

December 2020

There for You is UNISON's unique charity, set up to help members in difficulties – and this year, the COVID-19 crisis is making life harder for many of our already-stretched members.



There for You's COVID-19 response fund has been made available to help members access grants of up to £500.

So, what sort of reason might a member need help? All of the following members were able to access grants from There for You, using the charity's quick and easy COVID-19 grant application process.

Sheila is a care worker in a nursing home and had to take sick leave for three weeks as she had COVID-19 symptoms. She was paid statutory sick pay only for the time that she was ill, which left her struggling to pay her bills.

Her work is always challenging and the current health crisis has made additional demands on Sheila and her colleagues. The last thing she needed was financial worries on top of everything else.

Lesley is a nurse working at a hospital some distance away from her home. She has been doing extra shifts to help during the current crisis, but her usual transport links have been reduced. In order to travel to and from the hospital, she is having to regularly pay for cab fares, which she is finding expensive.



We are so saddened to hear of members dying from COVID-19, including so many who have died in the line of duty, as they try to help others in this unprecedented time.

We want you to know that if you're the family or friend of a UNISON member that has died, we're here to help.

UNISON Death Benefit

If you are the next of kin of a UNISON member who has died, you can apply for our death benefit.

Due to the COVID-19 outbreak, and from 1st March 2020 to July 2020 (when it will be reviewed), the next of kin of all deceased members will receive a benefit of £576.

For more information visit unison.org.uk

Help may also be available for members suffering financial difficulties for all sorts of unexpected reasons such as:

- Loss of income;
- Bereavement;
- Relationship breakdown.

There for You is proud to support thousands of members and their families every year with things such as:

- General Living Costs
- Utility Bills
- Funeral Costs



Winter fuel grants are likely to be available again for UNISON members who are having difficulty meeting their heating bills. The grant will open in January. UNISON's recent school uniform grant was very oversubscribed and closed only eight days after it opened so members are advised to keep an eye on the UNISON website and for further communication from UNISON.

The grants, which are available from the union's independent welfare charity, There for You, consist of a one-off payment of up to £60.

The process will be very similar to previous years and an amount of money has been ring-fenced to support this initiative. This is a fixed sum and we are unable to make further grants once it is allocated.

Members who wish to apply for a grant can download an application form from the website.



Working from Home

You may be able to claim tax relief for additional household costs if you have to work at home regularly, either for all or part of the week. This includes if you have to work at home because of COVID-19.

Additional costs includes things like heating, metered water bills, home contents insurance or a new broadband connection.

You can either claim tax relief on:

- £6 a week from April 2020
- The exact amount of extra costs you've incurred above the weekly amount - you'll need evidence such as receipts, bills or contracts.

For more information visit <https://www.gov.uk/tax-relief-for-employees/working-at-home>

Useful information:

- The **LiveFearFree** helpline is a free, confidential 24 hour helpline run by **Welsh Women's Aid**. Call 0808 8010 800 or email info@livefearfreehelpline.wales
- Men experiencing domestic abuse can contact the Respect **Men's Advice Line** on 0808 801 0327. Men suffering abuse can also contact **The Dyn Project** in Wales. They offer a free and confidential helpline and provide advice and information on their website.
- **Stonewall Cymru** provides advice and support on a range of issues to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender victims and survivors of domestic abuse in Wales.
- **Bright Sky app** is a free mobile app that provides support and information to anyone who may be in an abusive relationship.

The Trussell Trust

If you are in financial crisis and live in England or Wales, please call the Trussell Trust confidential, free helpline on 0808 208 2138 (Monday - Friday, 9am - 5pm) for emergency food and support.