

SUBSTITUTE TEACHING IN NORTHERN IRELAND

Substitute teachers have a vital role in raising and maintaining high educational standards in schools. Campaigning to secure professional entitlements for supply teachers is a key priority of the NASUWT, together with securing decent pay and working conditions for all substitute teachers.

In Northern Ireland, the arrangements for the deployment of substitute teachers (supply teachers) in schools are the subject of agreement with the NASUWT.

Substitute teachers are employed in accordance with Northern Ireland terms and conditions of service. Substitute teachers are members of the Northern Ireland Teachers' Pension Scheme (NITPS).

Substitute teachers are registered on the Northern Ireland Substitute Teachers' Register (NISTR).

There is an online booking system for schools, jointly developed by employers, the NASUWT and other teachers' unions and the Department of Education Northern Ireland (DENI) which is endorsed by the General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland (GTCNI).

The NISTR website, which provides full details of how the register operates, has an online registration link. The website address is: www.nistr.org.uk

The link to the substitute teacher register is: www.nistr.org.uk/hosted/ni/register.asp

The DENI Circular 2006/7, which was issued in March 2006, specifies that only teachers registered on the NISTR should be employed as substitute teachers from 1 September 2006.

GENERAL TEACHING COUNCIL

All substitute teachers must be registered with the GTCNI. The GTCNI approves qualifications for the purpose of registration and eligibility to teach in schools in Northern Ireland.

The NISTR will carry out checks to ensure that teachers are registered with the GTCNI (and periodic checks that they continue to be registered), in order to

maintain their details on the 'live register' which is made available to schools seeking substitute teachers. Although teachers must be registered with the GTCNI in order to join the NISTR, since other checks are also required applicants are advised by the NISTR not to delay completing the NISTR application until after they are registered with the GTCNI.

Teachers seeking to register with GTCNI can obtain application forms:

- directly from the Council's website: www.gtcni.org.uk;
- by contacting the registration team at registration@gtcni.org.uk;
- by telephone: (028) 9033 3390;
- in writing to GTCNI, 4th Floor, Albany House, 73-75 Great Victoria Street, Belfast BT2 7AF.

Substitute teachers may need to have an enhanced disclosure check before they are released to the active pool of the NISTR register. Full details, including the relevant forms, are available on the NISTR website (www.nistr.org.uk).

SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS' PAY

The NASUWT has been taking industrial action since 2009 to secure improvements in pay and conditions of service for all teachers in Northern Ireland, including advancing the interests of substitute teachers.

Substitute teachers are paid a 195th of the salary point at which they enter the classroom, including any UPS point which they have reached. For example, the M1 salary is £21,588, giving a daily rate of £110.71. The hourly rate for substitute teachers is the salary point divided by 1,265 hours; for example, £17.08 is the hourly rate on M1.

The current daily and hourly rates for substitute teachers are as follows:

Classroom Teachers

Main Pay Scale

Pay Scale	Annual Pay	Daily Pay	Hourly Pay
M1	£21,588	£110.71	£17.08
M2	£23,295	£119.46	£18.44
M3	£25,168	£129.07	£19.92
M4	£27,104	£138.99	£21.45
M5	£29,240	£149.95	£23.14
M6	£31,552	£161.81	£24.97

Upper Pay Scale (UPS)

Pay Scale	Annual Pay	Daily Pay	Hourly Pay
UPS1	£34,181	£175.29	£27.05
UPS2	£35,447	£181.78	£28.05
UPS3	£36,756	£188.49	£29.09

Schools are reimbursed for the cost of substitute cover up to the cost of an M3 teacher's pay by Education and Library Boards. If a teacher is paid more than this, the school must make up the shortfall. For this reason, some schools attempt to cap substitute teachers' pay at no more than M3. If the teacher's individual, normal pay point is higher than M3, any deduction of pay to the M3 level would be an unlawful deduction of salary and members should contact the NASUWT for assistance if a school reduces pay in this way.¹

TEACHERS' PENSIONS

All substitute teachers are automatically in the Northern Ireland Teachers' Pension Scheme (NITPS), unless they decide to opt-out. The NASUWT recommends that substitute teachers continue to be members of the NITPS. The NITPS gives defined benefits to teachers who retire and involves a substantial employer contribution to those pension benefits. It is very unlikely that a personal pension will be able to provide comparable benefits. In particular, any pension annuity which is privately purchased is very unlikely to give teachers defined benefits around which they can plan for their retirement.

The NASUWT opposes the current reforms to the NITPS, which have received a great deal of publicity, and has been campaigning, lobbying and negotiating with the DENI in the interests of members. During this process the NASUWT continues to work with the DENI and employers in encouraging all Northern Ireland teachers to remain in the NITPS.

PROFESSIONAL DUTIES

Substitute teachers' duties

Substitute teachers' duties are those of a teacher without a teaching allowance or any other paid responsibility. These statutory duties are set out in the Teachers' (Terms and Conditions of Employment) Regulations (Northern Ireland), which is available at the following link: www.deni.gov.uk/_terms_and_condition_regs_87_88-2.pdf.

The key duties of a teacher relate to teaching and are to teach, plan lessons and assess pupils' work. Teachers also have to participate in pastoral arrangements, communicate with parents and carers and attend meetings.

¹ The employment of prematurely retired teachers in receipt of an enhanced pension is an exception to this. Prematurely retired teachers in receipt of an enhanced pension should only be employed if no other substitute teacher is available and should be paid on M1 of the pay scale. An 'enhanced pension' is an early retirement pension awarded on grounds of redundancy or efficient discharge with added years. If a teacher is in receipt of a pension without added years they should be paid on the normal pay point they have reached.

The NISTR arrangements for paying substitute teachers reflect the fact that contractual duties are not different for substitute teachers in comparison with other teachers. If you believe that you are being treated less favourably than other teachers in the school where you are employed in respect of the allocation of your duties, you should contact the NASUWT for advice.

The Regulations include a series of other teacher duties in addition to these key duties, including co-operating in the preparation and development of programmes of study. These duties may well involve working outside the pupil timetabled day on certain days where a substitute teacher is contracted to work. With the exception of planning, preparation and assessment, all of the duties directed by the school will fall within the 1,265 hours' directed time budget, which will be spread over 195 days within the School Year.

As the Regulations do not differentiate between the duties of substitute teachers and other teachers, schools can have a reasonable expectation that a substitute teacher would carry out all of the duties of a teacher. Situations sometimes exist where this causes problems, however – for example, if a school calendar groups together a series of after-school parents' evenings in a very short space of time, which happens to coincide with a period of substitute teacher employment.

Substitute teachers should contact the NASUWT for assistance if they consider that the weight of duties placed on them is unfair.

The NASUWT is taking effective action short of strike action to reduce teachers' workload. Substitute teachers are entitled to participate in this action, details of which are available via the following link: www.nasuwat.org.uk/consum/groups/public/@publications/documents/nas_downlad/nasuwat_009930.pdf.

The NASUWT industrial action tackles unnecessary workload and administrative tasks, reduces meetings after school and ensures that teachers can focus on teaching and learning. Educational standards in Northern Ireland benefit from the NASUWT industrial action.

NASUWT

The Teachers' Union
NORTHERN IRELAND

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