

Children, Young People and Education Committee

Meeting Venue:

Committee Room 1 – Senedd

Meeting date:

Wednesday, 18 March 2015

Meeting time:

09.15

Cynulliad
Cenedlaethol
Cymru

National
Assembly for
Wales



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Agenda

Private Pre-meeting – 09.15 – 09.30

1 Introductions, apologies and substitutions (09.30)

2 Inquiry into Supply Teaching – Evidence session 2 (09.30 – 10.30)

(Pages 1 – 30)

National Union of Teachers Cymru (NUT) and Undeb Cenedlaethol Athrawon Cymru (UCAC)

CYPE(4)–09–15 – Paper 1

CYPE(4)–09–15 – Paper 2

Owen Hathway, Wales Policy Officer – NUT Cymru

Elaine Edwards, General Secretary – UCAC

3 Inquiry into Supply Teaching – Evidence session 3 (10.30 – 11.30)

(Pages 31 – 33)

Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) and Local Education Authorities (LEA)

CYPE(4)-09-15 - Paper 3

Dr Chris Llewelyn, Deputy Chief Executive, Director of Lifelong Learning, Leisure and Information - WLGA

Daisy Seabourne, Lifelong Learning Policy Manager - WLGA

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National Assembly for Wales

Children, Young People and Education Committee

CYPE(4)-09-15 – Paper 1

Inquiry into Supply Teaching

Evidence from : NUT Cymru

Consultation questions

Question 1 – What are your views on whether there is a prevalence in the use of supply teachers on a planned and unplanned basis?

Every school will have a need to call upon the assistance of supply teachers at some time.

Planned use may include securing cover for staff whilst on maternity leave, secondments, CPD courses or school trips. Unplanned cover will typically involve sudden absences due to illness or requests for leave of absence.

Clearly the demand for use of supply teachers is demonstrated by the proliferation of supply teacher agencies that now exist, though it remains NUT policy that it is preferable that supply teachers should ideally be resourced through local authority maintained supply lists. Indeed the practices of supply agencies, and their impact on the motivation, morale and professional development of those who act as supply teachers is arguably the biggest issue with the entire provision.

There is significant variation in the use of supply teachers. The provisions of the workload agreement (in particular rarely cover) have led to increased demands for external cover in schools, many of these at relatively short notice. Given the limited SEG funding for many schools, access to INSET and CPD has declined compared with the situation in the 1990's and the first few years of the last decade.

There is evidence of increased sickness absence in a number of schools which increases the demand for supply cover in these institutions.

Many schools, in the primary sector in particular, are using unqualified staff (LSA's and HLTA's) to provide cover for absences and PPA classes. This results either in child minding or specified work being undertaken by persons unqualified to do it. There should

always be a qualified teacher leading a class.

Supply teachers are a common sight in medium to large schools with anecdotal evidence suggesting that in larger secondary schools, the engagement of between three and ten on several days per week is not uncommon.

If you believe that this results in problems (for example, for schools, pupils or teachers), how do you think they could be resolved?

It is not a problem that there is a need for supply teachers. Indeed, utilising supply in order to allow permanent teachers to be released to access professional development and to share best practice within their schools, and with other schools as part of collaboration working, is a real success for the system. It could also be the case that schools may utilise supply cover to address a shortage in subject specialism in their timetables or to enhance their compliment of teachers in a certain field if they are aiming to improve results in those subjects.

However, it very much remains a problem that supply agencies have become increasingly more powerful in controlling this staffing provision and the impact their practices are having, not only on schools and pupils but also on the individual teachers who are registered, often due to having no other alternative, with them.

Further to this the NUT believes that staff absence levels are exacerbated by the pressure caused by excessive workload. These workload issues are resulting in more and more teachers being forced into taking sick leave due to mental health and stress related illnesses.

There is a serious shortage of supply teachers able to teach through the medium of Welsh and in some areas specific secondary subjects are in short supply. In rural Welsh-speaking areas, a body in front of a KS4 class is an achievement. We know of examples where an absent teacher's timetable is being split between at least three staff as no one supply teacher is available in that area for that subject for a full working week.

How significant is this issue? (Please select one option)

1 - This is a key, urgent problem.

X

<i>2 - This is a problem that needs to be addressed.</i>	
<i>3 - This is a minor problem</i>	
<i>4 - Not a problem.</i>	
<p>Question 2 – What are your views on the circumstances in which supply teachers are used for example, the types of classes they cover; the types of learning activities which take place under the supervision of supply teachers; whether they are qualified to teach relevant subjects?</p>	
<p>Ultimately it is incumbent on a school to ensure that the supply cover they access matches the requirements they have in terms of the gaps in their teaching compliment. Of course this will prove more challenging depending on the nature of the cover. Finding the appropriate supply cover for a pre-planned absence, i.e maternity leave or for training, will be far easier than if it is necessary to find cover for a short-notice unplanned absence due to illness.</p> <p>One issue that does cause even greater problems for schools is the way in which supply agencies operate. In some areas of Wales for example certain supply agencies will have been given a monopoly to provide cover for schools. This has a very concerning impact on the sorts of relationships schools can build with individuals as well as the way in which they can access cover. Schools, and indeed individual teachers, are very much at the mercy of those supply agencies and so being selective about the criteria of teacher and skill set they require can be outside the gift of the school.</p> <p>Longer term absences are often managed by rejigging staffing to ensure that target, or vulnerable groups, are taught by teachers employed at the school. Otherwise, it will depend on who is absent.</p> <p>There is often a mismatch between the subject or key stage required and that in which the supply teacher has experience. Secondary schools often do not cover sixth form classes unless the absence is prolonged – they are unlikely to secure a suitably qualified candidate for a number of A level subjects.</p> <p>Demand can often be seasonal – transition arrangements, INSET and (in the secondary sector) requirements of external examinations increase demand from April and illness either side of Christmas.</p>	

Some NUT members working in the supply sector have reported that they have been asked to cover more than one class at a time, on occasions resulting in them overseeing classes of close to 50 pupils. This is of course unacceptable.

