



Cabinet Minister pledges to look into private prison covid sick pay

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A Cabinet Minister has agreed to look into the private prison staff scandal which could see jail workers on covid-related absence forced to survive on just £95 a week.

Contractors such as G4S, responsible for running private prisons including Rye Hill and Altcourse, insist any time off for coronavirus comes out of their company sick pay allowance

This situation leaves many prison workers faced with the impossible choice of going to work ill and risking spreading the virus through the prison population or staying home and not being able to pay the bills.?

But responding to Sheffield Hallam MP Olivia Blake in Parliament, Justice Secretary Robert Buckland pledged to 'look into this matter' and 'report back to her on the latest progress.'

Nadine Houghton, GMB National Officer, said:

"GMB believes, given the essential service these prison staff provide and the need to protect both staff and prisoners during this time, G4S should agree a covid absence payment that sits outside of the contractual sick pay arrangements.

"This would give assurances to prison staff that they will not be penalised for self-isolating – which is essential to stopping the spread of the virus in the prison estate and protecting our key workers.?"

“Let’s hope Mr Buckland is as good as his word.”

