

Press Release from the SEA

Hand National Tutoring Cash to Schools Now Instead of to Rip Off Recruitment Agencies says SEA

Like NHS Test and Trace, The National Tutoring Programme is part of the government's strategy to hand profit making opportunities to its friends in the private sector instead of providing an effective locally based service. Opportunities to properly support the education of the most disadvantaged and vulnerable pupils will sadly be missed if the programme goes ahead as planned. The government have engaged an umbrella group made up worthy names like Teach First, the Sutton Trust and the Education Endowment Foundation who in turn have contracted out the actual tutoring. 64% of the delivering organisations are profit making, including supply teaching agencies. Connex for example charges schools £45 per session but pays its tutors £25. The cost of this programme to the taxpayer is £350 million, now over two years. Much will end up in the pockets of agency bosses.

In spite of the funding, this programme is being done on the cheap. 'We match your pupils with trained, subject specialist undergraduate tutors from leading UK universities' the NTP website proclaims. These tutors are not even graduates let alone qualified teachers. So far they have only recruited 188 tutors. They say they will place 1000 in the spring which is far too late for pupils hoping to get support for the examinations the government insist on running. The Education Endowment Foundation rates one to one tutoring as high impact at low cost. It is disingenuous of them to promote this scheme based on research into previous work in schools which has mainly used qualified staff in face to face sessions. Every teacher knows that tutors must build positive relationships with vulnerable pupils to achieve success. They will not be able to do this, on line, using standardised resources which are not adapted to the learners' needs. What is more pupils will only be able to receive tuition in one subject and may will have to miss important standard lessons to access it.

'We welcome the shadow education team's call for more resources for schools to deal with the negative effects of the pandemic and its criticisms of the way the NTP is being rolled out', said James Whiting, General Secretary of the Socialist Education Association. 'One way of releasing more funds would be to abandon this shabby programme now and hand the resources straight to schools. They would be able to provide programmes adapted to the needs of learners using qualified staff'.