If you believe there are problems in this area, how do you think they could be resolved?

NUT Cymru have long argued that it would be more appropriate for local authorities to run their own supply pools which would extend access and make the process far easier to navigate. The benefit of this would be to allow schools to plan more appropriately; to be able to have greater familiarity with the individuals they are employing on supply terms – which would also increase the familiarity of those individuals with the schools and pupils with which they are interacting, as well as map out a better system in terms of matching skills and knowledge with teaching gaps in the council areas they serve.

This would help adequately match the right individuals to the right schools based on the specialisms they require, and the ethos and relationships that have been established at the schools. It would also address the issues of supply agencies having a monopoly on the professional capital in the system.

Alternatively, if additional funding were available, schools could employ sufficient teachers to act as internal supply teachers. In the current financial climate, this is a pipe dream with many schools facing making existing staff redundant.

How significant is this issue? (Please select one option)

<i>1 - This is a key, urgent problem.</i>	X
<i>2 - This is a problem that needs to be addressed.</i>	
<i>3 - This is a minor problem</i>	
<i>4 - Not a problem.</i>	

Question 3 – What are your views on the impact of the use of supply teachers on the outcomes for pupils (including any impact on pupil behaviour)?

Where we can ensure that there is a motivated, respected and supported pool of supply teachers there should be no noticeable impact on pupil outcomes.

It has to be accepted that building relationships with pupils is a key factor in how a teacher ensures their students reach their potentials. There is anecdotal evidence that in some schools supply teachers face issues of disruptive behaviour because they are not familiar with the school, its pupils and procedures.

For a supply teacher it can be difficult if they do not know the school setting. However, there is no reason that if those working in supply roles are empowered correctly and provided with access to training as an ongoing issue, they cannot manage pupil behaviour effectively and continue to maintain standards for pupil outcomes when they are in charge of lessons.

The reality at present however is that many supply teachers do not feel they are valued professionals. They are paid a fraction of the agreed rate for a teacher in a fully contracted role; they are denied adequate pension contributions and, worryingly in terms of standards, the access they are given to professional development when working with supply agencies is virtually non-existent. Where it does take place is rarely focused on developing classroom skills. While some supply teachers may access professional development through their union membership, even this is difficult to take up due to the zero hour contract nature of being associated with a supply agency.

One impact of workload on pupil outcomes in the supply sector, is that teachers hard pressed for time are sometimes tempted to leave work prior to a planned absence which can be easily done by a supply teacher who is not an expert in the subject, rather than work which will extend the pupils but with which the supply teacher might be unfamiliar.

If you believe there are problems in this area, how do you think they could be resolved?

Again, NUT Cymru's view is that there should be a supply system that is run by local authorities. This would allow individual teachers to have a greater sense of partnership in the education system; it would address issues around pay and pensions and could create a better system for ensuring that those working through the supply chain can access proper training on new schemes of work, initiatives and specialisms. This would greatly enhance the self-worth of those supply teachers which will have a major impact on motivation and morale and lead to a more empowered supply workforce supporting pupil outcomes, as well as a profession who have a greater consistency of knowledge and skills in relation to what is being taught and how it is being taught in our schools. This will eliminate a large proportion of the variation that can sometimes be seen in teaching quality if a supply teacher without access to ongoing professional development covers lessons on a sporadic basis.

How significant is this issue? (Please select one option)

<i>1 - This is a key, urgent problem.</i>	X
<i>2 - This is a problem that needs to be addressed.</i>	
<i>3 - This is a minor problem</i>	
<i>4 - Not a problem.</i>	

Question 4 – What are your views on the Continuous Professional Development of supply teachers and the potential impact of the National Professional Learning Model?

The sad reality is that for the vast majority of teachers with permanent contracts in schools, access to continuous professional development is almost non-existent. For those working in the supply sector, particularly those fully reliant on supply agencies, this provision does not exist. There may be some training from supply agencies around their priorities. However, not only is this very rare where it does exist it does not focus on the national priorities of the Welsh Government; it does not have a good reputation amongst those who undertake it for developing professional skills, it is not focused on new initiatives or schemes of work and very rarely will help supply

teachers maintain let alone enhance their professional capabilities.

Some schools will allow supply teachers to attend INSET sessions but cannot afford to pay them unless they are on medium to long term cover and would have been in work anyway. Even in these cases, some schools instruct supply teachers to stay home to save money.

The ERW consortium has sought to introduce a pay policy via its LA's which would cap supply teachers' salaries.

It should not be underestimated that those individuals who are supply teachers are very capable teachers. They are highly trained and a credit to the profession. However, working through supply agencies leave them increasingly marginalised from the changes that are taking place to policies on an almost daily basis by the Welsh Government and far removed from any high quality industry recognised professional development.

