

Date: 3 February 2021

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General Secretary/Y sgrifennydd Cyffredinol: **Dr Patrick Roach**

Kirsty Williams MS
Minister for Education
Welsh Government
Cardiff Bay
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Dear Kirsty,

Urgent clarification regarding financial support for supply teachers

The NASUWT finds itself in the position of having to send further correspondence regarding financial support for supply teachers in light of the continuation of the national lockdown the continued closure of schools to the vast majority of pupils.

Whilst acknowledging the need to contain the spread of the COVID-19 disease, it must be recognised that vast numbers of supply teachers have now found themselves in the position of having had very little access to work and a source of income. The NASUWT has written to you previously to highlight this situation and request that more is done to provide adequate financial assistance.

We know that you appreciate the key role played by supply teachers and the Union recognises the value of the extension of the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) until April 2020, particularly for supply teachers as agency workers.

However, as previously stated in correspondence, the Union is increasingly concerned that more and more supply teachers are reporting that the agencies and/or umbrellas companies they work for are unable to place them on furlough because of the increased employers' costs towards the scheme.

Such a situation has been made even more precarious with recent changes announced by the Treasury that now mean supply agencies are no longer able to backdate claims for supply teachers to the start of the new academic term in January.

I am sure you will agree that the inability to backdate furlough to the start of January, as per section 7.1 (c) i) of the revised Treasury Direction is unacceptable, as it has left thousands of supply teachers without any possible source of income unless subject to a protective furlough agreement with the agency.

Added to this the short notice that was received for many schools, supply teachers and supply agencies which left many unable to put in place in time the necessary arrangements to place supply teachers on furlough as per the above Treasury Direction.

It cannot go unnoticed that the absence of any further advice and guidance from the Welsh Government has exacerbated the situation.

Once again, the NASUWT calls on the Welsh Government to urgently look at the situation for dedicated supply teachers whose incomes and livelihoods have been detrimentally impacted as a consequence of the aforementioned limitations and lack of clarity.

The NASUWT would welcome an assurance that urgent consideration will be given by the Welsh Government to an appropriate level of financial protection, including better access to the CJRS.

I look forward to your positive response on these very important matters.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Patrick Roach', written in a cursive style.

Dr Patrick Roach
General Secretary

