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Our ref: 210106/Williamson G/PR/TF

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Secretary of State
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Dear Gavin

Urgent clarification regarding income protection for supply teachers

I am writing to you regarding the financial provisions for supply teachers during the national lockdown announced by the Prime Minister on 4 January 2021 and the closure of schools to the vast majority of pupils from 5 January in order to curb the spread of COVID-19, specifically the new COVID-19 variant.

Whilst recognising the importance of the measures imposed to curtail the spread of the disease, it cannot go unnoticed that an inevitable consequence is that there will now be large numbers of supply teachers unable to work, had work cancelled, or who are now only able to obtain drastically reduced employment opportunities. The NASUWT is seriously concerned at the situation for hardworking and dedicated supply teachers and the increased financial uncertainty they face.

We trust 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 to cover the loss of pay and to support their access to training and professional development during periods when they do not have access to paid work.

The NASUWT appreciates that the extension of the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) until April 2020 should provide some level of financial assistance to supply teachers, but the Union is aware that the increased employers' costs towards the scheme (e.g. National Insurance and pension contributions) have resulted in supply agencies stating that they cannot place supply teachers on furlough, coupled with the associated loss of earnings.

This situation has been compounded by the lack of advice and guidance from the DfE in anticipation of the aforementioned school closures. Previously, the DfE referenced Cabinet Office/Crown Commercial Services (CCS) advice and guidance on the use of contingent labour in the public sector to assist schools when making decisions in respect of supply teachers. Under this separate scheme, contingent

labour working in the public sector who are long-term or have an assignment which naturally ends in the future, should have 80% of their salary paid for up to a maximum of £2,500 per month. Disappointingly, in respect of the CCS advice and guidance this came to an end in Autumn 2020.

Furthermore, previous advice and guidance from the DfE in respect of the general principles that state-funded schools should follow stated that supply teachers on a live assignment should continue to be paid from the existing budget of the school, with those supply teachers who had their assignments terminated earlier than the original terms reinstated on the original terms of their contract.

In addition, local authority schools were expected to use their public funding to pay ad hoc or casual supply teachers at 80% of their typical pay, based on a retrospective audit of the previous 12 weeks (or as many weeks as the supply teacher has been on assignment).

We are acutely aware of the demands being made of you and the Government at this time. We would ask, however, that serious consideration is given by the DfE and the Treasury to further financial protections to be available to teachers and other groups of workers whose incomes and livelihoods will be seriously impacted as a consequence of the further extension of Coronavirus emergency restrictions announced by the Prime Minister.

The NASUWT would welcome particular consideration is given to how the Government is able to support these teachers, and would welcome an assurance from you that this will be looked into as a matter of urgency and raised with colleagues in the DfE, the Treasury and Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC).

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