

**National Assembly for Wales  
Children, Young People and Education Committee**

ST 07

**Inquiry into Supply Teaching**

**Evidence from : Supply Teacher**

**Consultation questions**

<b>Question 1 – What are your views on whether there is a prevalence in the use of supply teachers on a planned and unplanned basis?</b>	
I am employed in both cases, planned being when a regular class teacher is attending a course and unplanned being when a teacher is unwell. I would say that I work both cases equally however in the case of an unplanned absence I am more likely to cover for up to a term at a time whereas I cover for courses usually on a one day basis.	
<b>If you believe that this results in problems (for example, for schools, pupils or teachers), how do you think they could be resolved?</b>	
Often when a teacher is unwell no planned work is left and a supply teacher has to use whatever resources are available to them. I then worry that, when I am teaching “off plan” the children are not covering the necessary topics/ skills that their regular teacher would teach them. It would be useful for Head teachers to be vigilant about ensuring that weekly plans are displayed in the classroom and that the plans are detailed and clear for a supply teacher to follow, or that sufficient support is given eg. PPA time for a supply teacher/ copies of long or medium term plans etc. especially if they are covering for a prolonged absence (3 days or more).	
<b>How significant is this issue? (Please select one option)</b>	
<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 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?

As a primary supply teacher I believe that I cover the same topics and have equal qualification as many of the regular class teachers. However, I am aware of very different circumstances in Secondary school, where unqualified members of staff or supply teachers are employed as ‘cover supervisors’. It is my opinion that this role should not exist. It does not benefit the pupils, as the cover supervisor is often not an expert in the subject and it does not benefit the employee as they cannot count this type of teaching towards their NQT induction and are paid less than a regular teacher.

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

I believe this could be solved by the eradication of the cover supervisor role and instead qualified supply Teachers should be used. There seems to be a view that if you have not planned/ designed the work yourself then you can be employed as a cover supervisor, however the deliverance of these plans require teaching skills and should be acknowledged as teaching rather than ‘supervising’.

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

*1 - This is a key, urgent problem.*

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

*3 - This is a minor problem*

*4 - Not a problem.*

x

**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)?

On a day to day basis I believe that the pupil's learning may be adversely affected. I say this because the supply teacher has not created the same relationship with the pupils as their regular teacher and therefore, in my experience, the behaviour of the pupils can sometimes be worse. This of course affects learning. However, I have found that when employed regularly or exclusively in one school as a supply teacher you have the opportunity to create relationships with pupils and behaviour becomes less of a problem. By having a relationship with pupils whereby you know their individual educational needs and personal background you can cater to them and create a fantastic learning environment.

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

Supply agencies and schools should employ supply teachers on a regular or exclusive basis so that the supply teachers are able to create those crucial relationships with the pupils. I also believe that schools should provide supply teachers with a detailed pack of information, including school policies, IEPs, classroom plans, schedules etc. so the supply teacher is fully informed. This means that they can plan and differentiate learning activities to individually suit the class.

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?**

It is my opinion that the CPD of supply teachers is poor. Supply teachers are reluctant to attend courses where they may be sacrificing a day's pay and therefore often end up attending courses in holiday time. The provision of courses run by agencies varies hugely and supply teachers have to pay to attend. I have paid over £100 pounds to attend CPD courses when other NQTs, who are paid a far higher wage, are being funded by the school/council/government. I also believe that supply teachers are hugely disadvantaged by the NQT induction as it stands. The standards that we are expected to attain are the same as a regular teacher, such as regularly assessing pupil progress and meeting with parents. This is difficult when many supply teachers are employed for one or two days at a time in different schools with different classes. Observations by their mentors may take place with classes that the supply teacher hardly knows.

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

- Supply teachers to be enrolled in any teaching courses run by the local council (this is not the case in the council that I work under) and/or supply agencies to be legally obliged to provide regular, free CPD courses.
- Induction standards to be adjusted to acknowledge the situation of a supply teacher.
- Schools to be thoroughly informed and supportive of the Induction process supply teachers must achieve and offer supply teachers, especially regular supply, any CPD opportunities that regular teachers are afforded eg. Twilight sessions, Inset days, observed lessons by senior leadership team with feedback.

