



Leanne Wood MS
Welsh Parliament
Cardiff Bay
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12 February 2021

Dear Leanne,

During plenary this week you raised a concern with the Minister for Finance and Trefnydd regarding care home staff having to take leave when they are required to self-isolate. I am responding as social care falls within my portfolio.

I am very concerned to hear if this is current practice. This should not be occurring because we have introduced the Statutory Sick Pay Enhancement scheme, which has been operational from 1 November 2020.

<https://gov.wales/covid-19-statutory-sick-pay-enhancement-scheme>

We recognised the difficulty for social care workers required to stay off work due to actual or suspected COVID-19 or because they have to self-isolate. We know up to 90% of the independent care workforce are reduced to statutory sick pay, or to no income at all, in these circumstances.

The scheme provides funding to allow employers to pay eligible workers full pay for the isolation periods. This removes the financial disadvantage to social care workers when staying away from work and helps to protect our most vulnerable citizens, by reducing the risk of transmission.

Care home providers claim back their additional costs from local authorities who are managing the scheme on our behalf. There is no limit to how often the care worker can receive this support as we know people may need to self isolate on several occasions.

The scheme is open to care workers in care homes, domiciliary care and Personal Assistants. Support workers in the supported housing sector and those providing outreach to the homeless are also eligible.

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:
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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

In addition, social care workers may also qualify to apply to the Self-Isolation Support scheme

<https://gov.wales/self-isolation-support-scheme>

We have also introduced this scheme that supports low paid workers across all job sectors who must self-isolate and cannot work from home. Employees apply for a payment of £500.

While care workers cannot benefit from both schemes for the same absence, they should not be financially disadvantaged due to self-isolation. Consequently, I remain concerned if care workers are using their well earned annual leave to prevent a drop in income.

I will ask officials to send further communications to all eligible care employers and our trade union partners to ensure care staff and their employers are fully aware of the schemes and how to access them.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Julie', with a stylized, cursive script.

Julie Morgan AS/MS

Y Dirprwy Weinidog Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Deputy Minister for Health and Social Services