The national learning model has thus far not been effective. It has sound and laudable ambitions but in an age of shrinking school budgets it is becoming increasingly harder to see how schools will ensure a full complement of staff can be maintained, let alone enhance their professional development. However, where this does happen of course, it is even more difficult to envisage how supply teachers will benefit. If anything the more successful the national learning model, and the new deal CPD that has been suggested more recently by the Minister, the more supply teachers will be left behind due to the restricted access to CPD they get working through supply agencies. Essentially supply agencies are creating a skills gap, particularly in regards to ensuring familiarity and knowledge of new initiatives and frameworks that need to be embedded into the system.

If you believe there are problems in this area, how do you think they could be resolved?

Ensuring funding is set aside to allow supply teachers to be able to access CPD as an ongoing entitlement is essential. This could either be done through a central pot that supply teachers could access or through providing the funding for schools who could then make provisions for supply teachers to join their staff, thus improving the economies of scale of the CPD purchase.

Regional consortia should have access to specific funding (not top-sliced from schools' budgets) to provide CPD for supply teachers on a structured regional or sub-regional basis.

Ultimately of course the big barrier to making progress in this field is the fact that many supply teachers, in order to have any access to work, are forced into contracts with agencies who have a monopoly, including preferred supply status, to deliver supply cover for schools. This massively restricts individual's freedom to access CPD and build unilateral relationships with schools.

How significant is this issue? (Please select one option)

1 - This is a key, urgent problem.

X

2 - This is a problem that needs to be addressed.

3 - This is a minor problem

4 - Not a problem.

Question 5 – What are your views on performance management arrangements for supply teachers?

What performance management arrangements? Some supply teachers have been eligible for progression for up to six years but have been unable to progress up the incremental scale. Given that some schools try to hold back their own staff on the basis of affordability, this should come as no surprise.

If you think there are problems in this area, how do you think they could be resolved?

The new pay policy introduced by Michael Gove was seriously disadvantageous to supply teachers. Problems will continue unless this is reversed. We've already seen this with the ERW consortia's attempt to cut supply teacher's pay via their draft pay policies.

In terms of performance management if, as has been argued by NUT Cymru, there was a responsibility for local authorities to run the supply services rather than delegating that role to supply agencies, there would be a clearer approach.

NUT Cymru also believe the Welsh Government should work with trade unions and supply teachers to establish a supply teachers

charter to maintain quality of training and employment.	
How significant is this issue? (Please select one option)	
<i>1 - This is a key, urgent problem.</i>	
<i>2 - This is a problem that needs to be addressed.</i>	X
<i>3 - This is a minor problem</i>	
<i>4 - Not a problem.</i>	
Question 6 – Do you consider that local authorities and regional consortia have sufficient oversight of the use of supply teachers?	
<p>No. In some areas they have none. In LA's where a pool system still exists, it is little more than a list of available people but is often out of date. LA's lack the capacity (and in some cases the will) to maintain them.</p> <p>However in many areas it is the case that local authorities and regional consortia have essentially washed their hands of the situation, having simply delegated, and indeed instructed, supply agencies to deliver this provision in full. In some areas, Newport for example, a single supply agency has been given a contract to act as a monopoly on the supply cover. This has not only resulted in the fact that those local authorities have lost all insight into the development and delivery of the supply pool but it has completely undermined the professionalism and professional development of the teachers that are forced to sign restrictive commitments with those agencies.</p>	
If you believe there are problems in this area, how do you think they could be resolved?	
<p>Local authorities would have a far greater understanding of the nature of supply teaching; both in regards to the requirements and use from a schools and individuals perspective, if they took a responsibility for the delivery of this workforce. Re-establishing local authority maintained supply pools would help resolve many of the existing concerns.</p>	
How significant is this issue? (Please select one option)	
<i>1 - This is a key, urgent problem.</i>	
<i>2 - This is a problem that needs to be addressed.</i>	X

<i>3 - This is a minor problem</i>	
<i>4 - Not a problem.</i>	
Question 7 – Are you aware of any local and regional variation in the use of supply teachers and if so, are there any reasons for this?	
Yes. Agencies are more prevalent in some areas than others, in some cases, promoted by LA's. Shortages of supply teachers are worse in some areas and in the Welsh-medium schools. There are serious shortages in some secondary subjects. Some schools make little use of supply teachers for short term absences, preferring to rely on unqualified internal staff.	
If you believe there are problems in this area, how do you think they could be resolved?	
A more uniformed, public sector driven, approach would resolve this inconsistency. However, there is no short-term fix available. This will require the will of tackling the practices, and the dominance, of supply agencies.	
How significant is this issue? (Please select one option)	
<i>1 - This is a key, urgent problem.</i>	
<i>2 - This is a problem that needs to be addressed.</i>	X
<i>3 - This is a minor problem</i>	
<i>4 - Not a problem.</i>	
Question 8 – Do you have any views on supply agencies and their quality assurance arrangements?	
The practices of supply agencies have caused no end of damage to the morale, motivation, professionalism and standards of supply teaching.	
The NUT is fundamentally opposed to the way in which agencies siphon off public money which should be spent on children's education, and is campaigning vigorously to halt the diversion of public funds away from schools and supply teachers into the hands of private businesses	
Supply teachers who work via agencies are increasingly employed under inappropriate 'umbrella company' arrangements, under which	

the employer seeks to avoid UK taxation and the employee is required to pay both employers' and employees' NI contributions to be entitled to state benefits

NQTs, who are in their first year of teaching after qualifying, often struggle to get work and end up being held over a barrel by agencies. Many suffer far lower pay and conditions than their qualifications deserve, not to mention an inability to access pensions or training. They cannot oppose the system as it's the only way they can access work to complete their induction period. It sadly leads to some enthusiastic and promising young teachers simply leaving the profession.

