently operates in 16 countries around the world, have not yet been released, and how it will work out remains to be seen. But ultimately it seems that platforms will find it increasingly hard to claim no responsibility for matters such as health and income protection for their workers. How, for instance, can platforms like Uber or Deliveroo continue justifying providing financial support to workers affected by Covid-19, but not to workers with other illnesses? How can platforms provide Covid-19-related health insurance but no health insurance for other work-related risks?

The Pandemic and Financial Prospects

The Covid-19 crisis has resulted in a significant financial hit for many platforms, with some ceasing operations during lockdowns, and others seeing demand for their services plummeting. This has incurred enormous financial losses, with some platforms abandoning certain markets (e.g. Uber Eats in Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Ukraine). The financial consequences of the Covid-19 crisis have also brought about a wave of mergers and acquisitions, as platforms try to restructure and reorganise to improve profitability or avoid major losses (e.g. Cornershop in Chile was bought by Uber in May 2020).⁸³ There is a clear trend towards greater market concentration as players with better financial backing are able to acquire financially weaker platforms.

Nevertheless, not all platforms have experienced losses during the pandemic. A number of platforms, especially those in the courier and delivery sectors, have seen their revenues skyrocket, as more people have started to use their services in order to avoid going into shops, or because they have been prevented by lockdowns. In July 2020, Hermes, the parcel delivery firm, announced that they were planning to open 10,000 positions to meet the surge in demand for home deliveries. However, 9,000

of these jobs are going to be for couriers, many of whom will be classified as self-employed, with no access to basic employment protections such as the minimum wage and sick pay.

Many food delivery companies have also seen their sales increasing by double digits, with Uber Eats seeing a growth in revenues of 103 percent from the previous year.⁸⁴ Some platforms have used the Covid-19 crisis as a springboard to venture into new sectors and areas of business. For instance, Uber has launched *Connect*, a same-day courier service for small packages, in 25 cities around the world. Similarly, food delivery service Yassir undertook significant expansion into grocery delivery in North Africa, launching *Yassir Express* in Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia.

Although this massive jump in sales is probably temporary and digital purchases are likely to wane as shops and restaurants gradually reopen, some have argued that the Covid-19 crisis has changed consumers' shopping habits forever, and at least some of the sales are likely to have switched to websites and apps for good.⁸⁵ Consequently, platforms are likely to become an increasingly essential part of our economies, with continuing expansion of their market penetration and market share.

How will these changes in the platform economy affect the working conditions of workers? On the one hand, the role of platforms as labour providers is bound to increase and become more commonplace. As platforms replace more traditional companies in certain markets, we are likely to see a shift to more non-standard forms of employment, including zero hours, gig work, and other more contingent and less protected alternatives. The Covid-19 crisis appears to have already accelerated an already existing growth trend for gig work.⁸⁶

However, as platforms increase their market concentration and market share, a small number of players is set to dominate entire markets, holding a disproportionate amount of power over workers and governments alike. As such, it will become increasingly difficult to implement policies that run counter to platform interests, as the threat of leaving a market will be a key point of leverage for these platforms against unwanted regulatory interventions and changes.

Multinational vs Local Platforms: What Differences Can We Observe?

Our research demonstrates a difference in the type and degree of the measures taken by different platforms, depending on whether they are multinational (i.e. operating in various countries) or regional (i.e. operating in a single country). In particular, multinational platforms have been more active in introducing policies to protect workers during the pandemic and, on average, they have implemented a wider range of measures. At the same time, they have generally been able to enact costly policies, such as financial support schemes and health insurance. Multinational platforms have both greater financial capacity, and bigger organisational and operational capacity, and this may have allowed them to implement a wider range of costly policies and measures. This might also help explain why multinational platforms have been more active in reconfiguring their activities, by offering new or additional services, in order not to lose revenues, or to contain losses during the pandemic. Multinational platforms have been better able to adopt a "pack up and leave" approach, not only by

abandoning certain services but by leaving entire markets if they are no longer deemed profitable. This is the case, for instance, for Uber Eats and Careem Bus in Egypt.

