

### COVID-19 UPDATE

The continuation of the national lockdown until March 8 (in order to contain the spread of COVID-19) continues to have a significant detrimental financial impact on hardworking and dedicated supply teachers who had very little, if any, access to work.

Whilst **Government advice and guidance** for the extended Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) makes it clear that employers can still claim for supply teachers, including during school holiday periods provided they meet the usual eligibility criteria, 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.

The Union is aware that more and more 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.

This 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. Section 7.1 (c)(i) of the revised Treasury Direction has left supply teachers without any possible source of income unless subject to a protective furlough agreement with the agency.

#### ***Agreement between employer and employee***

*7.1 An agreement is in accordance with this paragraph if-*

*(c) the agreement (including a collective agreement)-*

*(i) is made before the beginning of the period to which the CJRS claim relates (but may subsequently be varied to reflect any variation agreed between the employer and employee during the period to which the CJRS claim relates).*

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

Supply teachers may wish to discuss this with their agency and/or umbrella company to see about the possibility of a protective furlough agreement being put in place to address this situation going forwards.

The NASUWT has written to the Secretary of State for Education calling on the Department for Education (DfE), as well as the Treasury, to urgently look at the situation for dedicated supply teachers whose incomes and livelihoods have been detrimentally impacted as a consequence. Similar correspondence has been sent to the Minister for Education in Wales.

In addition, the Union has written to the DfE along with education unions calling for better income protection for supply staff. A letter/statement signed by the NASUWT, NEU, Voice, the TUC and the Recruitment and Employment Confederation (REC)

The joint letter calls upon the Government/DfE to:

- reissue the Procurement Policy Notice (PPN 04/20) that was put in place during the first lockdown to assist agencies and supply teachers;
- allow agencies to backdate furlough claims to the start of the January term to minimise the loss of income to supply teachers and other staff.

Details of the letters are available at: [www.nasuwt.org.uk/Covid19CampaignSupplyTeachers](http://www.nasuwt.org.uk/Covid19CampaignSupplyTeachers).