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NEWS STORY

Coronavirus: support for the supply sector

Letter from Minister for Education, Kirsty Williams.

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Supply staff are a valued part of the school workforce, and, with the current school closures, I appreciate that this must be a difficult and uncertain time for all those currently working in the supply sector.

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As you will appreciate, this is a fast moving and complex issue and advice is changing daily. Whilst education policy is devolved to Wales, employment law is outside the legislative competence of Welsh Ministers and therefore advice on these matters can only issue from the UK Government. However, the following information may provide some clarification on what may be available to support those in the supply sector during this difficult time.

Advice for staff will depend on how they are employed and who the employer is. As supply staff can either be employed by LAs, supply agencies or directly by schools, consequently any advice will depend on this. It is advised that they check the terms of their contract and discuss this with their employer in the first instance.

If supply staff are employed by the LA or school on a long-term contract, they are expected to be contracted on the same terms and conditions as permanent staff. If so, these workers should be paid accordingly. For those employed via a supply agency, the contracts may vary and therefore these staff need to discuss the terms of the contract with their agency.

For those working for an agency, the [National Procurement Service \(NPS\)](#) has a national framework in place for supply teaching in Wales, which aims to ensure improvements to supply teachers' pay and conditions. Agencies on the framework are required to register with a representative professional recruitment body and to sign up to the Welsh Government's Code of Practice on Ethical Employment in Supply Chains and our Fair Work principles. Since the framework began operating in September 2019, we have encouraged supply staff, local authorities and schools to only engage with agencies on the framework. Over the past few weeks, framework agencies have been engaging with Welsh Government and the NPS to understand what support is available to their staff. Please contact your agency to discuss this if you have any concerns.

You may be aware that the UK Government has recently announced support for employers under the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme. I understand that this scheme is open to all businesses with PAYE employees and may therefore be available for agency supply staff.

[Further information on this scheme is available](#), and staff are advised to discuss this with their agency.

Additional measures have also been announced to support those who are self-employed, although very rarely will supply staff fall into this category. [Further information on this scheme](#) is available.

If you are [unsure of your employment status](#), you can find further advice and guidance.

The Welsh Government has tried to address many of your concerns in [our FAQs](#), which are being updated regularly. This page includes advice on SSP, how to access Employment and Support Allowance and Universal Credit, and further information on the schemes announced by the UK Government.

We will continue to work with the UK Government and to update the education workforce in Wales as and when the situation changes.

I hope that you find this information helpful.

Yours sincerely
Kirsty Williams AC/AM
Y Gweinidog Addysg
Minister for Education

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