In contrast, regional or local platforms have shown less capacity to adapt to the new market conditions created by the Covid-19 crisis, and have been less able to implement new policies to protect their workers. Regional platforms have mostly been introducing specific Covid-19-related measures, such as provision of personal protective equipment (which has been legally mandated in some countries) or the installation of protections in vehicles, but they have generally refrained from introducing more costly policies, such as financial assistance, deferral, or sick pay. But it is also worth considering that some of the policies highlighted in our Table of Platform Policies for Covid-19 (pgs. 6-11) were already available to workers in local platforms *before* the pandemic, rather than being additional measures introduced to shield workers during the pandemic. For example, in China, most platforms were already offering death benefits to their workers.⁸⁷ In another example, Mr D Food, in South Africa, was already offering personal injury, death and disability insurance for all their drivers executing deliveries. This insurance, which is provided free of charge, includes lump sum payments and/or coverage of medical costs, where applicable. Nevertheless, where more costly policies have been introduced, the amount of financial protection provided or its duration has generally been more limited compared to multinational platforms.

Overall, we have seen a different degree of adaptability of multinational vs regional platforms to the Covid-19 crisis, with a different capacity of the two types of platforms not only to venture into—or abandon—certain services and markets, but also in the type and degree of the measures they have introduced to protect workers. Whilst multinational platforms have generally been responsive in adopting a wide range of encompassing policies, regional platforms have struggled to offer equivalent protective measures; although some of them were already in place before the beginning of the pandemic.

Analysis and Discussion

While our first report released in April 2020 reported on early emergency responses from governments and gig economy platforms, this second report comes half a year into the crisis. Platform and government policies have evolved, and in some cases, have provided workers with additional support. The majority of the 191 platforms surveyed offer some sort of policy to protect workers from the financial, social, and physical effects of the pandemic. Overall, what workers want and need—as reflected in union requests and individual workers’ testimony—is primarily pay-related, i.e. a desire to maintain their income. Platforms have largely, with the exception of some which are providing some level of sick pay, left this to governments. Instead, platforms have focused mainly on preventive measures which are predominantly aimed at protecting and reassuring customers. While many governments have torn up their ideologies and rulebooks in order to respond to this unprecedented

threat, platforms largely have not. Except for the introduction of sick pay, they have been incremental rather than radical in their responses, and there continues to be a gap between what platforms say they offer and what all workers are able to access. Moreover, some platforms have opted for buck-passing: their strategy of financial support for workers is simply a set of hyperlinks to government-provided schemes, and their strategy of worker protection is a set of hyperlinks to government-provided public health information.

Other forms of assistance have been mostly piecemeal: platforms offering loans rather than payments to workers with financial difficulties; deferring rather than waiving loan repayments; simply telling workers to disinfect rather than monitoring that they do so; providing general health and safety guidance information rather than bespoke personal health advice.

Indeed, there are many areas where platforms continue to provide little or no support, and fail to protect the workers who are providing essential services during the pandemic. Around 10 percent of the surveyed platforms⁸⁸ instituted policies to provide financial support to workers. Some platforms have frozen loyalty programs or other bonuses in an attempt to safeguard worker income. There is also inconsistency and uncertainty as to whether workers have received the protection equipment promised and whether they have been able to access sick pay. A handful of platforms have released public statements condemning discrimination against workers, though they did not take any practical steps for protection against race-based abuse.

Most noticeably, little has been done to improve contractual terms, instead, platforms have continued to take a position of denying responsibility towards workers, insisting workers are independent contractors rather than employees. Despite calls from prominent politicians to do so,⁸⁹ platforms have not altered contracts to reclassify workers as employees or dependent contractors. During the past few months legal battles in the UK and US have intensified around this issue. Voters in California will be deciding on the future of AB5 (a proposed law that extends employee status to gig economy workers) in November, and gig economy workers in the UK are waiting to hear later this year whether they will be entitled to employment benefits. Meanwhile, platforms continue to engage in costly legal battles to maintain that their workers are independent contractors who are not entitled to benefits. Uber for example, continues to contest the AB5 ruling in the US, and the ongoing case in the UK. More broadly, platforms have been keen to avoid a ratchet effect, whereby measures taken now could later be interpreted as equating workers with employees. For example, the language used around sick pay has been carefully worded: platforms typically do not describe the financial support provided as sick pay, but instead describe it as a “one-time pay adjustment” or a “support payment”. There have been several instances of platforms appealing directly to governments and platform users to provide financial assistance to gig workers, effectively deflecting responsibility away from themselves, and towards other actors. Platforms like Careem have encouraged users to tip retroactively in some places, while others like Getir in Turkey have expanded their tipping functions.

