

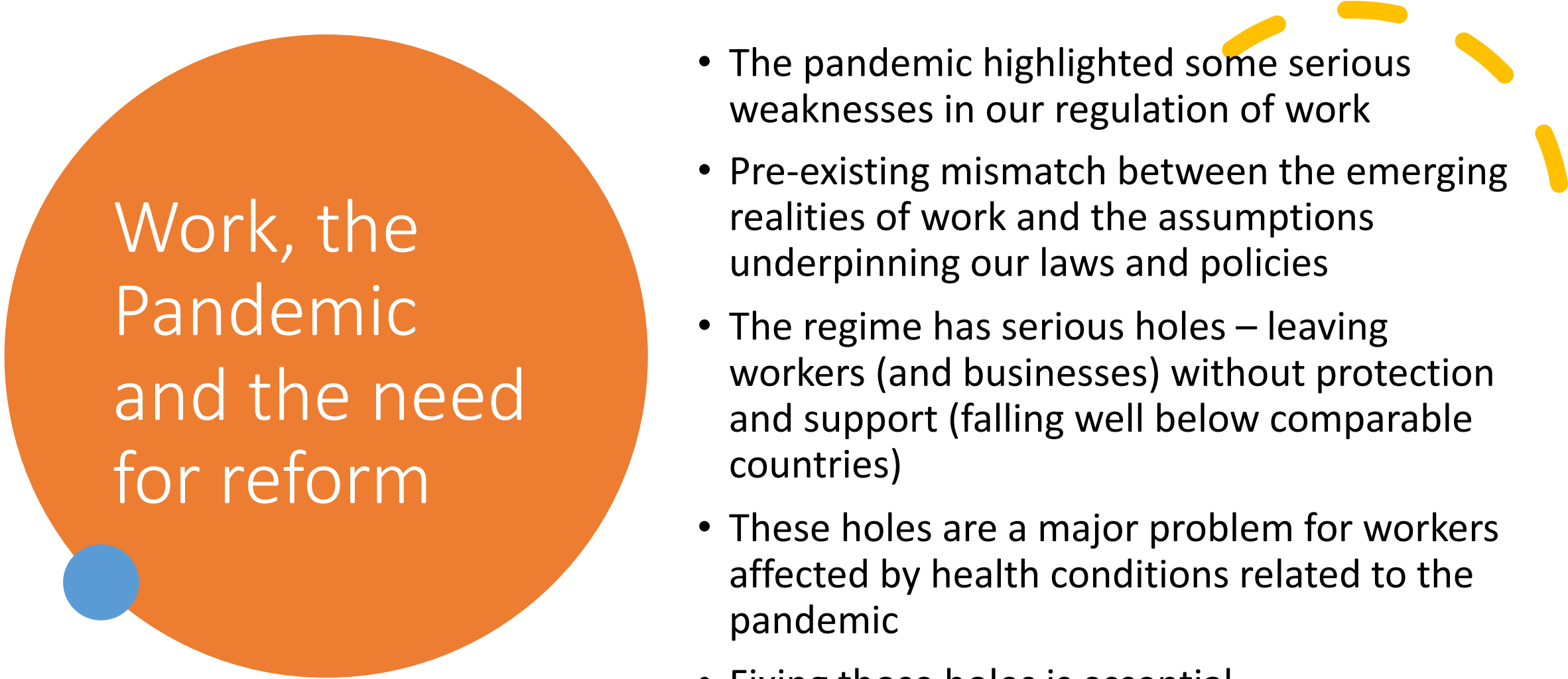


Rethinking employment and work: What works for all?

