

Today, on International Workers' Memorial Day we remember the dead and fight for the living.

We stand in solidarity with workers', and their families, whose lives have been lost, been left disabled, and injured in their line of work.

Every year more people are killed at work than in wars. Most don't die of mystery ailments, or in tragic "accidents". They die because an employer decided their safety just wasn't that important a priority.

Death, illness, disease, and accidents at work are preventable. Most work-related accidents, diseases, and death at work can be avoided, but only if employers make health and safety a top priority.

As our movement meets to commemorate those whose lives has been lost and impacted by workplace injuries, so too do we look to the present and future to build a world of work that prioritises health and safety, and where all forms of workplaces related injury and disease are eliminated.

With the recent devolution of industrial injuries disablement benefit comes a generational opportunity to develop a new benefit system and create a Scottish Industrial Injuries Advisory Council fit for the 21st century, reflecting the modern Scottish workplace, and the harms workers continue face.

The existing benefit has been built on the backs of those workers lost, injured, and disabled before us. We owe it to them to ensure that workers in the 21st century who become injured or ill in the line of work can turn to a no-blame social security scheme that is retained and strengthened.

Where the worst incidents of workplace injury and disease may occur, we strongly believe that the state must and should ensure that they will be there to support workers' who must live with the consequences.

That is why, on International Workers' Memorial Day, we call upon the Scottish Government to support the Scottish Trade Union Movements pledge to introduce a Scottish Employment Injuries Advisory Council and to support Mark Griffin MSPs proposed bill to implement this.

The bill would secure an independent, statutory council in Scots law, with new research powers to research the harms in 21st century workplaces – and put workers at the heart of the new benefit.

We can build on the existing scheme, but we must do more than merely change the name. It has failed to keep pace with the dangers, injuries and diseases that occur in the economy and our workplaces that we know best.

It is the trade union movement who know the harms, our workplaces, and the consequences of those dangers. It is our movement that can build the evidence case and know how the new benefit must evolve.

With the requirement for the benefit to be devolved by 2026, the Scottish government deliver at pace an independent, statutory advisory council that meets the needs of workers, and puts them at the heart of it.

The government must support the Proposed Scottish Employment Injuries Advisory Council Bill.

