***News update from Notts UNISON***
22 May 2020

***1. School openings
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**School openings**
Notts County branch has written to every school and each MAT this week. We have begun to have responses. If you have any concerns about the plans at your school speak with your Headteacher/ manager in the first instance, asking to see the risk assessments. Further information can be found on the national unison website in the section education workers.

**Working from Home – expenses/tax allowance?**
Notts UNISON is aware that many members are and have been working from home. We want to answer some of your questions on this.

**What expenses can staff claim whilst working from home?**
Workers should be able to claim any additional expenses incurred whilst working from home from their employer, including for stationery and additional utility costs.
**( If you work for Notts County Council please be aware that we have raise this with them but their position remains that they will not be paying expenses for additional utility costs due to the cost saving that staff will have with not travelling to and from their work base)**

Apportioning additional heating, electricity and water costs can be very difficult to work out fairly. However, workers will not be able to claim for things that are used for both private and work use, for example, rent or broadband access (unless the employee did not previously have broadband and it has been solely set up for work use).

Her Majesty’s Revenue and Customs (HMRC) states that from 6 April 2020 employers can agree to a flat-rate payment of £6 per week or £26 per month for monthly paid employees to an employee working regularly at home without the employer having to justify the amount paid. If the £6 guideline rate is paid the employee does not have to keep any records to demonstrate the additional expenditure. HMRC expects that £6 per week would be sufficient for most cases, particularly where the additional costs are only for heating and lighting the work area.

For tax years 2012 to 2020 the guideline rate was £4 per week or £18 per month for monthly paid employees.

Further details from the government at [www.gov.uk/expenses-and-benefits-homeworking](http://www.gov.uk/expenses-and-benefits-homeworking)
individuals may be able to claim tax relief on this expense – in other words the amount will be deducted from the individual’s taxable income. Employees can check if they can make a claim by completing details requested via[www.gov.uk/tax-relief-for-employees/working-at-home.](http://www.gov.uk/tax-relief-for-employees/working-at-home.) We urge you to do this.

**Do I need to notify my home insurance provider?**
Staff may need to check with their home insurers, mortgage providers or landlords if there are any issues with them working from home. If there any additional costs involved (such as higher insurance premiums) negotiate with the employer to cover them. However the MoneySavingExpert website confirmed in March 2020 that they had “checked with a raft of major home insurers including Axa, Aviva, Churchill, Direct Line, Esure, Hastings, LV and More Than. All have said during the coronavirus crisis period there's no need to change or update your cover if you're now working from home and, crucially, you don't need to call and tell them.

This applies if you're doing clerical work – generally defined as working on a laptop and making phone calls. It won't cover any claims arising from visitors to your home who are there as part of your work, but this shouldn't be a problem in the current lockdown as you shouldn't be having visitors in your home anyway.”]

**Risk Assessments - Powerpoint presentation**
There is now a COVID19 Risk Assessment Powerpoint presentation available from National UNISON via the website Additional risk assessment information is also available from the same page [(link to website](https://www.unison.org.uk/search/risk%2Bassessment/)). Also, please visit the national website [www.unison.org.uk](http://www.unison.org.uk/) for regularly updated information and advice regarding COVID19

**Notts Unison**
Branch Telephone Admin Numbers during the COVID19 pandemic
Marion: 07841270806 (**9.00am-2.00pm**)
Michelle: 07872197912 (**9.30am-1.30pm**)
Gill: 07841270801 (**Mon – Thurs 1.00pm-5.00pm, Fri 1.00pm-4.00pm**)
Branch email: branch.office@nottsunison.org.uk
Branch website: [www.nottsunison.org.uk](http://www.nottsunison.org.uk)