

Date: 11 December 2023

Our Ref: 231211 Cleverly J/PR/LB



The Rt James Cleverly MP
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Dear Home Secretary,

IMMIGRATION CHANGES FOR TEACHERS

I would like to express my profound concern about the potential impact of your planned changes, announced on 4 December, to the immigration regime on the UK education system and those who work within it.

As you will be aware, the education system is currently subject to the worst teacher recruitment and retention crisis in living memory. In many schools across the UK, the work of teachers requiring a Skilled Worker Visa is critical to ensuring that children and young people can continue to benefit from the high-quality education to which they are entitled. These colleagues are key servants of the UK public and are worthy of respect as such.

It is, therefore, deeply disappointing that while you have decided not to apply the planned increase to the Skilled Worker Visa salary threshold to teachers, you have chosen to increase the health surcharge they must pay from £624 to £1,035. This increase would not only deter teachers from seeking to work in the UK, it would also penalise those teachers already working in this country. It would further compound the considerable financial pressures teachers already face as a result of ongoing cost of living pressures. There is, in our view, no rational justification for increasing this tax on overseas teachers working in the UK, especially at a time of the continuing teacher supply crisis.

The NASUWT calls on you to reconsider this matter and to reverse this unnecessary additional burden on these hard working, dedicated, skilled and much needed professionals.

We also note with concern that you intend to increase the salary threshold for those teachers who wish to be joined by family members by means of a Family Visa from £18,600 to £38,700. Following this announcement, the NASUWT has been supporting teachers who are worried and concerned about the effect this change will have on them and their families, and who are now considering whether it will remain feasible for them to remain in teaching in the UK.

In our view, there can be no reasonable justification for this increase in the threshold. It is already the case that this change will do little other than cause distress and anxiety to those teachers and their families who wish to avail themselves of this provision but who earn salaries below this threshold. Again, we urge that this increase be withdrawn.

It appears likely that these changes will have a disproportionate adverse impact on teachers and others with protected characteristics on the grounds of ethnicity, nationality and national origin. Under the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty, the Home Office is subject to a duty to conduct an equality impact assessment of these proposals prior to their introduction. We would remind you of your legal obligations in this regard and request confirmation from you of the equality impact assessment undertaken by the Home Office regarding the measures you are seeking to introduce.

Finally, you have announced a review by the Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) of the Graduate Visa programme. Given the potential implications for teacher supply of any changes, I would request your assurance that the NASUWT will be given the opportunity to engage fully in this review.

I look forward to hearing from you on these very important matters to our members.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Patrick Roach', written in a cursive style.

Dr Patrick Roach
General Secretary

Cc: The Rt Hon Gillian Keegan MP, Secretary of State for Education