Yet, there are signals that platforms are increasingly aware of the unsustainability of arguing that gig workers are independent contractors, working for themselves; and continuing to distance themselves from their responsibilities for providing employment benefits. Several months into the crisis, the CEO of Uber called on local governments in the US to create laws that would require companies to provide gig economy workers with benefits.⁹⁰ A similar open letter released by the CEO of Careem stated that it was not financially feasible for the company to fill the gap in worker income, emphasising that drivers were in “grave danger of losing everything.”⁹¹ And in a recent interview, as highlighted earlier, the CEO of Just Eat announced the company’s intention to move away from the gig economy model by hiring workers with workplace benefits rather than independent contractors.⁹² The platform also indicated they would only use gig workers in countries where they could provide benefits, such as insurance, to drivers.⁹³

While these sentiments have the effect of framing platform executives as benevolent parties to the current crisis, they should be taken with a grain of salt, especially when taken together with how some platforms have been battling in the courts to claim they are technology rather than transport companies, facilitators rather than employers, and that workers are independent contractors and not employees.

In a similar vein, the executives of some platforms have announced that they are forgoing their 2020 salaries⁹⁴, in order to ensure that their platforms stayed afloat during the crisis. While financial uncertainty hit all platforms during the pandemic, it is difficult to overlook the fact that it also provided some platforms opportunities to expand their operations to new services and sectors. Most representative of the financial uncertainty platforms are experiencing is a letter sent by Zomato to its workers in May 2020 which simultaneously emphasised new market ventures while announcing pay cuts and job losses due to financial troubles.⁹⁵

It may still be too early to accuse platforms of “fair-washing”: of making well-publicised statements about their actions to help workers, and then failing to deliver on those. However, policies often use the language of the get-out clause rather than the language of the guarantee: “We are actively working to provide...” rather than “We will provide...”; “You can apply for ...” rather than “You will receive ...”; or that personal protection equipment will only be provided at “select locations”. In combination with the tendency to displace responsibility, there continues to be some contradiction in the rhetoric of platforms and the steps taken to provide actual protection for workers. Many of the measures taken by platforms can be seen as beneficial primarily to the platform and/or its customers, for example in seeking to maintain its level of business, with the benefits to workers being only a side effect. We have observed very few policies designed solely for the benefit of workers throughout the pandemic.

We have also seen the emergence of new concerns relating to working conditions in the gig economy. In recent months, platforms have taken to increased surveillance of workers, collecting invasive and personal data under the guise of health and safety. This has included requiring workers to share their

temperatures with customers before delivering orders, and sharing workers' selfies or photographs when waiting in restaurants to pick up orders. These new additions to the list of things workers need to submit to are made more concerning by the continued lack of engagement of platforms with worker associations and representatives. This is despite the fact that worker action has intensified since April 2020, with ever more workers acknowledging and resisting the working conditions they have endured during the pandemic. Workers in the Americas and Europe have, for instance, organised several strikes to draw attention to the lack of adequate safety measures. While there has been some pushback earlier in the crisis (i.e. see the Amazon US case)⁹⁶, platforms have largely failed to meaningfully engage with workers' concerns and demands.

More urgently, platforms have yet to announce what will happen to their workers moving forward. Existing platform policies and government assistance packages have begun to come to an end, without any obvious end to the pandemic in sight. There have also been mean-spirited responses from a number of platforms: making workers pay for the personal protection products necessary to reduce risk of infection while doing their job, denying sick pay to workers who have fallen ill, raising technical barriers to claiming sick pay, and allegedly dismissing those trying to organise for better pay and safety for workers whose lives and livelihoods are endangered.

Platforms are undoubtedly worried about their businesses as the economic downturn continues to deepen. But, while worsening economic conditions are worrying for platforms, they can be life-threatening for workers. Gig work has always involved a risk asymmetry between the worker and the platform, with the worker bearing most of the risk burden.⁹⁷ At its extreme, this risk manifests in gig workers robbed or murdered, killed and injured in traffic accidents, or taking their own lives when unable to keep up with loan repayments. These asymmetries have been further sharpened during the Covid-19 pandemic: it is workers who bear the risk of losing their jobs; it is workers who bear the risk and serious potential consequences of infection and loss of income, while simultaneously providing essential services for societies in lockdown.