Supply agency teachers are not entitled to membership of the Teachers' Pension Scheme, not least because agencies themselves are unable to offer their teachers membership of the TPS. The NUT continues to campaign to allow agency supply teachers access to the TPS in common with other teachers.

Supply agencies have led to teachers who work in this field receiving limited or no access to professional development. This is a significant failing in the ambition to ensure Wales has a leading education workforce.

If you believe there are problems in this area, how do you think they could be resolved?

In regards to the issues with NQTs, and as a short-term measure, NUT Cymru have in the past proposed that the Welsh Government delivers a very positive policy that will guarantee an offer of work for 12 months in a maintained school for individuals to complete their induction. This will reduce class sizes and help to raise standards while in the process reducing the reliance on supply agencies amongst new practitioners. This is a policy the Welsh Government can bring into action relatively quickly which will have a noticeable impact on the profession.

In the medium-term phasing out the exclusivity contracts afforded to supply agencies which restrict the ability of schools and teachers to find sustainable working relationships at fair and equitable conditions of service should be examined.

In the long-term there should be a return to in-house supply services run by the public sector for the good of teachers and pupils rather than for huge profits at the public expense.

How significant is this issue? (Please select one option)

<i>1 - This is a key, urgent problem.</i>	X
<i>2 - This is a problem that needs to be addressed.</i>	
<i>3 - This is a minor problem</i>	
<i>4 - Not a problem.</i>	

Question 9 – Are you aware of any specific issues relating to Welsh medium education? If so, what are they?

As stated above there is a serious shortage of supply teachers able to teach through the medium of Welsh and in some areas specific secondary subjects are in short supply. In rural Welsh-speaking areas, a body in front of a KS4 class is an achievement.

If you believe there are problems in this area, how do you think they could be resolved?

There is a sabbatical scheme for improving language skill and creating access to this, in its proper form with a funding commitment for it, should be more readily available. We would question how many, if any, supply teachers are able to take advantage of the scheme to ensure they are proficient at teaching Welsh or through the medium of Welsh. Allowing practitioners that wish to learn Welsh or improve their Welsh to immerse themselves in the language for a defined period of time would be hugely beneficial to ensuring proficiency exists across institutions.

How significant is this issue? (Please select one option)

<i>1 - This is a key, urgent problem.</i>	X
<i>2 - This is a problem that needs to be addressed.</i>	
<i>3 - This is a minor problem</i>	
<i>4 - Not a problem.</i>	

Question 10 – If you had to make one recommendation to the Welsh Government from all the points you have made, what would that recommendation be?

We cannot separate the following in importance: take steps to reduce workload-related absence and, therefore, the demand for supply teachers, and deal with the pay and employment issues facing supply teachers (often but not exclusively employed by agencies) to increase availability.

Question 11 – Do you have any other comments or issues you wish to raise that have not been covered by the specific questions?

We would highly recommend that you visit this survey conducted by the NUT into the issue for supply with our members.

https://www.teachers.org.uk/files/supply-teacher-survey-aug-14-am_0.pdf

While it is not strictly an exclusive survey of only Welsh members many respondents do work, and have worked, in Wales and the concerns that are highlighted are evident in both nations.

National Assembly for Wales

Children, Young People and Education Committee

ST 23

Inquiry into Supply Teaching

Evidence from : Undeb Cenedlaethol Athrawon Cymru (UCAC)

Introduction

UCAC welcomes the opportunity to respond to this study. Supply teachers play an important role in education. Maintaining a relationship with quality supply teachers can be crucially important to a school's success when problems arise due to long-term illness.

Losing a teacher for a time can affect a pupil's education, and it is extremely important to be able to fill the vacancy in a professional manner with a teacher who is quickly able to establish a working relationship with pupils so that their education is not interrupted.

It is equally as important to ensure that short-term absences are treated carefully. By using quality supply teachers, uninterrupted education is ensured during periods of absence.

The work of a supply teacher can be very difficult, and supply teachers' working conditions have deteriorated during the past 10 years, especially as supply agencies have come into force in Wales.

UCAC is very aware that there is a severe lack of supply teachers in some parts of Wales. A situation of this kind may lead to schools failing to fill in the gaps when there are absences among the workforce.

This situation comes to the fore when professional development courses are held and there is heavy demand for supply teachers on the same day. There are several examples that UCAC is aware of where a school has failed to find a supply teacher. A situation of this kind is totally unacceptable and puts pressure on schools to maintain services in very difficult circumstances. This is especially true in areas where there are Welsh-medium schools, because the pool of supply teachers who are able to teach through the medium of Welsh is more restricted.

Consultation Questions

1. Supply teachers are frequently used by schools. Often, when there is illness, or in special circumstances, it is not possible to plan for the deployment of a supply teacher. As a rule, the arrangement is that schools will contact either the education authority or supply agency, or get in touch with a teacher directly, to arrange cover on the first day of absence.

1.1. If the period of absence continues, the school will then be able to make arrangements whereby a supply teacher is deployed for the duration of that absence.

