

GUIDANCE

# School staff and their employment: coronavirus

Information about school staff and their employment during the coronavirus pandemic.

## Contents

[What advice is available for temporary teaching staff employed by an LA or school, and for those employed via supply agencies?](#)

[What financial support am I entitled to if I am a temporary worker and am not currently employed?](#)

[Are teachers and practitioners expected to go to school if they are not at risk but have a dependent who is? Will they still be paid and able to work from home?](#)

[Are teachers and support staff to be tested as they are frontline staff?](#)

[Will students on Initial Teacher Education \(ITE\) courses be able to complete them?](#)

[Will Newly Qualified Teachers be able to continue to complete their statutory induction period while schools are closed?](#)

[What are you doing to reduce the burden on headteachers and schools in this unprecedented situation?](#)

[Will Welsh Government still be expecting statutory data collection returns from schools?](#)

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# What advice is available for temporary teaching staff employed by an LA or school, and for those employed via supply agencies?

Supply staff can either be employed by LAs, supply agencies or directly by schools, and it is advised that temporary staff check the terms of their contract with their employer. This includes seeking clarity on whether they are entitled to SSP. The type of support available will depend on employment status and individual circumstances. If supply staff are [unsure of their employment status](https://www.gov.uk/employment-status/worker) (<https://www.gov.uk/employment-status/worker>), further information is available.

Those employed by the LA or school on a long-term contract are entitled to the same terms and conditions as permanent staff and should be paid accordingly.

Staff employed via an agency will have a contract with that agency, and should discuss their terms with them. Schools who meet their supply teacher needs via agency staff are encouraged to use agencies who have met the requirements of the National Procurement Service's (NPS) Supply Teachers' Framework for Wales. Framework agencies 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.

Whilst education policy is devolved to Wales, employment law is not and therefore advice on this issue is determined by the UK Government. This includes advice for supply agencies who may have queries regarding support for their businesses.

The UK Government has now made an announcement outlining additional financial support for employers under the [Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19/covid-19-support-for-businesses#support-for-businesses-through-the-coronavirus-job-retention-scheme) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19/covid-19-support-for-businesses#support-for-businesses-through-the-coronavirus-job-retention-scheme>). This scheme allows employers (including agencies) to furlough PAYE workers for up to three months and to claim 80% of salary costs. The scheme is open to all UK employers with PAYE employees on payroll as at 28 February 2020. Agency supply staff should discuss this scheme with their agency.

## What financial support am I entitled to if I am a

# **temporary worker and am not currently employed?**

Currently, if someone is affected by COVID-19 directly or indirectly and unable to work, and has paid enough National Insurance over the last 2 years, then they can **[claim New Style ESA](https://www.gov.uk/employment-support-allowance/how-to-claim?step-by-step-nav=a661e652-204c-4abf-a2ce-9f183aca85b9)** (<https://www.gov.uk/employment-support-allowance/how-to-claim?step-by-step-nav=a661e652-204c-4abf-a2ce-9f183aca85b9>) which is not means tested.

If someone is unsure about whether they have paid enough contributions through employment to claim New Style ESA they are advised to claim both New Style ESA and Universal Credit at the same time. This means that if they do not qualify for New Style ESA they will not have delayed a claim to Universal Credit and missed out on any entitlement days. If someone has not paid enough national insurance to claim ESA then they will need to claim Universal Credit.

Universal Credit is **[claimed online](https://www.gov.uk/apply-universal-credit)** (<https://www.gov.uk/apply-universal-credit>). The UK Government is currently looking at Universal Credit and therefore this advice may change.

## **Are teachers and practitioners expected to go to school if they are not at risk but have a dependent who is? Will they still be paid and able to work from home?**

If teachers or other staff members have caring responsibilities/dependents and are unable to go to work, they should speak with their employer and agree reasonable arrangements for homeworking. Teachers unable to attend work will be paid as normal.

Any member of staff who falls into the shielding category or those who fall into the stringent social distancing categories should not be expected to work in either a school or hub.

Where a member of staff lives with someone who is vulnerable, we would expect employers to take account of this. In doing so, they should consider the severity of the individual case and the expected levels of attendance.

# **Are teachers and support staff to be tested as they are frontline staff?**

Our absolute focus is on increasing the number of tests to protect frontline healthcare workers and the most vulnerable, and to stop the spread of the virus. We are working in a four-nations way to share best practice, work up solutions and to validate new tests.

The position is constantly under review. In the meantime, social distancing, thorough handwashing using soap and water, and frequent cleaning and disinfection of hand contact surfaces are the best course of action.

## **Will students on Initial Teacher Education (ITE) courses be able to complete them?**

We have issued guidance to ITE providers who currently have students undertaking school placements. The guidance will advise ITE providers to cease schools placements with effect from this week in order to minimise the risk to students and to schools.

In order to ensure that the current cohort of ITE students are able to complete their courses the Welsh Government have advised ITE providers that they have the discretion to make an assessment of their students' suitability for the award of Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) based on their periods of placement completed at this point in time.

When providers make this discretionary judgement then they will be required to issue individual learning plans to students setting out requirements for any areas that they have been unable to complete. Students would be required to undertake learning in these areas during their induction period and provide the relevant evidence to their induction provider in order to gain fully qualified status.

Any academic teaching that remains to be completed in this school year will be undertaken remotely through digital channels. This will enable the existing cohort to graduate and achieve QTS and enter induction in September.

# **Will Newly Qualified Teachers be able to continue to complete their statutory induction period while schools are closed?**

We recognise that newly qualified teachers in Wales will understandably be anxious about the potential impact of Covid-19 on their statutory induction. We have worked with EWC, regional consortia and local authorities to develop [revised guidance for NQTs and everyone involved in induction](https://hwb.gov.wales/professional-development/induction/) ([//hwb.gov.wales/professional-development/induction/](https://hwb.gov.wales/professional-development/induction/)) to follow whilst schools are closed.

# **What are you doing to reduce the burden on headteachers and schools in this unprecedented situation?**

For a temporary period, schools have a new purpose. We will therefore be removing or relaxing requirements on schools which would be in place in normal circumstances. We will continue to keep this under review.

Estyn halted its inspection arrangements as of Monday 16 March, and we intend to temporarily relax requirements to undertake national tests and assessments and to report the outcomes, and requirements to undertake moderation.

We intend to temporarily relax requirements to undertake national tests and assessments and to report the outcomes, as well as requirements to undertake moderation.

We have cancelled all statutory data collections that would have been due to take place before the school summer holidays and have not yet started. Normal arrangements for reporting of Key Stage 4 and post-16 performance measures will be suspended for this year and we are also actively considering the associated arrangements and statutory requirements that depend on the availability of data.

# **Will Welsh Government still be expecting statutory data collection returns from schools?**

We will not expect returns for all statutory data collections that would have been due to take place before the school summer holidays and have not yet started.

This includes:

- Attendance: Primary 2020 data collection;
  - Attendance: Secondary 2020 data collection;
  - National Data Collection (NDC) 2020 data collection
  - Welsh National Tests (WNT) 2020 data collection
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