<p>- How the school treats supply teachers to be investigated during an ESTYN inspection.</p>	
<p>How significant is this issue? (Please select one option)</p>	
<p><i>1 - This is a key, urgent problem.</i></p>	<p>x</p>
<p><i>2 - This is a problem that needs to be addressed.</i></p>	
<p><i>3 - This is a minor problem</i></p>	
<p><i>4 - Not a problem.</i></p>	
<p><b>Question 5 – What are your views on performance management arrangements for supply teachers?</b></p>	
<p>I have not been involved in any performance management through schools (observations, evidence files, target setting etc.)</p>	
<p>If you think there are problems in this area, how do you think they could be resolved?</p>	
<p>Regular supplies to be involved in the performance management strategies employed by their regular school, especially if they are to be observed by ESTYN.</p>	
<p>How significant is this issue? (Please select one option)</p>	
<p><i>1 - This is a key, urgent problem.</i></p>	
<p><i>2 - This is a problem that needs to be addressed.</i></p>	<p>x</p>
<p><i>3 - This is a minor problem</i></p>	
<p><i>4 - Not a problem.</i></p>	
<p><b>Question 6 – Do you consider that local authorities and regional consortia have sufficient oversight of the use of supply teachers?</b></p>	
<p>No, supply agencies have monopolised the supply agency market as they search for work for supply teachers, whereas the council works as a means of payment rather than as an agency.</p>	

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

Either:

- Supply agencies to pay supply teachers the same wage as they would be paid through the council, as currently the agencies take a significant cut of our wages. In my case my school pays the agency £180 a day and I receive £70 pounds of that (after tax).

Or (more preferably)

- Schools to employ supply teachers directly and be paid through the local council. Supply teachers jobs could be advertised by the school and once awarded, one or more supply teachers would work exclusively for that school, covering all their supply work.

Or:

- A more active role taken by *all* councils (as some already do) to run government funded agencies by the local authority (eradicating private agencies) where they do not take a cut of a supply teacher's wage.

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 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, some councils play a far more active part in supply teaching, creating a supply teaching 'pool'. I am aware that Carmarthenshire council do this. I am unaware of why this is the case in some counties and not in others.

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

- Remove private supply agencies
- Councils to play a more active part in employing supply teachers eg. Forming their own local authority supply agency where they actively find supply teachers work.

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

*1 - This is a key, urgent problem.*

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

x

*3 - This is a minor problem*

*4 - Not a problem.*

**Question 8** – Do you have any views on supply agencies and their quality assurance arrangements?

- Supply agencies take a significant portion of a supply teacher's wage. My school pays my agency £180 pounds for a day's work and I receive £70 of this.
- The interview process is more of a formality than of a rigorous interview you would receive for a teaching post.
- Supply agencies often pay teachers through an umbrella company, who also take part of your wage through a processing fee. They often hold your holiday pay unless you specifically ask for it and there is a tight deadline for when you can apply for your holiday pay.
- Supply agencies have often pressurised me into taking work which is miles away from where I live or in which I am inexperienced eg. SEN units and nurseries or asking me to work in a class/ school in which the behaviour of the pupils is challenging and, as an NQT, I am inexperienced with. They are often not upfront about the fact that these classes are challenging as they do not wish you to turn down a day which they financially benefit from.

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

- A fixed and consistent wage paid for any supply work undertaken.
- Supply work offered to be carefully matched to a supply teacher's qualifications, experience and location.
- To be paid directly rather than through umbrella companies.
- Holiday pay to be included in any work the supply teacher undertakes (as law).
- A pension payment plan consistent with teacher's payment plans who work through the council (as law).

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?

N/A

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

N/A

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>	
<i>3 - This is a minor problem</i>	



*4 - Not a problem.*

**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?

That schools directly employ one or more exclusive supply teachers who they pay through the council and who are afforded all of the CPD opportunities that their regular teachers are given.

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