Of course, platforms face demands from—and are accountable to—multiple stakeholders: investors, shareholders, customers and governments, as well as workers. But workers are the foundation of the pyramid without which no value can be delivered to any other stakeholder. At present, too many find themselves in the no-win situation summed up by one worker from Chile: “either I'm starving or I'm dying of coronavirus”.⁹⁸

Policy Recommendations

In this section we provide a list of policy recommendations we have developed as a result of studying platform responses. These outline what ideal platform responses might look like, in accordance with each of the five Fairwork principles discussed at the beginning of this report. In doing this, we draw on published statements from gig worker unions and associations of the actions they are seeking. To date this includes statements from nine groups, drawn from the UK (Independent Workers of Great Britain,⁹⁹ United Private Hire Drivers¹⁰⁰), US (Rideshare Drivers United,¹⁰¹ Silicon Valley Rising,¹⁰² Gig Workers Collective¹⁰³), Italy (Riders Union and Deliverance¹⁰⁴), India (Indian Federation of App Based Transport Workers,¹⁰⁵ OTU Drivers and Owners Association¹⁰⁶) and Indonesia (Two-Wheel Movement Union - GARDA, Online Driver Association - ADO¹⁰⁷). We also draw on the charter of recommendations recently coordinated by the Centre for Internet and Society and Tandem Research in India,¹⁰⁸ and on discussions with representatives of United Private Hire Drivers (UK), Gig Workers Matter (US), and Rideshare Drivers United (US).

Although we list recommendations against all five principles, it must be noted that far and away the top priority across all groups and all countries is the need for action on loss of income resulting from job loss, declining demand, illness, enforced quarantine, and caring responsibilities.

In setting out these recommendations, we recognise that workers vary in their level of dependency on platform work. Recommendations on Fair Conditions (Prevention), Fair Contracts, Fair Management, and Fair Representation should apply to all workers, regardless of level of work. Those on Fair Pay and Fair Conditions (Illness) would be targeted at those workers who are significantly dependent on earnings from the platform for their livelihood and/or would be provided in proportion to the extent of earnings derived from a platform.

We also recognise differentiation of policies by national context. For example, provision of healthcare insurance is of limited value in countries like the UK with free, universal access to healthcare (although this does not apply to migrant workers). Or, for example, that pay loss compensation by platforms in Germany may be unnecessary given gig workers' contractual status now affords them access to government financial assistance.

Finally, we acknowledge the differing circumstances and capacities of platforms which may impact their ability to undertake some actions.

Fairwork Principle	Recommended Platform Action
1. Fair Pay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Rapid access to a minimum income (equivalent to at least the local living wage) for those unable to work due to fall-off in demand, legislative restrictions, or pre-existing health vulnerabilities ● Reduction in costs (e.g. platform commission/fees) or increase in per-gig payments for those still working but with reduced earnings ● Additional hazard pay for those facing additional risks while working during the pandemic ● Waiver (not deferral) of work-related costs such as loan repayments ● Facilitated access to interest-free emergency loans ● Plan for post-lockdown income recovery measures which may include higher per-gig payments or lower commission fees ● Inclusion in income compensation and financial deferral schemes of all those who have worked for the platform during the past three months
2a. Fair Conditions (Prevention)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Regular, adequate, free provision of personal protective equipment (PPE): disinfectants, gloves, and masks ● Installation of physical barriers between driver and passengers in all ride-hailing cars ● Fully contact-free supply chains (both collection and delivery) for delivery workers ● Daily sanitisation of vehicles and upstream locations: warehouses, hubs, etc. ● Free Covid-19 check-ups for workers and their families
2b. Fair Conditions (Illness)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Accessible sick pay from platforms that apply universally to all those unable to work while ill or quarantined or while providing essential care for sick family members, and which relate to pre-pandemic average earnings ● Sick pay policies that specify precisely and openly how much workers will be paid, with simple application processes which do not impose onerous health documentation requirements that sick workers cannot meet ● Extended sick pay for those workers hospitalised by Covid-19 infection ● Provision of general medical insurance cover ● Provision of life insurance cover or other death-in-service benefits
3. Fair Contracts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● No temporary or permanent alteration of contracts during the period of the pandemic to the detriment of workers

