

G4S sick pay fails prison officers 'among most likely to die'



G4S sick pay policy exposes the gaps our 'hidden' key workers fall through

GMB has slammed private prison operator G4S for failing to give guarantees on sick pay for prison officers - revealed as some of the most likely to die from covid-19.

Figures from the ONS this week showed those working in prisons are some of the staff - **outside of those working in the NHS and care homes - most likely to die from Coronavirus.**

Despite this G4S - which runs prisons including Altcourse, in Liverpool and Rye Hill, in Northamptonshire, refuses to give guarantees that staff forced to self-isolate or take time off sick due to



coronavirus will get full pay – leaving many to languish on statutory sick pay of just £95 a week, once they have exceeded any contractual sick pay arrangements.

This failure to give a cast iron guarantee of full pay not only puts more prison officers at risk but it raises the danger for inmates at a time when prison transmission is on the increase.

If staff cannot afford to take time off to self-isolate they may continue to come to work.

The ONS statistics and G4S's failure to guarantee sick pay are a double kick in the teeth for prison officers in privately run prisons as the MOJ has failed to extend a bonus scheme they have paid to staff in state run prisons to privately run prisons.

Nadine Houghton, GMB National Officer, said:

"In light of these shocking ONS statistics, G4S should be doing more to protect staff and prisoners.

"Prison officers should not be forced to come to work if they are at risk of spreading covid-19, equally as workers more likely to contract it they should also know that they won't be forced into poverty if they do.

"But we can't let the Government off the hook; they have failed to provide employers running public sector contracts with assurances that the contracts will be fully funded for additional coronavirus costs – unless they are NHS contractors.

"Added to this the MOJ have left out the workforce in privately run prisons when giving bonuses to workers in state prisons. Our members do the same job and are facing the same risks and yet they are treated differently by the government because they work for a private contractor.

"This policy exposes the gaps our 'hidden' key workers fall through and is another example of the Government failing key workers.

"GMB demands full sick pay guaranteed from day one for all those forced to self-isolate or take time off due to covid-19."

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