



Members' Briefing REVENUE & CUSTOMS GROUP

To: **All Members**

cc: **Branch Secretaries, Group Executive Committee, Equality Chairs, VOAC** (for info)

Can this Briefing be circulated via HMRC IT systems: **YES**

Website: **YES**

Action to be taken: **For the attention of all members**

Date: **6 October 2022**

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INDIA BUILDINGS TEMPORARY CLOSURE **Update for members**

- ***PCS takes steps to address Liverpool members' home-working concerns***
 - ***Back-dated payment being made to reflect additional costs***
 - ***Union presses for clarifying policy and a review of payment level***

As you know, since July 2022, the recently opened regional centre for Liverpool, India Buildings, has been closed because of an infrastructure issue. As a result, members based in India Buildings have been told that they will need to work from home until at least the new year. This briefing updates you on central discussions the union has held with the department, regarding the impact the closure has had on you if you're based in the Liverpool office, and wider matters involving HMRC members as a whole, which the temporary closure has brought to light.

Working from home

Since the closure of the office, if you normally work from India Buildings, the odds are you've been working from home. Our Merseyside branch has raised with the Group Executive Committee, the concern that with energy bills increasing, there needs to be financial recognition that by working from home all of your working week, you're incurring additional costs - even though you didn't choose to work from home.

PCS has discussed this matter with the department, and HMRC have confirmed that if you're based in the Liverpool regional centre, and you're having to work from home all week, you'll receive a payment of £13 per month. This is precisely the same amount that's received by all HMRC members who are contractually home-based, and it will be back-dated to July.

In addition, we've asked for, and received, the assurance that the fact you're receiving the equivalent of the contractual home-based working payment, doesn't change your contractual status (in other words, just because you get the same payment as a contractual home-based worker, doesn't make you a contractual home-based worker).

We've also asked for, and been given, the assurance that any newer member of staff who hadn't already had the necessary 'Display Screen Equipment' furniture to use at home (an appropriate chair, desk etc.), should by now have received it.

Wider issues

During our talks with the department, it became apparent that there are some wider issues related to members who are working from home.

First of all, the home-based working guidance that the department issues isn't clear, where the £13 payment is concerned. So, we've asked HMRC to make it clearer that this kind of payment is available, and they've agreed to work with unions to clarify the policy.

Then there is the amount itself. It seems that the level of this payment hasn't been reviewed for years, and frankly some of the costs that are the basis for this payment have pretty-much doubled in the last twelve months. PCS have called on HMRC to meet with us to discuss a review of the current payment level, and to agree a mechanism for regularly reviewing the level in future. The payment will now be on the agenda at the next formal meeting with the department.

Finally, rather than trying to address problems like this on a case-by-case basis, every time they come up; we've said to the department that we need to work together to develop a common policy, complete with 'help cards', so we can move quickly, if something like this happens again. HMRC have said they're happy to work with us on that.

Join PCS

PCS isn't just here to speak-up for you on civil service-wide issues like the current national campaign on pay, pensions and jobs; we're here to represent you on the more local issues as well, so if you've read this briefing and you aren't yet a member of PCS, then [join today](#).

Get involved!

Remember, HMRC applies restrictions on the content of union circulars distributed using the department's email system, so make sure that you stay in touch with your union. You can find your membership number in your latest email digest from PCS.

If you haven't already done so, let PCS have your personal/non-work email address and your mobile phone number. We'll only use it to keep you informed about PCS matters. You can update your details securely online by registering for [PCS Digital](#) or by contacting your local PCS rep, and asking them to enter your details securely on the PCS Organising App.

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