



Caretech / Coveberry – Joint Unions Response

Following the assessment of the company offer made in June 2024, the joint trade unions response for Coveberry Pay 2024 is as follows:

- There has been an unprecedented increase in the cost of living which continues to cause severe difficulties for many Coveberry staff whose wages have not kept pace with the bills in recent years.
- A cost of living crisis requires a cost of living pay rise.
- Appropriate reward is needed to sustain the morale and productivity of staff in their crucial role of delivering high-quality services.
- Staff members consulted advise that they seek improvements to terms and conditions which will make them feel valued and appreciated for their dedication to the service users, in addition to hourly rate increases, there are measures which improve terms which set the company apart from other providers and become an employer of choice in the care sector.

2. DETAILS OF THE PAY CLAIM

Having consulted with members, we are seeking increases in hourly rates and elevations to terms and conditions which send a positive and progressive message to staff that the company is dedicated to going above and beyond the standards in the sector:

- **Hourly rate increases**

Testimonials from joint union members advise they are struggling with debt following the 2023 soaring rates in interest. Members are advising they are lodged with debt management companies, are struggling to pay bills and are having to work overtime to cover the cost of living.

GMB members currently do not feel valued or supported by Coveberry relating to their pay and 30% of the members surveyed have advised they will consider leaving the company to find other work elsewhere in 2024.

“Feel more appreciated”

“Would feel valued”

“I had a pay rise it would be instrumental in helping me in my life.”

“This will relieve pressure on bill paying and day to day living.”

“Help to get me out of debt”

“I think we need a pay rise because my wages is not sufficient to take care of my family after paying my bills”

“Everything going up and basic wages are just not enough to cover the costs of life”

“My pay mostly on my bills and Foodstuff, every month is a struggle”

“I have had to get help from a debt management company”

“Extremely difficult we worked through covid 19 and got no reward then on top of that inflation went massively up and we haven’t been rewarded / paid any more only close to minimum wage, we are now far worse off having to budget and living a very basic lower quality of life.”

“I’m in full time employment and I have worked 14 hours a day in order to make ends but it never meets putting me in a state of stress due to low pay and high cost of living.”

“I can’t afford most of the day to day basis. Sometimes I have to go to food banks.”

“The cost of housing, cost of food, cost of car insurance, cost of clothing, and being underpaid means one has to work more and rest less to support a family.”

“We are getting difficult to pay our bills”

“I have recently had to go to a debt management company”

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We believe that our member's testimonials identify significant financial hardship. An increase within close margins of the National Minimum Wage at £11.44, especially those pay points in positions 4,5 and 6, within Grade 2 whose rise by the company outside of NMW statute amounts to only 0p, 9p and 10p an hour, will simply not be enough to support employees who testify to in-work poverty.

The joint unions seek a pay rise which lifts all workers to the minimum rate of the Real Living Wage of £12 an hour. The Real Living Wage boosts staff morale, improves the business’ reputation and helps to differentiate a business from competitors in the industry.

- **Annual Leave Entitlement**

Working in the sector is rewarding, however, it is exhausting.

70% of members surveyed advised they work between 0-5 hours a week unpaid overtime. The dedication of staff members to ensure the safety of service users and ensuring colleagues are not left understaffed causes significant impacts on members' work-life balance.

GMB members are evidently dedicated to the work and regularly go the extra mile, but wish to be recognised for this time with additional annual leave entitlement, which ensures the rest they need.

“I would feel more appreciated and I would have a better work-life balance”

“A better standard of living.”

The joint unions seek to negotiate an additional day of annual leave.

- **Sick Pay**

The Covid pandemic proved the importance of sick pay for infection control. During the pandemic, care sector workers were paid for sickness either through occupational sick pay schemes, furlough or mandated funds set by the local authorities. The removal of sick pay when the funding ceased sent a message from employers to care sector workers that their health, safety and financial security are only important in certain circumstances. Care sector workers now believe that this is a fundamental right to have access to pay from day one of absence. Sick Pay, not only protects service users, but other team members who are also at risk of contracting illness and having a longer term, negative impact on the working environment. Simply put, sick pay results in healthier levels of care.

Many of the leaders in the industry have begun to recognise that implementing a company sick pay scheme ensures the employer becomes a company of choice for employees for offering above industry standard terms and conditions. While restrictions on affordability of pay rises are impacted by Local Authority and ICB rates, implementing occupational sick pay is something which can have very little impact on the business, but a sizable difference for staff members who too often have to make a difficult choice between coming in to work when they know they are not well enough, and not being paid.

The joint unions seek to negotiate an occupational sick pay scheme from day 1 of sickness and the implementation of a robust but supportive absence policy, which supports staff returning to the workplace without loss of earnings. This is also reflective of infection prevention and control measures.

- **Bank Holiday Pay**

Increasing bank holiday pay would not have a significant impact on the company, but would support the message that CareTech values its staff members and their time. While office workers within the business would have the fortune of not working on a bank holiday, caregiving and home staff members in CareTech premises do not have this advantage, it would encourage team support to ensure those who wish to take annual leave due to child care are able to, while those who would ordinarily be off would be rewarded for supporting teammates and covering the shifts with a recognition of their valued contribution to the support of the service users.

The joint unions seek to negotiate shift allowances across bank holidays, so staff members are rewarded for stepping in to cover shifts where those with at home caring responsibilities will be able to take time off.