

2 March 2010

Circular 03.2010

To: Bursars of
All Voluntary Grammar Schools
All Grant Maintained Integrated Schools

Dear Colleagues

Classroom Assistants

As you will be aware the Minister for Education made additional resources available to Voluntary Grammar (VG) and Grant-Maintained Integrated (GMI) schools to implement conditions of service, including pay rates, for classroom assistants employed in those schools in line with the collective agreement by the Joint Negotiating Council. Classroom assistants employed by the VG and GMI school who accrued pension rights on the basis of a whole-time equivalent of 32.5 hours per week during the period 1 January 1995 to 6 February 2009 have those rights protected but thereafter, if they accepted the new conditions of service, accrue pension rights on the basis of a whole-time equivalent of 36 hours per week.

The consequence of accepting these new conditions is that the hours recorded by NILGOSC for these classroom assistants must be amended as at 7 February 2009. The amendments will be as follows:

- Any whole-time classroom assistant who previously worked 32½ hours per week will be recorded a part-time classroom assistant working 32.50/36.00 hours per week with effect from 7 February 2009.
- Any part-time classroom assistant who previously worked say 10.00/32.50 hours per week will, for pension purposes, be recorded as working 10.00/36.00 hours per week with effect from 7 February 2009.

Please can you complete the attached spreadsheet for all those classroom assistants who *accepted* the new conditions of service to advise us of their 'new' correct hours on 7 February 2009. It is important that the hours are recorded in the specific four digit decimal format as follows.

The first section is the actual hours and the second is the full-time equivalent e.g. for someone working 20¾ hours per week with a full-time equivalent of 36 hours it should read 20.75/36.00.

If the member has had hour changes after 7 February 2009, please include details of these in the 'Further Hour Changes' column.

When you return these spreadsheets securely to us (e.g. by password protecting or encrypting) we will be able to automatically update the records. Please complete and return the spreadsheet to maddi.frondigoun@nilgosc.org.uk by 31 March 2010. Please also email Maddi to confirm if you do not employ any classroom assistants who accepted the new terms and therefore will not be returning a spreadsheet.

Furthermore, the Department of Environment has recently consulted on retrospectively amending the Scheme regulations to protect classroom assistants' pensions as a consequence of the new conditions of service. As the implementation of these regulations will impact on the calculation of pension benefits and all documentation for all classroom assistants I have asked our software providers to scope the software project and quote programming costs. I have written separately to the Boards to query how these costs should be recharged.

Please do not hesitate to contact either myself or Maddi Frondigoun if you have any queries regarding this letter.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Zena Kee". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Zena Kee
Pensions Manager