



Our Ref: KS/SHM

Date: 30 March 2020

Minister for Health & Social services  
Welsh Government  
5th Floor  
Tŷ Hywel  
Cardiff Bay  
CF99 1NA

Dear Minister for Health & Social care,

**Covid-19 – Health & Social Care Workers**

I am writing to raise the serious concerns we have as a result of Covid-19 affecting Social care workers. GMB Union, represents members right across Social Care, both public and private employees.

We understand that these are exceptional times and advice and guidance is changing daily. I can assure you, that the trade unions alongside all our members are keen to pull together to tackle this crisis the best we can.

However, it is essential that in doing so, we are not putting at risk the health, safety and well-being of this crucial part of the workforce – these key workers who are now being called upon to protect our society.

**• Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

In your written statement 25<sup>th</sup> March, you stated that:

*“Social care has an essential role in our response to COVID-19. I have authorised PPE to also be released for use by social care providers. Health Boards have been providing PPE to support care centres dealing with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 cases. This week we will be enhancing those arrangements by putting in place a contingency plan for social care access to PPE through local authorities’ Directors of Social Services and also put in place arrangements to monitor the use of PPE and top up these supplies when needed.”*

Our members in the independent private sector feel let down at a time when they have put themselves on the frontline. GMB has been contacted by Managers in despair at feeling they are putting their staff in harm’s way and are unable to do anything to protect them, as it seems that the PPE that you have requested be released isn’t getting through to all those that need it, where it does get through they are insufficient in numbers and quality. Health and safety breaches of this magnitude should not continue to be ignored just because we are in a time of crisis. The health and safety of key workers must remain a priority for Welsh Government and all employers.

1. Can you please advise me of what you are doing to address this crisis within in a crisis?

- **Pay**

NHS staff are protected with sick pay should they be required to be off work due to Covid-19, this is not the case for the social care workforce who are only receiving SSP from day one. If they are required to self-isolate or go sick, this is putting our members in the unbearable position of having to ignore government and medical advice and put at risk the vulnerable people that they care for and their families at risk, as once again they cannot afford to take time off work.

GMB is calling on Welsh Government to ensure all Social care employers commit to paying full and normal pay from day one of sickness during Covid-19 and where the employer can’t we ask the Government to underwrite full pay of social care staff.

GMB’s Demands for Social care staff are:

- Full pay parity for all social care staff with NHS Agenda for Change Staff on pay terms and conditions.
- For any sickness absence or any Covid-19 related absence to pay paid at full pay and where the employer can’t we ask the Government to underwrite full pay of social care staff.
- Paid time off to care for children when there is no other option available.
- To stop the scandal of tiering key workers and offer full access to all that need it Personal Protective Equipment.