1.2. Schools often plan the deployment of supply teachers. An example of this is the deployment of supply teachers during teachers' continuous professional development courses.

Schools also use supply teachers to release teachers on particular pre-planned occasions. These can include training courses, strategic or planning meetings, teachers' assessment moderation days, periods of anticipated long-term leave (for example, maternity leave, surgery and so on).

2. Supply teachers are used during the following periods of different absence:

- Periods of unexpected sudden illness
- Longer-term periods of illness
- Periods of maternity / adoption / paternity leave
- Periods of compassionate leave
- Periods of continuous professional development
- NQT Preparation period
- When a teacher attends an in-service training session
- When a teacher is called for jury service
- To release the workforce for various internal/external meetings
- To provide cover at a school during educational visits

2.1. Some teachers are content to provide occasional cover for a time, with no desire for a permanent post, while others wish to return to the workforce on a permanent basis.

2.2. Government statistics show that there will be a greater need for 're-entrants' to the profession in future as the pupil population increases. See the Welsh Government's evidence to the STRB 2014: *A baseline projection from the TPSM (Teacher Planning and Supply Model) for the period 2013/14 – 2022/23 using updated data shows that without any change to numbers there would be no over supply of primary ITT entrants, but a sustained and significant reliance on large numbers of re-entrants to fill vacant positions.*

2.3. The learning activities undertaken under the supervision of a supply teacher can vary significantly.

2.4. There are praiseworthy examples of teachers having undertaken joint planning with the supply teacher. Often, teachers at a school will plan a series of activities for the supply teacher during an absence. A teacher will often arrange for a supply teacher to cover certain aspects of a syllabus during their absence. Of course, there are examples of the opposite happening, where there has been no opportunity for sufficient planning to be undertaken beforehand, and this can have a detrimental impact on continuity.

2.5. Workforce absences can lead to problems in secondary schools where the supply teacher does not have expertise in a particular subject. UCAC is aware of many examples where it was not possible to teach some specialist subjects (music, design and technology, art and some of the core subjects) because it was not possible to employ supply teachers who specialised in these areas. Of course, such a situation can be a cause of concern to parents, especially when children are preparing for exams, and, unfortunately, it can lead, on occasion, to a decline in standards.

3. It is very difficult to measure empirically any effect that the use of supply teachers has on results.

3.1. Training (or lack of training) is a crucial point in terms of raising standards. Agencies, on the whole, do not offer appropriate training opportunities. Developing skills, maintaining and expanding subject expertise, becoming familiar with important national developments and receiving training on the use of ICT in the classroom are crucial. Agencies do not invest in training their teachers. Why should they? They do not have anything to gain.

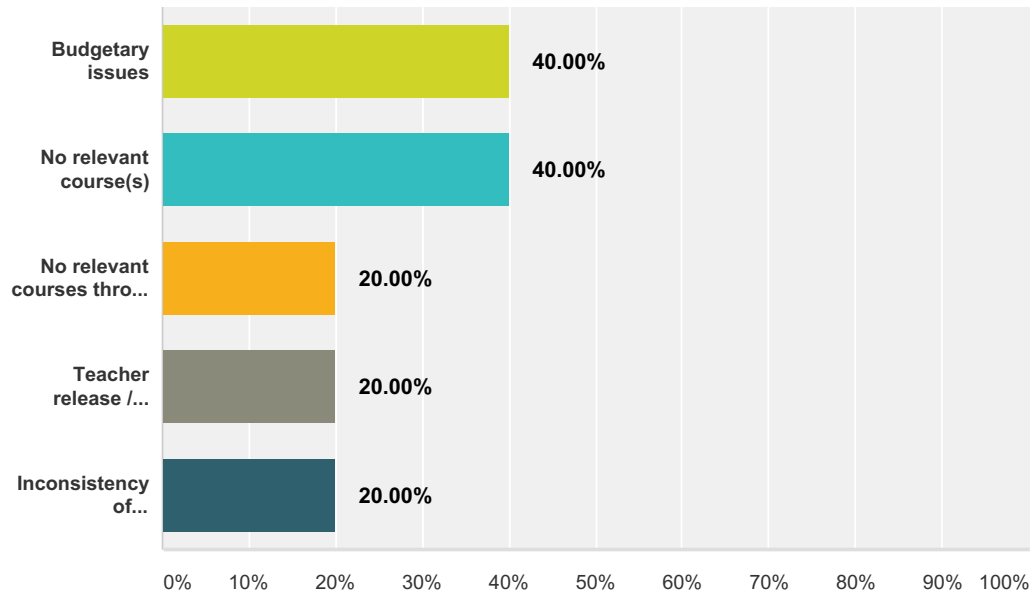
3.2. The results of the UCAC Survey for 2014 show that supply teachers working on a day-to-day basis and supply teachers who have short-term contracts are eager to receive training in specific fields.

3.3. During 2014, UCAC undertook a study of Teacher Workloads. Supply teachers working on a day-to-day basis and those with contracts highlighted the need for training.

