



The Truths & Myths of paid sick days

Paid sick days are a key part of maintaining safe workplaces, public health, and the economy, yet care providers across the country do not have a company sick pay schemes. Three in Four GMB care sector members do not receive sick pay until the 4th day of absence, which means financial difficulty for doing the right thing.

THE MYTHS & TRUTHS ABOUT PAID SICK DAYS

Reality: Reliance on statutory sick pay is not enough for care sector workers to live on. In response to the worst global pandemic in a century, Statutory Sick Pay was funded to be paid on day one of absence as self-isolation as the most proven method of protection. The removal of the sick pay from day one has created unhealthy work environments, which puts other staff and residents at risk. 52% of care sector workers surveyed by GMB said they can not afford to take time off sick, compared to 72% of members surveyed who were able to isolate when sick pay was implemented.

WORKERS DON'T NEED THE LAW TO GUARANTEE PAID SICK DAYS, THEY CAN SIMPLY RELY ON VOLUNTARY EMPLOYER POLICIES.

Reality: Care sector workers were given SSP from day one by the company during the pandemic, this was paid by the government and claimed back by employers, who stopped paying sick pay when it stopped being subsidised. Care sector providers have huge lobbying power and make millions of pounds a year for shareholders, but scrimp on paying sick pay to make their workplaces healthier. If we want sick pay, workers need to organise for it.

THERE ISN'T ANY BENEFIT TO EMPLOYERS PAYING SICK PAY

Reality: Company sick days help businesses reduce turnover and improve worker productivity because workers feel valued. When companies respond to the needs of working families, workers are more committed and productive, and workplaces stay healthy. Going to work sick results in more mistakes. In a 2015 study of UK pharmacists, employees who worked while sick tended to make errors more frequently, such as giving a patient the wrong medication or prescribing the wrong dosage. They also reported higher levels of depression and anxiety than those who took time off sick. Care staff are already x2 more anxious than the general population paid sick days can reduce this by giving you a chance to rest and paid sick days have been shown to reduce the chance of workers leaving a job by 25%, resulting in substantial savings for business due to reduced turnover.

BUSINESSES CAN'T AFFORD TO GIVE WORKERS PAID SICK DAYS – IF THEY WERE FORCED TO, THEY'D HAVE TO CUT WAGES OR JOBS.

In 2022, £176,741,353 was paid to a single company from England's local authorities. This sum alone, would allow every single worker 6 months full sick pay. We know that most people do not need to take time off sick for this length of time, but what we do know is that if we get sick and we come in to work, residents and colleagues are more at risk of becoming ill. Even a small amount of investment will make a big difference to the health and safety of residents.

Sign and share the petition for Full Sick Pay
<https://www.gmb.org.uk/campaigns/care-workers-are-sick-of-ssp/sick-of-ssp-petition>



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THERE ARE LOTS OF PROBLEMS THAT SICK PAY WONT FIX.

Reality: When employers have to pay sick pay, it incentivises them to look improve things at work which impact sickness rates.

If the #1 reason for absence is stress at work, they are more likely to tackle the route cause of stress through workplace changes. If the number #2 reason is accidents, it is more likely they will fix the reasons which are causing them.

If the company do not have to pay for absence, there is no incentive for them to change the causes.

STAFF WILL TAKE ADVANTAGE AND BE OFF ALL THE TIME.

Reality: Sick pay benefits all workers, implementing effective occupational absence schemes and managing sickness effectively will ensure that sick pay is not abused.

Abuses are in are the minority, not the majority and is not a good enough reason to block sick pay from hard working staff who should have it as a benefit. Employers can manage their staff with robust policies and procedures as long as they are supportive, non-discriminatory, fair and legal and the GMB will be with any members who need support in those meetings.

I WONT SEE A BENEFIT TO SICK PAY - I HAVE NEVER TAKEN A SICK DAY

Reality: If you never take a sick day, you will be given the benefits of safer workplaces and healthier workplaces. Real workforce planning should ensure that staff levels are maintained and residents and colleagues will be healthier - you're also less likely to take bugs home with you!

No access to sick pay can impact people dramatically at times when you would like to think your employer would actually support you.

I AM SURE MY EMPLOYER WILL HELP ME WHEN I NEED IT

Reality: If the policy doesn't say they pay - there is no guarantee that you will receive anything. If you were undergoing chemotherapy and radiotherapy treatment for 6 months, would you be able to live a life without worrying about money? Most of us wouldn't, without private insurance. and we don't think this is acceptable. You care for others - your employer should care for you.

We believe all colleagues to be able to focus on getting well - not the added stress of financial instability when a multi million pound business putting profit over health.

PAID SICK DAYS FOR Care Sector WORKERS

MEANS:

Financial security when ill

Protection for colleagues

Protection for residents

Protection for NHS

Better Planning for safe staffing levels

Scan to support
and sign



The GMB Union is the only union for care sector workers. GMB Members decide:

The campaigns for change

How much you are paid through pay negotiations and their votes to accept or reject offers.

If you aren't a GMB member, you aren't in control at work. Become a GMB Union member today.

www.gmb.org.uk/join