

Clearer guidance needed on supply teacher furlough contributions in national lockdown

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The Association of Professional Staffing Companies (APSCo) is urging the Government and the Department for Education (DfE) to take swift action to provide clear guidance on the employment and payment of support teachers in light of the on-going national lockdown.

With the Cabinet Office Procurement Policy Notes (PPN) which referred to the payment of supply teachers on contract by schools now expired, staffing firms are facing footing the bill for National Insurance Contributions (NICs) and pensions contributions for these agency workers furloughed while they are unable to work due to school closures. According to APSCo, this is simply unsustainable and unreasonable for already struggling recruitment businesses placing highly qualified supply teachers.

Tania Bowers, Legal Counsel and Head of Public Policy at APSCo, commented

“We welcome the confirmation that the Crown Commercial Service is working with the DfE to update guidance for schools and workers on the support available. However, what we feel is needed is a clear instruction to schools telling them they should continue to pay agency workers on contract, if they have no work for them, that is in line with the relevant sections of the 2020 Cabinet Office Notices PPN 02/20 and 04/20 that were published last year.”

“Placing the onus on staffing companies to pay the NICs and pensions contributions that are required under the furlough scheme simply isn’t viable for recruitment businesses that have a large number of supply teachers on their books and are already facing significant financial difficulty. While there are Government loans available to businesses, these don’t cover the full extent of the business operation costs and contributions to the furlough scheme for agency workers that are needed in current circumstances. While our members are completely committed to supporting agency workers, it is unreasonable for the Government to expect firms to use loans to finance furlough for workers supporting the public sector.”

“The current situation is highly distressing for workers and recruiters. What is needed is support that is specific to the recruitment and education sectors to ensure supply teachers are paid and staffing companies don’t face unnecessary financial pressure that could have a detrimental impact on their business and their own employees as well. We are writing to the DfE on this matter regarding the notice

needed from them and the review of furlough applicable to public sector teachers.”

ENDS

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