The following graph displays the various reasons why Supply Teachers did not receive training:

Q17 If you haven't had access to training in the past two years, give the reason(s)? (tick one or more of the boxes)

Answered: 5 Skipped: 5



Answer Choices	Responses
Budgetary issues	40.00% 2
No relevant course(s)	40.00% 2
No relevant courses through the medium of Welsh	20.00% 1
Teacher release / supply issues	20.00% 1
Inconsistency of opportunities across the workforce	20.00% 1
Total Respondents: 5	

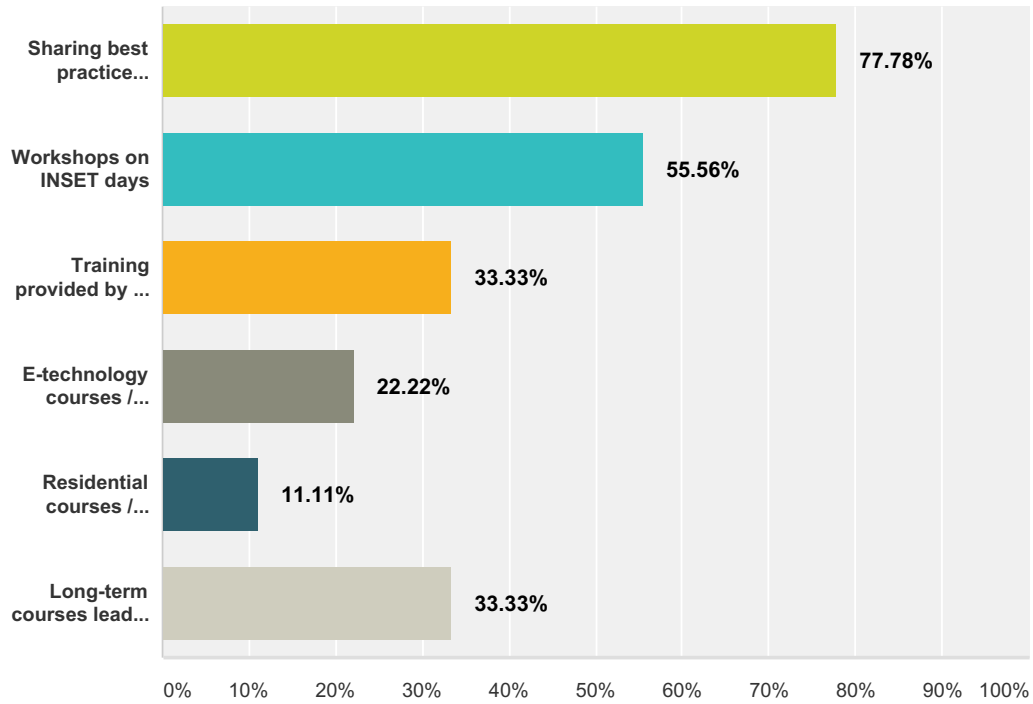
In the study, Supply Teachers listed their priorities with regard to training. Supply Teachers with a Short-term Contract considered training on behaviour management to be their main priority (57.14%), with curriculum planning, literacy and numeracy and additional learning needs in second place (14.29%).

Supply teachers providing cover on a day-to-day basis saw curriculum planning and literacy and numeracy as joint priorities (33.3%).

Supply teachers' responses when asked how they would wish to receive this training are outlined below:

Q16 How would you wish to receive training? (tick one or more of the boxes)

Answered: 9 Skipped: 1



Answer Choices	Responses
Sharing best practice (within the establishment / between establishments)	77.78% 7
Workshops on INSET days	55.56% 5
Training provided by the Local Authority / other agency	33.33% 3
E-technology courses / distance learning	22.22% 2
Residential courses / conferences	11.11% 1
Long-term courses leading to accredited qualifications	33.33% 3
Total Respondents: 9	

3.4. Insufficient training for supply teachers inevitably leads to a deterioration in pupils' behaviour. Situations arise where the supply teacher is not wholly aware of current developments and, as a result, their ability to prepare is impaired and behaviour can deteriorate as pupils take advantage.

3.5. Widespread use of teaching assistants, rather than supply teachers, is now made in our schools, and this can certainly be a factor where there is a decline in standards.

3.6. UCAC believes that only qualified teachers should lead entire classes, and that arrangements to use supply supervisors and classroom assistants for lessons where a teacher is absent may undermine standards, particularly where no specific training has been given regarding matters such as behaviour management. It is also highly likely, in situations of this kind, where work has, perhaps, been set, that it will not be possible to offer additional support for specific tasks to those pupils who need it.

3.7. Pupils become accustomed to the way that they are taught by a particular teacher; a change in these 'ways and means' under a supply teacher can lead to tensions between teacher and pupil and a deterioration in behaviour. Where this is possible, it is vital that the supply teacher discusses the matter with the teacher who is going to be absent—beforehand, if possible. In the busy school environment, there are scant opportunities to arrange a meeting with a short-notice supply teacher before they have to take a class.

4. At present, the education system in Wales does not treat supply teachers as professional people. All supply teachers need to be fully supported to ensure that this happens.

4.1. There have been so many changes to the education system in Wales over the past few years that the workforce in our schools is having difficulties in keeping up with every change. This situation makes supply teachers' work nigh on impossible.

4.2. Two of the Welsh Government's flagship policies, namely the Foundation Phase and the Literacy and Numeracy Framework, have been introduced with next to no training for the permanent workforce. There has been no training worth mentioning for supply teachers, yet they are expected to implement these policies in schools.

4.3. UCAC believes that this situation is wholly unacceptable, and that sufficient training should be ensured for our workforce, so that these progressive policies can be established and developed in our schools even when there are absences among the workforce.

