

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to dominate all aspects of public life, particularly given the phased reopening of schools in Scotland from February.

Whilst recognising the importance of the measures imposed to curtail the spread of the disease, the NASUWT is aware of the significant detrimental financial impact this will have on supply teachers, who may now be unable to work, have had work cancelled, or are drastically limited in the employment opportunities available to them.

The Union has written to the Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills, highlighting the situation for supply teachers, calling upon the Scottish Government to put in place appropriate financial support measures urgently for supply teachers, whose incomes and livelihoods will be seriously affected at this time of uncertainty.

Whilst recognising that opportunities for supply work will potentially emerge for some supply teachers with the phased reopening of schools, the NASUWT believes that the Scottish Government should provide appropriate financial support, including by reinstating the Scottish Negotiating Committee for Teachers (SNCT) Supply Teachers Job Retention Scheme, as well as issuing further advice and guidance to employers for the utilisation of supply teachers from February 2021.

In response, the Deputy First Minister has confirmed his expectation that all teachers available, including supply teachers, should be in the process of being employed to support education recovery, something that has been reinforced to the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA).

Further evidence of this can be found from comments made by the First Minister earlier in February:

[The First Minister in response to a question on 02 February 2021:](#)

'Yes. There should be no reason why supply teachers are not able to get work right now. We have already made £45 million available to local authorities to employ additional staff. Local authorities should be making full use of any offers of supply teachers that come their way, because the funding is there for that—let that message go out loudly and clearly.'

The NASUWT continues to be involved in the discussions at SNCT level and will continue to push for a job retention scheme for supply teachers.

The letter and the response from the Deputy First Minister are available at: www.nasuwt.org.uk/Covid19CampaignSupplyTeachers.

Additional sources of financial support that may be available to supply teachers

SNCT sickness allowances and notification arrangements

Supply teachers may be able to access sickness allowance under the provisions of the SNCT provided they meet the eligibility criteria. Further details, including the eligibility criteria, can be found [here](#).

This allowance is complementary to the statutory provisions, and employees who do not qualify may be entitled to Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) provided they meet the eligibility criteria.

The Government has removed the four-day qualifying period so this can be claimed from the first day of absence due to self-isolation. Further information is available on the Gov.uk website (see links overleaf).

Other state benefits

As a supply teacher, depending on your circumstances and the eligibility criteria, you and your partner may be able to access one or more of the following benefits:

- Universal Credit;
- Employment and Support Allowance;
- Jobseeker's Allowance;
- Test and Trace Support Payment Scheme.

Universal Credit

Universal Credit is a payment to help with your living costs. It is paid monthly and is available for those who are on a low income or who are out of work, provided they meet the eligibility criteria, which may include supply teachers as agency workers.

Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)

ESA is an individual benefit for those with a disability or health condition which impacts on their ability to work. ESA provides money towards living costs if you are unable to work, as well as supporting individuals back into work.

Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA)

JSA is available online for those who are currently unemployed who are actively looking for work, or work fewer than 16 hours per week.

Further information, including eligibility criteria, can be found at the Gov.uk website:

- <https://www.gov.uk/statutory-sick-pay>;
- <https://www.gov.uk/jobseekers-allowance>;
- <https://www.gov.uk/universal-credit>;
- <https://www.gov.uk/employment-support-allowance>.

NASUWT Benevolence

For those supply teachers experiencing financial hardship, the NASUWT Benevolent Fund is available provided a subscription has been paid to the Union.

The NASUWT Benevolent Fund was created to provide effective short-term assistance during times of financial hardship and difficulty.

To make an application for benevolence assistance, contact your [Local Association Secretary](#) in the first instance, or alternatively the Scotland National Centre at: rc-scotland@mail.nasuw.org.uk.

Other possible sources of help

For those members who have accumulated large or unmanageable debts, the Benevolent Fund provides access to a money advice service through [Payplan](#). Payplan is a free and confidential debt advice company which can provide advice on difficulties with debt and how best to manage such situations.

Additionally, you can contact your local [Citizens Advice Bureau](#) to speak to an experienced advisor, including your eligibility for state benefits.



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Website: www.nasuw.org.uk