

Amendment to motion ‘Give care workers decent sick pay’

Proposer: Cllr Sarah James
Seconder: Cllr Mahir Demir

Council notes:

1. That the Council is currently negotiating with third-party contractors for the provision of care services.
2. That as per statements made by the Cabinet Member and officers at Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the 22nd June 2020, these contracts will only make provision for the workers providing care on the Council’s behalf to receive Statutory Sick Pay (SSP).
3. That SSP is just £95.85 a week, is generally not paid until the fourth day of leave, expires completely after 28 weeks and is not available to part-time workers who on average earn less than £120 per week.¹
4. That the Government has loosened eligibility criteria for SSP in the context of Covid-19. However, these changes do not apply if a worker’s sickness has another cause nor do they affect the level of SSP.²
5. That the Office for National Statistics estimates that as of April 20th 2020, 131 care workers had been killed by Covid-19 and that they faced double the fatality rate of healthcare workers and the general population.³
6. That there have been 25,000 excess deaths in the UK’s care homes since the start of the coronavirus outbreak and that this represents 43% of the excess deaths nationwide.⁴
7. That the GMB Union has described proper sick pay as *“by far the best way to stop covid-19 spreading through care homes.”*⁵
8. That staff directly employed by the Council are, depending on their length of service, entitled to between one and six months of sickness absence at full pay and equivalent period following that at half-pay.
9. That Haringey was accredited as a London Living Wage borough by the Living Wage Foundation in November 2018. In an official comment, the Leader of the Council said that: *“Ensuring that all our staff earn enough to have a decent quality of life is a fundamental part of our commitment to making Haringey a fairer and more equal borough”*.⁶

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/statutory-sick-pay>

² <https://www.gov.uk/statutory-sick-pay/eligibility>

³ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-52616080>

⁴ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/p08jh9j7>

⁵ <https://www.gmb.org.uk/news/600-million-social-care-funding-england-must-be-used-covid-19-sickpay>

⁶ <https://www.haringey.gov.uk/news/haringey-council-awarded-london-living-wage-accreditation>

10. The statements by the Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP, Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, on the 16th March 2020 that *"This government stands with local councils at this difficult time. Everyone needs to play their part to help the most vulnerable in society and support their local economy. The government will do whatever is necessary to support these efforts"*.⁷

Council believes:

1. That there is an overwhelming moral and public health case for the Council ensuring workers providing care on its behalf receive sick pay on similar terms to its own staff.
2. That SSP is not adequate to amount to a living wage.
3. That no care worker should face financial hardship because they followed public health guidance on preventing the transmission of potentially infectious diseases to those they care for.
4. That the coronavirus crisis has exposed that many essential workers are not valued by our society the way they should be and that care workers are a prime example of this.
5. That given the risks they have faced during the covid-19 crisis, both as a society and a local community, we have incurred a moral debt to care workers.
6. That whilst coronavirus has brought this issue to a head, similar considerations will continue to apply even when the virus has been eliminated and that the Council should aim to negotiate contracts that reflect this long-term need.
7. That whilst we acknowledge that paying decent sick pay to their workers will have financial consequences for third party providers and that they may seek to reflect this in the price they charge the Council for their services, there would also be compensatory benefits to these providers in terms of improving staff retention and morale, and preventing the business disruption and revenue loss arising from disease outbreaks.
8. That given its public health benefits, decent sick pay for care workers should be considered a "necessary" expenditure by local government within the meaning of the Secretary of State's guarantee.

Council resolves to:

1. Resolves to investigate the costs of enhanced sick pay for workers in the care sector so that,

⁷ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/robert-jenrick-reaffirms-support-for-councils-in-their-coronavirus-response>

when central government comes forward with a sustainable funding package for adult social care, we can consider implementation of this.'

2. That the Cabinet Member for Adults and Health write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government and the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care to call on them to provide decent sick pay for carers nationwide