



Health & social care workers self-isolation exempt: 'one rule for them, one rule for us'

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Our patients are vulnerable, if we infect them we will kill them

GMB Union members working for the NHS are appalled by this morning's Government announcement that health and social care workers will be exempt from self-isolation - for work purposes only – after being pinged by the app.

Holly, a mental health nurse from London, said:

“This decision shows how little regard this Government has for frontline workers’ safety and well-being.

“It also demonstrates the staffing crisis is so desperate we will be forced to put ourselves, our colleagues and our patients at risk in a desperate move to plug the gaps of a national recruitment crisis.

“Yet outside of work we can sit in isolation? Their complete disrespect cannot continue.”

Martin, a nurse from Barnsley, said:

“We are critical front-line staff but we’re only worth 1%.

“We are ok to go to work but not out to play.

“All of our patients are vulnerable. They are in hospital because they are ill. If we infect them, then it will kill them.”

Paul, a paramedic from the North West, said:

“One rule for one and another for NHS and care staff.

“I think it’s a disgrace to even to consider it. What about all the people they will come across during work? Surely the idea is to stop the spread.

“Once again the Government on the take and only 100 days behind with this year’s pay deal.”

Rachel Harrison, GMB National Officer, said:

“Our NHS and ambulance service are operating under extreme pressures with chronic staff shortages, fatigue and exhaustion.

“Yet today - the “Government’s so called Freedom Day - they have had to issue exemptions for staff as services struggle to cope with rising cases.

“Ministers have no regard for the welfare of staff at all. That’s apparent, as the guidelines only exempt staff from self-isolation to attend work, and not outside of work.

“If this is a safe thing to do, why does it also come with the caveat of not being able to work with clinically extremely vulnerable people?

“All of this when NHS workers are burnt out and there is still no announcement on their pay increase which was due in April.”