<p>4. Fair Management</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ensure all Covid-19-related communications are in a form that can be readily accessed and understood by all workers ● Set up an accessible communications channel for workers for all issues relating to Covid-19, which is adequately staffed for rapid resolution of issues ● Transparent reporting of policies, actions and funds initiated by platforms during the pandemic ● Adhere to data privacy standards in collecting and sharing data about workers ● No loss of incentives, bonus levels or future availability of jobs for those temporarily deactivated as a result of Covid-19 ● Public statements to customers and others that discrimination against certain worker groups during the pandemic will not be tolerated
<p>5. Fair Representation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Formal receipt of, engagement with, and action on Covid-19-related demands from worker representatives

Appendix 1: List of Platforms Analysed

The order of countries follow the Table of Platform Policies for Covid-19.

Country	Platforms
UK	Deliveroo, Uber, Uber Eats, Just Eat, DPD, Hermes, Kapten, Syft, Bolt
Spain	Glovo, Deliveroo, Just Eat, Uber, Uber Eats
Italy	Glovo, Deliveroo, Just Eat, Uber, Uber Eats,
Denmark	Wolt, Just Eat
Germany	Uber, Clevershuttle, Lieferando
France	Glovo, Uber, Uber Eats, Deliveroo, Frichti, Just Eat
US	Amazon, Uber, Uber Eats, Lyft, Postmates, Doordash, Instacart, Grubhub
Chile	Uber, Uber Eats, Rappi, Didi, Cabify, Beat
Turkey	Yemeksepeti, Banabi, Migros Hemen, Bitaksi, Istegelsin, Getir
Egypt	Uber, Otlob, Swvl, Jumia
UAE	Uber, Uber Eats, Deliveroo, Talabat, Careem, Zomato
Morocco	Careem, Yassir, Jumia, Jumia Food
Lebanon	Careem, Zomato, Toters
Algeria	TemTem, Yassir, Wesselni, Careem
Tunisia	Yassir, Founa, IntiGo, Jumia, Jumia Food

Jordan	Careem, Uber, Talabat, Basket
India	Amazon, Uber, Ola, Zomato, Swiggy, BigBasket, Grofers, HouseJoy, UrbanCompany, Dunzo, Rapido, Shadow fax, Flipkart
Indonesia	Grab, Gojek
Philippines	Grab
Singapore	Grab, Deliveroo
China	Didi Chuxing, Meituan Peisong, Ele (Fengniao Peisong), FlashEx, Dianwoda, DADA Kuaisong, Meituan dache
South Africa	SweepSouth, Uber Eats, Uber, Bolt, OrderIn, Mr D, getTOD, NoSweat, M4Jam, Picup, Droppa, Secret Agent
Australia	Uber, Uber Eats, Deliveroo, Menulog, Coles
New Zealand	Uber, Uber Eats, Deliveroo, DeliverEasy, MenuLog, Zoomy, Ola
Argentina	Glovo, Uber, Cabify, Beat
Brazil	Uber, Cabify, iFood
Pakistan	Careem, Bykea, Foodpanda
Iraq	Careem
Palestine	Careem
Bahrain	Careem, Talabat, HungerStation
Qatar	Careem, Talabat, Carriage

Saudi Arabia	Careem, HungerStation, Lugmety, Carriage
Kenya	Jumia Food, Bolt, Lynk, Sendy, Uber
Nigeria	Jumia Food, Bolt, Uber
Oman	Talabat
Armenia	Yandex.taxi, InDriver, GG, Menu.am, Sovats.am, Bolt
Georgia	Yandex.taxi, GG, Glovo, Bolt
Russia	Yandex.taxi, InDriver, Maxim, YouDo, Delivery Club, Bolt,
Ukraine	Raketa, Uber, Bolt, Glovo
Bangladesh	Uber, Sheba.xyz, Truck Lagbe
Sri Lanka	Uber, PickMe
Ghana	Uber, Bolt, Jumia Food
Serbia	Car.go, alideda, Donesi, Bolt, Wolt