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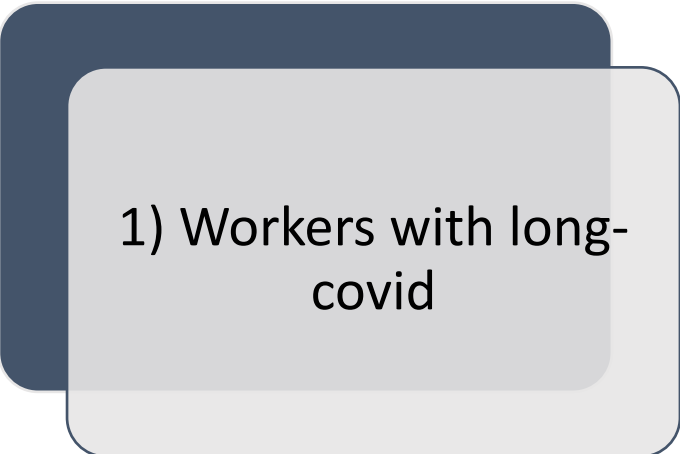


Work, the Pandemic and the need for reform

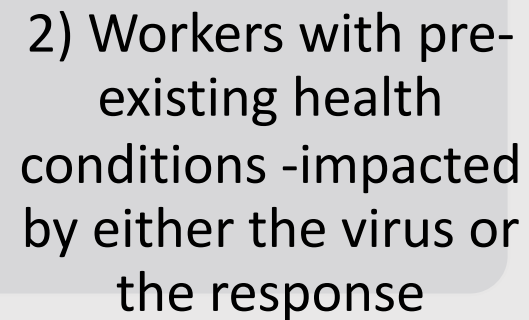
- The pandemic highlighted some serious weaknesses in our regulation of work
- Pre-existing mismatch between the emerging realities of work and the assumptions underpinning our laws and policies
- The regime has serious holes – leaving workers (and businesses) without protection and support (falling well below comparable countries)
- These holes are a major problem for workers affected by health conditions related to the pandemic
- Fixing those holes is essential



