



Hillscourt Education Centre
Rose Hill
Rednal
Birmingham
B45 8RS

General Secretary
Dr Patrick Roach

Telephone: 0121 453 6150 Facsimile: 0121 457 6208

E-mail: nasuwt@mail.nasuwt.org.uk Website: www.nasuwt.org.uk

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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

The NASUWT and the REC are writing to you from our respective organisations as we share similar concerns over the next stages of the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) and the detrimental financial impact this will have on supply teachers.

We know that you recognise and appreciate the vital service supply teachers provide to schools and colleges and hope you recognise the need to support them at this uncertain time.

The NASUWT and the REC appreciate the decisiveness of the action taken by the Government with the introduction of the CJRS, allowing many supply teachers to be furloughed through their employment business and receive some level of financial security.

However, moving forwards, the revisions to the CJRS and the contribution towards the scheme for supply teachers will be a difficult cost for agencies to meet at a time when they have little income. Agencies often have thousands of supply teachers on their books. Small costs, therefore, multiply quickly and it is difficult to see them being able to use the CJRS in any meaningful way when they must start contributing to the scheme while schools are not operating normally. The NASUWT and the REC are concerned that this will result in a significant fall in the number of supply teachers being helped through furlough, coupled with the associated loss of earnings.

Whilst more supply teachers will start to find work again with the gradual re-opening of schools, the levels of demand for supply teachers will take some time to return to normal as schools aim to minimise staff changes. The NASUWT and the REC therefore feel that there will be a need for the Government to continue to provide financial support for these workers at this difficult time.

On 18th May, in response to a written question from the MP for Walthamstow, Stella Creasy, Nick Gibb stated:

“On 12th May, my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced that the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme would continue until the end of October. This means that any supply teachers who have been furloughed by their employment agency will continue to receive 80% of their salary.”

The NASUWT and the REC ask that the Government stands by this commitment to supply teachers and that they will continue to receive 80% of their salary until the end of October. If the Government agrees that it is important supply teachers continue to be furloughed going forward, financial support will be required in the form of a grant or rebate for employment businesses who continue to use the scheme, given that there are no other available source of funds.

Despite our two organisations sometimes disagreeing on issues, we have chosen to collaborate, putting our collective weight behind this extremely urgent issue that simply must be clarified as a priority. It is absolutely critical that supply teachers, as agency workers, receive proper financial support from the Government at this critical time.

We believe that without this support, many unsupported, talented supply teachers will leave the sector for good. This would not only be deeply damaging to them on a personal level but also for the country's schools and pupils.

Yours sincerely



Dr Patrick Roach
General Secretary
NASUWT



Neil Carberry
Chief Executive
REC