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NASUWT

The Teachers' Union

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Rt Hon Gavin Williamson MP
Secretary of State
Department for Education
Sanctuary Buildings
Great Smith Street
London
SW1P 3BT

Dear Gavin

Urgent clarification regarding the Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme) Direction and supply teachers

The NASUWT is writing to you to raise awareness of an amendment to the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme Direction issued on 20th May and the serious detrimental impact this will have on supply teachers who provide a valuable service to schools.

As you will appreciate, supply teachers are committed and dedicated professionals who make a vital contribution to securing high educational standards for all children and young people, but as result of the COVID-19 pandemic there are now large numbers of supply teachers unable to work.

Many supply teachers need to obtain a set amount of supply work per month to be able to cover their mortgage and other essential expenditure.

The NASUWT welcomed the decisiveness of the action taken by the Government with the introduction of the Job Retention Scheme to provide some level of financial income and security for employees operating through PAYE, particularly clarification that furlough payments for supply teachers could be calculated to include periods of school holiday.

However, the latest iteration of Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme) Direction referenced above has amended clause 6.4 so it reads:

Where, during the period mentioned in paragraph 12, a period of unpaid sabbatical or other period of unpaid leave is enjoyed by an employee ("unpaid leave")-

(a) no CJRS claim may be made in respect of the period of unpaid leave,

(b) the period described in paragraph 6.1(b) must not begin during the period of unpaid leave.

The result of this has seen some supply agencies and umbrella companies argue that they will no longer be able to pay supply teachers during any period of school holiday, as it is their belief that this would fall outside the scope of the revised Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme Direction.

Furthermore, paragraph 16.1 of the revised Direction makes it clear that it supersedes the previous iteration issued in April and this could impact significantly on the ability of supply teachers to receive any potential payment during the school summer holidays.

The NASUWT is deeply concerned about the loss of earnings supply teachers may suffer as a result if they are not able to access the Job Retention Scheme due to the aforementioned clauses. This is surely not the intention of the revised Treasury Direction.

The NASUWT believes that this urgent issue must be clarified as a matter of priority. It is absolutely critical that supply teachers are able to access the full amount of financial support due from the Government at this critical time.

Yours sincerely

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

Dr Patrick Roach
General Secretary