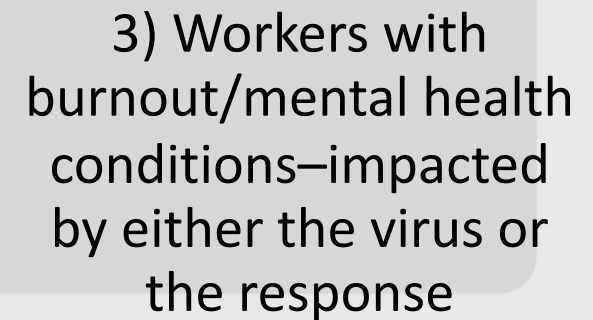
Focus: Three groups of workers



1) Workers with long-covid



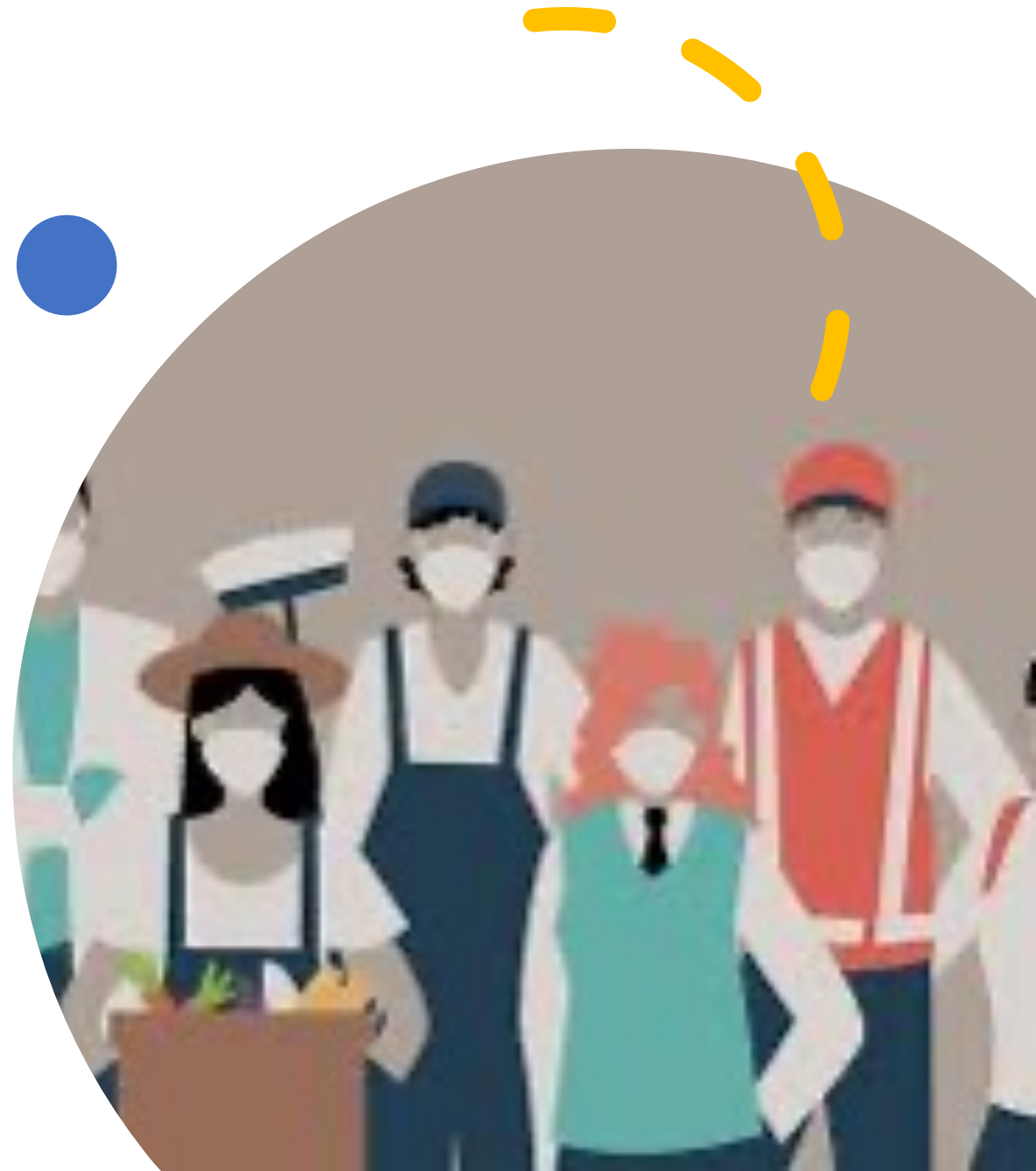
2) Workers with pre-existing health conditions -impacted by either the virus or the response



3) Workers with burnout/mental health conditions—impacted by either the virus or the response

Why those groups of workers?

- In a work/employment context their issues are often the same - Diagnostic categories helpful in medical research and clinical practice are often not helpful for law and policy
- They are each being failed by the same gaps in our regulatory/policy response
- Their working lives would each be helped by the same improvements to our regulatory regime
- To achieve meaningful reform it is better to understand the long-covid impacted as one group of workers being failed by an inadequate legal response rather than as the “problem”



The virus and the response to it

- Lock-downs – disruption, role-conflict and isolation
- Workload pressure – some jobs saw a massive increase in demands
- Occupational violence – threats, abuse and violence
- Social support – diminished informal support and connection
- Anxiety/uncertainty – workplace, personal and global uncertainty
- Understaffing – sick leave and high turn over
- Expectations – pressure to return to “normal”
- Business decisions – redundancies, spending cuts, staffing levels

