

The latest news and announcements from Derbyshire UNISON

Mileage rates

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Mileage rate rise needed urgently for public sector staff

The government must act to raise mileage rates for all frontline public service staff who can't do their jobs without vehicles, but are struggling with fuel costs, says UNISON.

HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) has not increased the allowance in a decade. Workers affected include midwives attending home births, district nurses, social workers and pest control officers.

UNISON says this means staff are effectively subsidising their employers, because they are paying much more for petrol than they can claim back, especially as fuel prices remain so high.

The approved mileage rate set by the Treasury for cars has not changed since 2011/12. It stands

at 45p for the first 10,000 miles and 25p for every additional mile in a tax year, nor have mileage reimbursements for workers on NHS contracts*, adds UNISON.

In contrast, the cost of petrol and oil has risen by 45% just this year. Overall motoring costs, including petrol, oil and vehicle maintenance, have soared by 39% since 2011**, says the union.

New analysis by UNISON shows that to keep pace with these increases, a 63p mileage rate increase is needed for the first 10,000 miles and then 35p for

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every additional mile. This would put £150 a year back into workers' pockets and better reflect the real costs of motoring.

A separate UNISON survey of health staff and those employed by organisations providing NHS services highlights how they rely on their own vehicles to do their jobs.

Findings based on 550 staff show the vast majority (91%) of those who drive a car at work use their own vehicle. More than two in five (44%) of these travel over 4,000 miles a year for work, including some who clock up more than 10,000.

An overwhelming number of staff (95%) of staff who drive for work are required to do so as part of their contract. More than a fifth (24%) say they are unable to use public transport to do their jobs, either because none is available or doesn't run at suitable times.

Around one in six (18%) say they need to carry heavy or dangerous equipment when they drive for work. Despite needing to use their cars, more than nine in ten (94%) say the current mileage reimbursement rate does not cover their actual driving costs.

Later today, public service staff are travelling to Parliament to highlight how fuel costs they incur through work are taking a toll on their finances. They are asking the Treasury to review HMRC mileage rates to reflect the real costs of using vehicle for their jobs.

They will share their stories in a roundtable discussion organised by UNISON and hosted by Dan Jarvis MP. Labour, Conservative and SNP MPs are also due to attend the event.

UNISON general secretary Christina McAnea said: "Staff can't carry on putting their hands in their pockets like this. No one should have to pay to work, especially those providing vital services.

"Many will end up quitting the public sector altogether because of wholly inadequate mileage rates. They simply can't afford the petrol to do their jobs, on top of huge bills and other rising living costs.

"The government must take action now by increasing rates so staff aren't subsidising their employers."

*NHS Agenda for Change (AfC) contracts, or staff with AfC mileage allowances in their contracts, currently get 56p for each of the first 3,500 miles, then 20p per mile over this amount. These figures have not been updated since 2014. Local government workers have not seen their mileage payments increase since 2010.

**Office for National Statistics, consumer price inflation tables to July 2022 - rates quoted are for the retail prices index.