4.4. UCAC believes that it is vital that supply teachers in the secondary sector are fully aware of what is expected of them in terms of the Literacy and Numeracy Framework, where teachers are required to introduce and

assess literacy and numeracy as part of every subject on the curriculum. There are major training implications for this Government if these strategies are to succeed.

4.5. Often, supply teachers search and pay for training opportunities themselves. There are now several parts of Wales where supply teachers work for Teaching Agencies. They are poorly paid and do not have the same status as other teachers, nor do they have the status of an employee—they are agency staff, and do not, therefore, have the same status under the law.

5. UCAC believes that including teachers who provide cover for longer than a term in the performance management process is an important development from the point of view of managing an individual's performance. There is a severe lack of training for supply teachers, and the performance-management process offers valuable training and updates for supply teachers.

5.1. If a supply teacher is at a school for more than a term, it is vital that they are part of all school-improvement processes, including performance management.

5.2. UCAC believes that performance management can be a means of ensuring that every teacher is treated fairly. A supply teacher who is at a school for an extended period of time must not be treated differently to other members of the workforce.

5.3. The Government has outlined schools' responsibilities with regard to Performance Management for Supply Teachers, but UCAC believes that these arrangements are yet to be implemented widely. These arrangements are relatively recent, but have received a positive response where implemented.

6. The situation regarding local authorities and supply teachers tends to vary a great deal across Wales. While some authorities continue to keep a list of supply teachers, an increasing number of schools are contacting teachers directly. It stands to reason that the development of this practice has implications, particularly in terms of verification by the Disclosure and Barring Service.

6.1. There are linguistic implications when schools contact agencies or an individual directly. Is the supply teacher able to teach through the medium of Welsh? UCAC would be very concerned if this essential skill were to be ignored in order to engage a supply teacher.

7. There is a concern that there are local and national variations in the responsibilities given to supply teachers. It is a matter of concern that some supply teachers have to shoulder the same responsibilities as a school's permanent workforce.

8. An increasing number of Local Authorities have failed to keep a list of supply teachers to facilitate the process of finding appropriate cover. As a result, it has become harder for schools to find and arrange cover at short notice and to find teachers to provide long-term cover. The Agencies have been able to exploit this opportunity to become established in Wales and make a substantial profit from the Public Education Service. UCAC believes that over 40 agencies are operating in Wales at present.

8.1. UCAC is concerned about the increasing use of Agencies. Even though the practice is more common in the south, it is spreading across Wales. Agencies are businesses that exist to make a profit. They undermine the status and rights of teachers as individuals and as a profession, and create a second-class tier of teachers. In order to compete, they sell teachers' services as cheaply as possible—some contact schools to offer teachers at a cheaper rate, and we have even heard of offering “two for the price of one”. This is not the way to create a dedicated and professional education workforce in Wales.

8.2. Whereas the relationship between a school, Local Authority and supply teacher used to mean some level of stability for the teacher, the school and pupils, engendering a feeling of being employed by the County and school, many supply teachers now feel increasingly isolated, and certainly receive a significantly smaller amount of money.

8.3. The Salary and Conditions Document for School Teachers does not set terms for teachers who are not directly employed by a Local Authority or by maintained schools. A teacher employed by an agency does not have the same safety net as other teachers.

8.4. Agencies do not invest in education, and the majority are businesses from England that have spotted an opportunity to exploit education in Wales, even though we now see businesses being established in Wales as well.

8.5. Agencies do not have to follow the rules of the education system. If a parent complains about a teacher supplied by an agency, there is no expectation that the agency will investigate the matter as a headteacher would be expected to do if the same complaint were made against a member of school staff. UCAC has experience of teachers being referred by an agency directly to the General Teaching Council for Wales, without investigation, with their names immediately removed from the agency's books. Teachers cannot be given supply work as they await the results of a General Teaching Council for Wales inquiry. Agencies do not pay teachers who are subject to a complaint while an investigation is underway, and there is a possibility that a teacher subject to a baseless complaint will be without an income for a long period of time without any possibility of being employed by another school or agency.

8.6. This is a time of deep concern for the teacher, and it is also a waste of the General Teaching Council for Wales's money (Education Workforce Council

from April 2015); all of this because the agencies do not shoulder their responsibilities as employers.

8.7. There is a lack of investigative procedures, but also a lack of support processes for teachers. This has become evident on more than one occasion, leaving teachers feeling extremely vulnerable. There are several additional concerns here, namely:

- the detrimental effect on teachers' health;
- a lack of understanding of the processes by the school itself;
- a lack of awareness by the local authority of what is happening;
- difficulty in establishing a dialogue with the teaching agency;
- the possibility that the matter will be passed to the General Teaching Council for Wales (Education Workforce Council);
- inconsistency in the way that the General Teaching Council for Wales (Education Workforce Council) considers the matter.

8.8. Many schools are now turning to Teaching Agencies to seek supply teachers, not only because they are able to save some money, but out of convenience—one phone call and the arrangements are made.

8.9. More often than not, headteachers are not aware of these teachers' salaries and terms and conditions. They have no idea of the “cut” taken by these companies from the fees paid by the school.

9. UCAC is concerned that Welsh-medium education suffers when supply teachers are in the classroom. Often, and again due to a lack of training, a lesson may turn from Welsh to English when a teacher faces an unfamiliar situation, because the supply teacher is not fully fluent in Welsh and their Welsh is not of a sufficient standard for the classroom. This can influence pupils' standards.

