

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: **NO**

Website: **YES**

Action to be taken: **Publicise to members and potential members working for ISS**

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ISS MEMBERS MEETING

Report back from first Zoom meeting for cleaners

- *Details of issues raised around COVID-19 and union action to resolve*
 - *Campaigning activity to be announced in due course*
 - *Recruit outsourced workers and encourage them to take part*

Background

On 1 May, PCS held meetings via Zoom for members employed by ISS. This was to discuss both the issues thrown up by the COVID-19 crisis and campaigning around the union's demands for a living wage, full occupational sick pay, equal conditions to civil servants, and job security in the face of office closures. This briefing reports back on the matters raised in the meeting.

Absences related to COVID-19

So far, it appears that ISS are adhering to the arrangements discussed with the Cabinet Office and providing full pay to members who have to shield or self-isolate in line with government guidance or who have to care for children due to school closures. The only exception appears to be members who are caring for adults in the vulnerable or extremely vulnerable group, who are not getting full pay.

Per members' briefing MB/019/20, please raise any instances you are aware of where this isn't the case to GEC member Phil Dickens.

Notifying outsourced workers of suspected COVID-19 cases

Reports for several members suggest that HMRC management are not notifying the cleaners on site (and possibly not other outsourced workers on site) of where there has been a suspected case of COVID. As a result, they are discovering later that they have been working in the environment where the person with symptoms was working, after those symptoms came to light.

This has now been raised with local management in the area where it was an issue, and a solution has been proposed. The question will also be asked centrally with HMRC to ensure it is happening everywhere.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Members raised concerns about having to work without facemasks and aprons. ISS had previously advised some that these would be ordered, but they never materialised.

This issue is being discussed centrally for the whole government estate and will be raised by the union to ensure that all workers have adequate protective equipment.

Key worker status

Some ISS cleaners have been provided with letters from their management to confirm their key worker status, but others haven't. More broadly, the members haven't been advised of the implications of this including access to testing.

This has now been raised with HMRC's Chief Commercial Officer, who has confirmed he will ensure the letter should have been cascaded and he will ensure that this is the case for the members who have yet to receive it.

Campaigning activity

The meetings discussed the possibility of campaigning, both to ensure that the protections of full pay whilst off are not reversed once the COVID-19 crisis is over and the broader issue of pay, conditions and job security for these workers who are routinely treated as second class citizens but now recognised as key workers. Details of these activities will be publicised at the appropriate time.

Future meetings

The intention is to have these meetings on a regular basis, timed to best suit the availability of the members. This will allow members to continue to raise issues as above, and for reps to report back on progress pursuing solutions locally and nationally. It will also mean that the campaign can continue to be developed and members can have a direct say in the shape of the campaign on an ongoing basis.

If you haven't already, please make contact with the outsourced workers in your branch and encourage them to join the union if they aren't already members. If they are interested in attending these meetings, please contact GEC member Phil Dickens.

Get involved!

Remember: HMRC are restrictive about what circulars can be distributed using the department's email system, so make sure that you stay in touch with your union.

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.

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