

25<sup>th</sup> September 2020

## **GMB BULLETIN: PPE & A WINTER PLAN IN SOCIAL CARE - COVID-19**

The Government recently published their Winter Plan for Social Care which places responsibility on your employer to provide you a safe place of work and full sick pay for any Covid-19 related absence.

These responsibilities include:

- Access government funding for infection, prevention and control measures to pay full sick pay for all staff who have to take time off work due to Covid-19 reasons.
- Restrict all, but essential, movement of staff between care homes.
- Access free PPE stocks and ensure all staff have the appropriate PPE in line with current guidance.
- Implement Covid-19 policies to include:
  - Undertaking a learning review after an outbreak.
  - PPE policy on appropriate use, supply, reporting shortages, etc.
  - Training for all care staff on infection, prevention and control.
  - Identified a lead for infection, prevention and control for Covid-19.
  - Guidance for staff who may have to self-isolate.
  - Limiting staff movement between care homes unless absolutely necessary.
  - Guidance for staff on how to access testing.
  - Policy on new admissions.
  - Policy on visits to the care home.
- Undertake individual risk assessments for all staff who are at increased risk. (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds, people that have been shielding, pregnant workers, etc.)

If your employer is not doing any of the above, you need to report this to your GMB Rep.

Please contact your GMB Rep direct, or alternatively you can email [PublicServices@gmb.org.uk](mailto:PublicServices@gmb.org.uk)

### **FULL SICK PAY:**

GMB has been campaigning for full sick pay to be a contractual right for all social care workers. The recent success in this campaign is that the Government have provided additional funding to enable your employer to pay full sick pay for Covid-19 related absences.

However, for us to succeed in securing full sick pay all year round and for all illnesses - we need your support. Please take a minute to sign our petition:

<https://www.gmb.org.uk/campaign/full-sick-pay-social-care-workers-now>

Once you have signed the petition, please share it with you work colleagues and share on your social media pages.

### PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT:

The issue of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) in social care has been one of the huge problems faced by GMB members working in social care during the Coronavirus Pandemic. The social care workforce were originally excluded from Government and Public Health England Guidance. The GMB was successful in getting this guidance amended.

The full guidance can be accessed at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/878750/T2\\_poster\\_Recommended\\_PPE\\_for\\_primary\\_outpatient\\_community\\_and\\_social\\_care\\_by\\_setting.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/878750/T2_poster_Recommended_PPE_for_primary_outpatient_community_and_social_care_by_setting.pdf)

The NHS was asked by the Department of Health & Social Care to assist social care settings in the training of Infection, Prevention and Control (IPC), which will include training for staff on the appropriate use of PPE.

Guidance was amended again on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2020 and can be accessed at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-infection-prevention-and-control/covid-19-personal-protective-equipment-ppe>

Key points to note are:

- Gloves and aprons should be used for single use only and disposed after each service user / resident contact.
- Sessional use means 1 worker, 1 shift.
- Gowns or coveralls can be used for an entire session of work in higher risk areas, but staff should not move between Covid and no-Covid areas.
- Fluid repellent surgical masks (FRSM) and eye protection can be used for an entire session of work.
- PPE must be changed when moving between Covid Positive and Non-Positive residents / service users.
- Any PPE that is suitable for reuse (in cases of extreme shortages) is to be reused by that individual only and not shared amongst workers, with appropriate cleaning performed after each use. A detergent product either combined / sequentially with a decontamination product should be used to clean the item, rinsed thoroughly and left to dry.
- Reusable face masks should be carefully folded so the outer surface is held inwards and should be stored in a clean sealable bag / box marked with the persons name. Fit checks should be performed each time a respirator is donned if it is reused.
- Hand hygiene should be practiced and extended to exposed forearms, after the removal of PPE.
- All staff should adhere to social distancing (2 meters) wherever possible, particularly if not wearing PPE and in non-clinical communal areas.

It is essential that all social care staff wear the appropriate PPE. When doing so, staff are reminded that they are entitled to take regular breaks and rest periods, ensuring that you increase your fluid intake. Breaks should be staggered to limit the numbers of staff in communal rest areas.

PASS THIS BULLETIN ONTO YOUR WORK COLLEAGUES AND ASK THEM TO JOIN GMB!

Not a GMB Member? Join today at [www.gmb.org.uk/join](http://www.gmb.org.uk/join)



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