

Supply teachers, business aid and furlough support missing from Prime Minister's 'roadmap'

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Commenting on the Prime Minister's announcement of a return to school and a roadmap to lifting restrictions, Tania Bowers, Legal Counsel and Head of Public Policy at the Association of Professional Staffing Companies (APSCo) states:

"The re-opening of schools is a welcome move, but the on-going success of this move will balance on the availability of teaching professionals. As we've seen in the past, education institutions have faced staffing challenges, with some employees facing isolation or quarantine periods, leaving schools short-staffed. In these instances, supply teachers will play a critical role in keeping classes running. However, these individuals have faced incredibly difficult times in recent months, with limited clarity regarding furlough payments forcing some out of the profession. Now more than ever, schools and governing bodies need to be working with specialist supply teacher staffing companies to ensure they can access the professionals that remain ready and able to work. And with calls from the Labour Party for the Prime Minister to ensure teachers have access to the vaccine, it is APSCo's view that this must extend to supply teachers as well. However, in order to co-ordinate this, the Government needs to engage with education staffing firms."

"The road map provides clarity for some, but there are still a number of gaps that need to be addressed swiftly, and APSCo hopes that the Chancellor's budget will provide further information regarding the extension of both business interruption loans and the job retention scheme. A potential full lifting of all restrictions by 12st June is certainly encouraging, however as we have learnt over the course of the last year, circumstances can change quickly and it is important that the Government provides the necessary support for businesses, employees and the self-employed in line with any further developments."

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