

Written evidence submitted by Michael Davis

I am one of the people who has fallen through the net. For several years I have worked as a supply teacher via several agencies, but since Christmas I have had a temporary contract with an LEA secondary school in my local area. This contract came to an end on 31st March, and I was due to take up another booking via my usual agency after the Easter holiday. This booking of course was not honoured (agency bookings can be cancelled with a day's notice) and because I was not working with the agency on 28th February (I had a temporary contract with the school direct) I was not furloughed by my agency. I therefore asked to be re-instated and furloughed by the school, who referred it to the LEA human resources. They refused. I queried this first via my local councillor and then via my union (the NASUWT, who support me as an exceptional case that morally should be re-engaged and furloughed) but they still refused. I am currently awaiting feedback from my MP, Mary Foy as she has indicated a willingness to make representations on my behalf.

I have of course applied for Universal Credit and have been informed that I will receive a decision on 11th May, and any money due on 15th.

It should be noted here that the furlough scheme is optional for employers-this is a serious mistake by the government as it leaves many people in my position with nowhere to turn. The furlough scheme for me and many other agency/casual/freelance workers has been a failure from start to finish. Other countries such as Spain and Ireland have, I believe, operated a temporary Universal Basic Income system, which would almost certainly be simpler to administrate and would certainly be more effective at getting money to where it was needed quickly and effectively. It appears that this was opposed for ideological rather than practical reasons.

As we approach the end of the lockdown period despite having an eye-watering toll of families torn apart with grief, I have to say that this government have done nothing to help my situation at all, and whilst Mr Sunak's initial announcement may have looked good, it has for me and many others delivered nothing. His statement that some will fall through the net and utter failure to offer any alternative is I'm afraid typical of the lack of care for others that this government has consistently shown over the last ten years. I'm one of the lucky ones in that I have a job due to start at the beginning of June, but a casual trawl of supply teachers' forums across the internet shows that many are considerably less fortunate, and are basically being cast aside to starve quietly. Mr Sunak's handling of this very difficult situation has been an exercise in style over substance. If the government are paying for this anyway, why give companies a choice about furlough? It should have been compulsory from the start.

There is one further issue which I know has been overlooked by Mr Sunak and his team. Many supply teachers are employed via umbrella companies who have seen fit to furlough them at 80% of minimum wage rather than at the daily rate agreed between teacher and agency. This has not affected me, but it has affected many supply teachers and has been raised by unions. As with many other issues related to

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the current situation it appears to have been ignored in this government's pitiful response to many aspects of this crisis.

I am very happy for my name to be used and to contribute in any way to the debate.

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