

Dear Minister

I am a permanent teacher who has watched with serious concern as colleagues who are paid through NISTR and have no work at present have gone unpaid for a significant period of time because of the Covid-19 pandemic and the necessary school closures which it has brought about. The effects of this dire set of circumstances has been to place those teachers and their families in financial difficulty and is causing them severe stress.

I call upon you to act now to extend to those teachers the same level of financial cover that is being extended to other sections of the workforce who are benefitting from the Job Retention Scheme. I understand that that this Scheme is primarily designed to provide income protection to private sector workers but in the last forty-eight hours it has now been extended to some public sector workers and I fail to understand why my colleagues cannot now be afforded some similar type of income protection.

I am further confused as to why monies that would have been needed to support substitute teacher provision in schools over this period, anyway, no longer seem to be available. I call upon you to put in place income protection for these teachers as a matter of urgency. I remind you that my colleagues who are not in full time employment are nevertheless integral and essential to the running of schools and are deserving of payment.

When schools are re-opened, at a time when it is safe to do so, you and the employing authorities will again need my substitute teacher colleagues again and they will respond. I must request that you treat my colleagues with the respect to which they are entitled and to and demonstrate that by putting in place a payment scheme which affords them the opportunity to support themselves and their families in these unprecedented times.

Yours sincerely

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