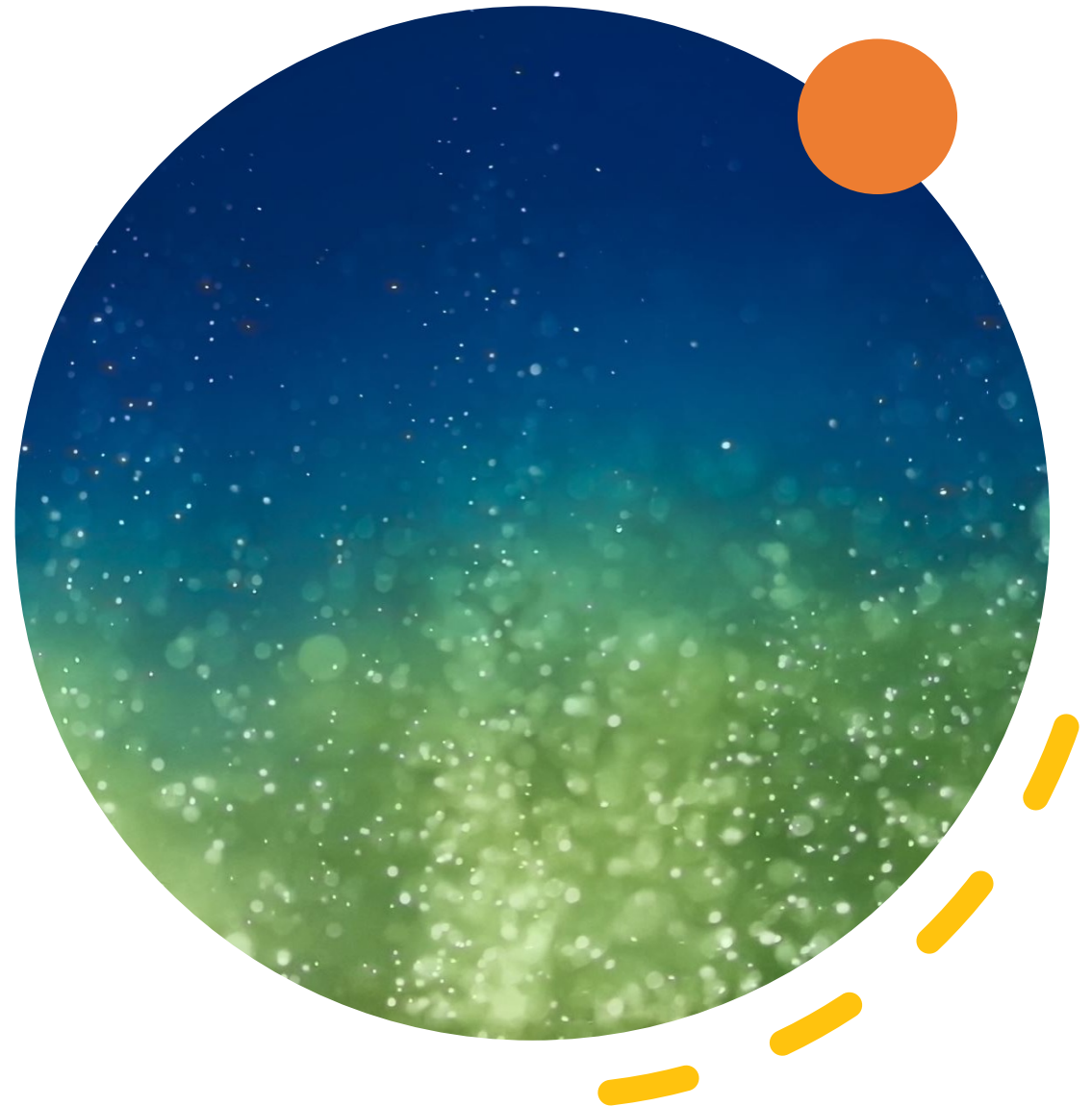
Areas where our laws are failing

Lack of focus on prevention of chronic work-related health problems

Lack of compensation and rehabilitation for affected workers

Disconnections between H&S, ACC and Employment (e.g. sick leave)

Lack of clear guidelines for employers






ACC


- Modern and equitable ACC coverage of work-related health problems
- Data collection – supports research, policy and enforcement

Health and safety

- Making health as much of a priority as safety
- Regulations and guidelines on healthy conditions of work
- Better suited enforcement tools



Reforms we
need:
Making it
work for all



Reforms we
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Employment relations

- Sick leave rules suited for the modern workplace
- Clearer set of employer obligations in relation to worker health

Connections between different parts

- Better working conditions –better workplaces
- Equitable support for people affected by long term illness