

Government's coronavirus battle plan an 'episode of Dad's Army'



Woeful statutory sick pay arrangements give people perverse incentive to work even if infected

The Government's Coronavirus battle plan is like 'an episode of dad's army' says GMB Union

Number 10 this morning unveiled a grand plan to halt Coronavirus – including telling people to wash their hands while singing happy birthday.

The plan completely fails to provide adequate statutory sick pay arrangement for workers force to self-isolate – meaning they don't get paid for the first three days of sickness – and then just £94 a week after that.



“ The Government’s response to the Coronavirus outbreak is predictably slap dash and ill-thought out. This isn’t a battle plan – it’s an episode of Dad’s Army.

Rehana Azam, GMB National Secretary

Workers are then faced with the devastating choice – put food on the table or come to work even if they believe they are infected with COVID-19.

The Government already has the powers to solve this public health crisis and could introduce a statutory right to normal pay during any period of self-isolation recommended by PHE, by amending rights which already exist under the Employment Rights Act 1996.

GMB is a general trade union in the UK and Ireland with more than 600,000 members. GMB members work across all industrial sectors – including in schools, the NHS, ambulance service and local government, retail, security, distribution, and utilities.

Rehana Azam, GMB National Secretary, said:

“The Government’s response to the Coronavirus outbreak is predictably slap dash and ill-thought out.

“This isn’t a battle plan – it’s an episode of Dad’s Army.

“Statutory sick pay is woefully inadequate at the best of times – but the outbreak of COVID-19 has highlighted the risks posed to workers and the public at large.



“Ministers already have the emergency powers to stem this crisis by forcing employers to pay full sick pay from day one – and to offer financial assistance to smaller companies where required.

“Instead, they are telling people they won’t get paid for the first three days of self-isolation – and only £94 a week after.

“That gives people a perverse incentive to come into work even if they may be infected.”

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