

Hundreds of thousands of care workers could be plunged back into sick pay poverty



Care workers are set to be plunged back into sick pay poverty today [1 April] as a pandemic scheme ends, the GMB Union has warned.

Under a scheme set up during the crisis, care providers could receive funding from the Government to provide full pay for any covid related absence.



The majority of England's 1.3 million care workers are only contractually entitled to Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) if they fall ill, which currently stands at £96.35 a week – one of the lowest rates in Europe. And many care workers are not entitled to any form of sick pay.

SSP is due to rise to £99.35 a week on 06 April, or 3 per cent. But with inflation running riot at more than 8 per cent, sick pay cover is being cut in real terms by more than 5 per cent.

The union warned that poverty sick pay would lead to higher infection rates.

Rachel Harrison, GMB National Officer, said:

"GMB has long campaigned for sick pay to be a contractual right for all care workers.

"Workers forced onto poverty SSP rates are left with the dilemma of choosing between going to work poorly or staying home and not being able to put food on the table.

"The lack of sick pay in social care is one of the biggest infection risks there can be.

"With covid very much still part of life, removing sick pay for covid isolation just puts people at risk.

"It's about time our care workers were valued.

"GMB is calling for no less than £15 per hour and full sick pay for all social care workers."

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