9.1. It is a concern that there are major implications in terms of training and improving the language skills of some supply teachers.

9.2. There is concern that there has been insufficient training for supply teachers to implement the Literacy Framework regarding the Welsh language in our schools. The UCAC 2014 Survey shows this to be the case.

UCAC
January 2015

National Assembly for Wales
Children, Young People and Education Committee
CYPE(4)-09-15 - Paper 3
Inquiry into Supply Teaching
Evidence from : Welsh Local Government Association

INTRODUCTION

1. The Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) represents the 22 local authorities in Wales, the three national park authorities and the three fire and rescue authorities.
2. It seeks to provide representation to local authorities within an emerging policy framework that satisfies the key priorities of our members and delivers a broad range of services that add value to Welsh Local Government and the communities they serve.
3. The WLGA welcomes the opportunity to provide evidence to the Children and Young People Committee Inquiry into Supply Teaching. In drafting this response the WLGA is guided by a number of key principles which underpin the work of the Association. The WLGA believes that decisions about services should be taken as close point of delivery as possible and that the people and communities using those services should be as engaged as possible in their delivery. It is also our belief that local services should be provided within a democratic framework of local accountability.
4. The WLGA recognises that it is the role of the Welsh Government to set the strategic framework and policy direction for services at a national level and that it is the role of local government to deliver those services taking account of the local circumstances and pressures. It is also recognised that services must be provided within a proportionate but effective regulatory framework to ensure that public resources are used appropriately and that services are delivered effectively and efficiently.
5. The WLGA has consistently argued for an un-hypothecated revenue support grant (RSG) as the best way of funding local government and any new responsibilities or additional burdens placed on local government should be fully costed and appropriately funded.



6. The WLGA recognises that some policy initiatives or strategies need to have funding attached to them for specific periods of time to make sure that they become embedded and are delivered as intended. For this reason, the WLGA, by exception, supports the use of specific grants or the ring fencing of revenue funding for specified purposes on the understanding that funding will eventually return to the RSG.
7. The Wales Audit Office and Estyn undertook a thematic inspection of the impact of teacher absence in 2013 which resulted in a number of recommendations being made to Welsh Government, local authorities and schools. Although managing teacher absence is the responsibility of individual schools local authorities recognise that they have a role to play to support schools with this issue. Following the publication of the Estyn and Wales Audit Office report the WLGA worked closely with Welsh Government and local authorities to highlight the issues raised in the report to ensure that local authorities and schools were aware of the recommendations.
8. The Wales Audit Office (WAO) estimated in 2013 that just under 10% of lessons were taken by staff who were not the usual class teacher. This estimate includes cover being provided for teacher absence by other teachers, or support staff within the school, as well as cover from supply teachers. The General Teaching Council for Wales (GTCW) has over four and half thousand teachers registered as supply teachers which represents approximately 13% of registered teachers in Wales. The use of supply teachers by schools is both necessary and effective in covering teacher absence particularly for planned or long-term absence. Since the introduction of the teachers workforce agreement teachers within a school need only provide cover where the absence is unforeseen, the 'rarely cover' agreement.
9. The report from Estyn and the WAO provided evidence that there was an impact on learners from teacher absence and that in some instances this caused disruption to lessons and problems with the behaviour of pupils. Some of these effects were mitigated in primary schools by the use of Higher Level Teachers Teaching Assistants (HLTAs). Where local authorities and schools work closely with supply agencies the effective matching of the skills and qualifications of supply teachers to particular classes and activities is possible for schools to manage. It should be considered however, that in some circumstances this is not always possible, for example, if supply cover is needed quickly. Many local authorities working with preferred providers monitor how schools are using supply teachers through regular

meetings with agencies and by seeking feedback from schools on the use of supply teachers. Working closely with providers gives the opportunity for schools and local authorities to tailor supply cover to the need, particularly when managing long term or planned absence.

10. Wherever possible schools and local authorities seek to minimise the impact on learners from teacher absence and the use of supply teaching. The Estyn and WAO report demonstrated that teacher absence did have an impact on learners at the time of their report. Since that time local authorities and schools have worked with Welsh Government to examine the recommendations in that report. A particular strand of work has been to look at monitoring the use of supply cover effectively, including seeking feedback when supply teachers have been used. Work has also been undertaken to strengthen guidance for school and local authorities on safeguarding issues when looking to use supply teachers. In addition, the provision of appropriate information for supply teachers when they enter a school for the first time has been highlighted. If supply teachers receive accurate information about where the class is and what is expected for the coming lessons before they cover a class this can help them to deliver appropriately targeted lessons.
 11. It is essential that supply teachers have access to up to date continuous professional development opportunities. There are a number of ways that this can be achieved and is the subject of discussion during the development of the new Education Workforce Council (which replaces the GTCW). Working with preferred providers local authorities and schools can include supply teachers who work regularly within their area in local CPD arrangements. This provides formal professional development and also enables supply teachers to gain more informal knowledge about the schools and teachers within that area. This approach can be augmented by enabling access for supply teachers to national training and development opportunities. Given that over a third of registered supply teachers have qualified within the last 5 years, it is essential that they take an active part in CPD opportunities.
 12. In conclusion the use of supply teachers in schools is necessary to cover teachers absence in some circumstances. The management of teacher absence is the responsibility of schools, however, local authorities in Wales are working with schools and with supply teacher providers to ensure that children and young people are not disadvantaged by teacher absence or the use of supply teachers.
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