

Lack of PPE 'national crisis' as more than 4,000 ambulance workers self isolate



GMB Union says the lack of PPE and testing for frontline workers 'a national crisis' as the number of self-isolating ambulance workers hits 4,100 – across just eight trusts.

London, Yorkshire, North East, Wales, East Midlands, South Central, South East Coast and North West ambulance services have reported hundreds of cases of self-isolation each.



GMB ambulance workers report being given no access to PPE, even when being sent to treat patients suspected of having COVID-19.

When supplies are finally getting through, they are often out of date masks with stickers over the expiry dates.

Not all workers who are self-isolating will have COVID-19 but the lack of testing for frontline workers means that potentially thousands of key workers are having to stay at home at the time they are needed most.

Rachel Harrison, GMB National Officer, said:

"The lack of protective equipment for our frontline workers is nothing short of a national crisis and it's going to bring services to the brink.

"We've got thousands of workers self-isolating.

"Some will have the virus after working without proper protective gear, others might just have a cold and could be at work but without testing there is no way to know – it's creating a capacity issue and putting more people at risk.

"Out of date masks are being issued as standard, with stickers placed over expiry dates as if somehow that means the equipment is safe to use,.

"Our members are trained in how to be safe, they know that they're being put at risk but are worried too that lack of protection means they're taking this virus home to their loved ones. That's just plain wrong.

"The Government need to act now to get PPE to the front line, and immediately start testing frontline staff as a priority.

"GMB is demanding PPE for all staff who need it and testing for all staff."

Press office

07958 156846

press.office@gmb.org.uk

Member requiring help?

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info@gmb.org.uk

