Essential workers list reveals indispensable 'hidden army' tackling COVID-19

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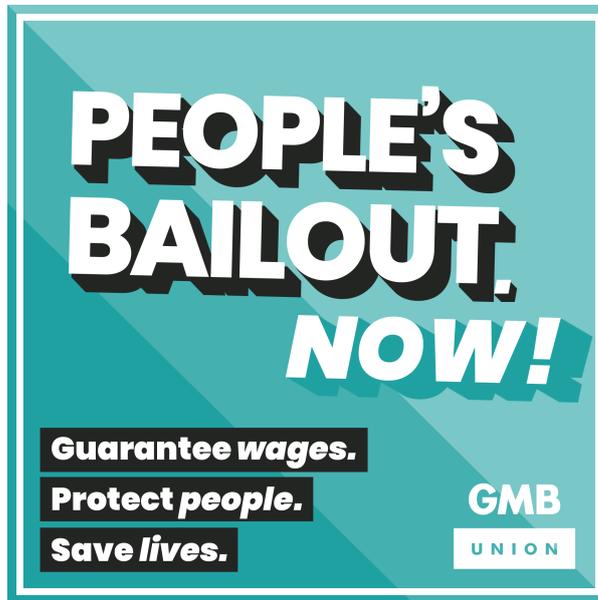
GMB has welcomed the Government's recognition of workers essential to the COVID-19 response.

The union said the list revealed an "indispensable hidden army" of workers supporting the country through lockdown.

The list published by the Government includes:

- frontline health and social care staff

- nursery and teaching staff, social workers and specialist education professionals

- those involved in food production, processing, distribution, sale and delivery

- those who will keep the air, water, road and rail passenger and freight transport modes operating

- key staff working in oil, gas, electricity and water sectors (including sewerage), civil nuclear, chemicals and 999 and 111 critical services)

There are still details to be worked through, GMB said, and the union is ready to engage closely with the Government as issues emerge.

Those working in the critical sectors listed will be prioritised for education provision.

Tim Roache, GMB General Secretary said:

"Those who are keeping the lights on, the taps running, producing, stocking and delivering food are an indispensable hidden army in the fight against this virus.

"All essential workers who are risking their own health to keep our country running must get proper protective equipment without hesitation and they must know that they will get full pay if they have to self-isolate or become sick.

"Ministers need to support employers to do the right thing – there can be no cutting corners.

"GMB reiterates the call for people to respect social distancing. Our members are risking their lives to save others. This is not something you can choose to do if you fancy it, it's absolutely essential. If you respect the front line, you respect social distancing.

"There are still details to work through to ensure all essential workers are supported - and we stand ready to work closely with the Government to address any and all issues as they emerge."