Appendix 2: List of Platform Policies for Covid-19

Policy Category	Sub-Category	Platform Action
1. Fair Pay	Pay Loss Compensation	Additional payments to compensate for loss of income, including increase in pay rates
	Financial Deferral	Emergency loan facility
		Asking renters to reduce vehicle / other rental costs
		Loan repayment suspension
		Deferral of loan/rental costs
	Income Opportunity Attempted Compensation	Expansion of scope of service to try to increase business for platform and workers (e.g. ride-hailing adding delivery; meal delivery adding grocery delivery)
		Waiver of customer fees to try to maintain level of business
Stopping onboarding of new workers to preserve income for existing workers		
2a. Fair Conditions (Prevention)	Physical Protection (Workers)	Contact-free delivery, including no signature and no cash payment for delivery
		Physical barriers installed in vehicles
		Suspend accounts of customers diagnosed with Covid-19
		Additional sanitisation by platform, e.g. of vehicles, warehouses, hubs, etc.
		Contact-free management via closure of physical hubs
		Destroying all unpackaged goods, against contamination

		Social distancing / other measures in upstream supply chain (e.g. food preparation and grocery picking / packing)
	Physical Protection (Consumers / General Population)	Suspend accounts of drivers diagnosed with Covid-19
		Travel ban policy in line with the latest guidelines given by local / national authorities
		Suspension of some services
	Personal Protection	Provision of disinfectant (gel, spray) to workers
		Provision of masks for workers
		Instruction to follow best hygiene practices
		Mandatory use of PPE, including monitoring of worker hygiene practices
	Virus Safety Knowledge	Provision of standard virus health practice information
		Provision of virus safety training
	Healthcare Assistance	Medical checkups, including temperature scans
		Access to general health advice
		Access to personal health advice (paid / provided by platform)
2b. Fair Conditions (Illness)	Sick Pay	Sick pay for workers who are ill or in mandatory quarantine (14 days)
		Usual pay rate for workers who are ill or in mandatory quarantine (14 days)
		Financial support fund (use to be clarified but usually for sick pay)

		Workers made to sign agreements that sick pay was pandemic-specific and does not change employment status
	Insurance	Platform provision of health insurance, or credit on health savings account
	Death Benefits	Provision of death benefits
3. Fair Contracts	[No example policies found]	[Beneficial changes to worker T&Cs / contracts / status as a result of Covid]
4. Fair Management	Algorithmic Penalty Protection	No loss of incentive level despite lower level of work
		Unlimited unpaid time off without penalty
	Anti-Discrimination	Platform statement to customers that discrimination against certain worker groups during Covid-19 (e.g. on spurious hygiene grounds) will not be tolerated
5. Fair Representation	[No example policies found]	[Formal receipt of, engagement with, and action on Covid-19-related demands from worker representatives]
		Dismissal of workers if they engage in organisation of workers during Covid-19
Other	Donation	Substantial donation or other assistance (e.g. free services) to national health services, community funds or similar
	Hiring	Hiring initiative for unemployed workers (does not benefit current workers)
	Service Contraction	Contraction of scope of services, e.g. to emergency provision only

Key: items in blue text appear to be particularly for the benefit of the platform but with some potential benefit for workers; items in orange text are likely negative for workers; items in red text are negative for workers.

Credits and Funding

Fairwork draws on the expertise and experience of staff at the University of Oxford, the University of Cape Town, the University of the Western Cape, the University of Manchester, the International Institute of Information Technology Bangalore, Technical University of Berlin, Universidad Adolfo Ibáñez (UAI-Chile), Universidade do Vale do Rio dos Sinos (Unisinos University, Brazil), Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences (FLACSO-Ecuador), and Universitas Gadjah Mada, Yogyakarta, Indonesia. Project staff work to translate our principles into measurable thresholds, conduct rigorous research to evaluate platforms against those thresholds, and publish our results in a transparent manner.

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⁵ At the time of writing, members of the Fairwork team are also undertaking surveys of workers in Fairwork programme countries, and conducting interviews with worker representatives. The results of this survey will be published in a later report.

⁶ The list of platforms within our survey is not representative of any particular country or sector. Some of the platforms we have surveyed stopped their operations during the course of our research since April 2020, and have been excluded from our Table of Platform Policies for Covid-19. These are Cornershop in Chile, Uber Eats and Careem Bus in Egypt, Airlift in Pakistan, Uber and Uber Eats in Saudi Arabia, Citymobil in Russia, Uber Eats and Eda.ua/ Menu.ua in Ukraine.

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