



**The Rt Hon Bridget Phillipson MP**  
Secretary of State for Education

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Helen Hayes MP  
Chair, Education Select Committee  
Houses of Parliament  
London  
SW1A 0AA

11 October 2024

Dear Helen,

It is with great pleasure that I write to you to inform you of the introduction of our landmark Employment Rights Bill.

The Plan to Make Work Pay is central to this Government's pro-worker, pro-business agenda and sets out an ambitious programme to ensure workplace rights are fit for a modern economy, empowering working people, and contributing to economic growth.

The Bill is the first phase of delivering our Plan to Make Work Pay, supporting employers, workers, and unions to get Britain moving forward. Alongside other planks of our modern supply side approach, including planning reform, kickstarting a skills revolution, a modern industrial strategy and a plan to tackle inactivity, the Bill will support the Government's strong commitment to increase productivity and create the right conditions for long-term sustainable, inclusive, and secure economic growth.

The majority of measures within the Bill are led by the Secretary of State for Business and Trade. These measures include, but are not limited to, measures to introduce 'Day 1 rights' and protections like Unfair Dismissal (while allowing employers to operate probation periods) and entitlement to Paternity Leave; establish Bereavement Leave; address one-sided flexibility through ending exploitative zero-hours contracts; end the unscrupulous use of fire and rehire; strengthen and champion Trade Unions; and establish the Fair Work Agency, transforming the enforcement of employment rights and protections.

Measures included in the Bill within my Department's purview include the reinstatement of the School Support Staff Negotiating Body (SSSNB). The body will be tasked with establishing a national terms and conditions handbook and fair pay rates for support staff, and providing advice on training and career progression routes.

Support staff make up more than half of the school workforce in state-schools in England. Establishing the SSSNB through the Bill will help to ensure schools can recruit and retain the staff needed to deliver high-quality, inclusive education, and run effectively and efficiently.

Whilst a previous SSSNB existed in 2009-10, we recognise that the school system has evolved since then. As such, we have been - and will continue to be - working across the sector to ensure the SSSNB is appropriate for the world of 2024. The new body will therefore have a wider remit than the original SSSNB and will include support staff employed by academy trusts. This recognises that around 50% of schools are now academies, and more diverse support staff roles now exist. It will also ensure that the SSSNB can achieve national and consistent terms and conditions and fair pay rates for school support staff across schools and address the specific recruitment and retention challenges for this group.

The introduction of the SSSNB demonstrates how much we value the school support staff workforce. School support staff play a vital role in all our schools and they will be crucial in supporting our work to drive high and rising standards and ensure we give children the best possible life chances. To give all support staff, regardless of the type of school they work in, professional recognition and strengthen their workplace rights is an important step forward.

We are committed to implementing our Plan to Make Work Pay in full. Not all of the commitments within the Plan require primary legislation to implement; in many areas the Government has existing powers to deliver on commitments through secondary legislation and non-legislative means. In addition, the Government has been clear that some parts of the Plan will take longer to review and implement. In order to provide Parliament, workers and business clarity on how Government intends on delivering on the Plan, we have published the **Next Steps to Make Work Pay** report, which sets direction and gives businesses and workers confidence in our long-term programme of work. Work is already underway to prepare consultations on several aspects of the Plan.

I would be happy to engage with you further as the Committee sees fit.

Implementation of the Plan to Make Work Pay will represent the biggest upgrade in employment rights for a generation. We are working hand in hand on these changes with both business, unions and civil society in a spirit of partnership to ensure we get the balance right to get Britain moving again.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bridget Phillipson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**The Rt Hon Bridget Phillipson MP  
Secretary of State for Education**



# Helen Hayes MP, Chair Education Committee

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## **The Rt Hon Bridget Phillipson MP**

Secretary of State for Education  
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20 Great Smith Street  
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SW1P 3BT

22 October 2024

Dear Bridget,

Thank you for your letter dated 11 October 2024, informing me about the introduction of the Employment Rights Bill and the reinstatement of the School Support Staff Negotiating Body (SSSNB).

I am grateful to you for drawing attention to the measures within the Bill that lie within your department's purview.

The planned reinstatement of the SSSNB is noteworthy as support staff play a crucial role in our schools, and it is therefore essential that their contributions are recognised and rewarded appropriately. Establishing national terms and conditions, fair pay rates, and providing advice on training and career progression will undoubtedly help in recruiting and retaining the necessary staff to deliver high-quality, inclusive education.

I am confident that, once appointed, my Committee will pay close attention to the progress of the SSSNB, and we may discuss this during one of our regular accountability hearings with your ministerial team.

Thank you once again for your letter and I look forward to working closely with you and your Department during consideration of the Bill in Parliament.

Yours sincerely,

**Helen Hayes MP**

**Chair of the Education Committee**