

Owen Evans

Estyn

22 February 2024

Dear Owen,

Covering Teachers' Absence

You may be aware that our Committee has recently considered the Auditor General for Wales' follow-up work on Covering Teachers' Absence in Wales. This work followed other outputs by the previous Auditor General for Wales in 2013 and subsequently by the current Auditor General in 2020.

The Auditor General for Wales wrote to the Committee on 19 October 2023 to set out his findings. Having considered the contents of the report, the Committee agreed to hold an inquiry on this topic, with an oral evidence session held on 21 February 2024, with Welsh Government officials, to explore some of the Auditor General's conclusions. In the session, the Committee covered topics including:

- Absence rates;
- Supply teacher availability;
- Recruitment and retention incentives for supply teachers;
- The previous and new agency framework;
- Agency fees;
- The suitability and quality of agency staff;
- The new booking platform and its impact;
- The professional development of supply staff; and

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.

- Supply teachers' pay and conditions.

Following this session, the Committee agreed to write to Estyn to seek your view on the current position in Wales, with reference to your own functions and inspection work, and to invite you to submit evidence to our inquiry, which may assist in our work and be reflected in our final report.

If you would like to submit evidence to our inquiry, I would welcome a response by Friday 29 March 2024.

Regards



Mark Isherwood MS

Chair of the Public Accounts and Public Administration Committee