



Youngest, oldest, BAME and disabled workers hardest hit by Coronavirus crisis

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Older, younger disabled and BAME workers are the hardest hit by Government inaction over statutory sick pay and self-employed support during the Coronavirus crisis, GMB research shows.

In the absence of an official equality impact assessment, GMB has used official data to show the groups current policies are having a particular and detrimental effect

GMB Union says the figures are a stark reminder of why the Government must announce support for self-employed workers and increase statutory sick pay to a level people can live on.

GMB research shows:

AGE

- Self-employed workers are significantly more likely to be older. 9.5 per cent of self-employed workers are aged 65 or older,
- Older and younger workers are much more likely to be reliant on SSP. 46 per cent of workers aged below 24 and above 65 are entitled to SSP only.

DISABILITY

- 15 per cent of self-employed workers identified as disabled compared to 13.5 per cent of employees.
- 37 per cent of disabled workers are reliant on SSP

RACE

- A quarter of workers who gave their ethnicity as Pakistani were self-employed, compared to 15 per cent of white workers.
- Workers who identified as mixed race (40 per cent reliant on SSP) and black (35 per cent reliant on SSP) are more likely to be entitled only to SSP than white workers

SEX

- Women are more likely to be reliant on SSP (at 35 per cent) than men (at 28 per cent)

Tim Roache, GMB General Secretary, said:

“It can’t be right that the incomes of some the most vulnerable workers are hardest hit during the coronavirus crisis.

“At a time like this we all need to pull together - that means Government action to provide make sure self-employed workers can make ends meet and making sure sick pay is at a level people can live on.

“The Chancellor must urgently give self-employed workers the same protection he’s rightly offered to other workers. He must also increase statutory sick pay to an amount that will allow people to get by without having to put their bills and shopping on credit cards. Ministers know it’s impossible to live on that amount yet it’s what many people – including key workers – are being asked to do

“Not only is it the right thing to do, they are obliged to do so under their public sector equality duty.”