

**P-05-805 Fair Deal for Supply Teachers, Correspondence – Petitioner to Chair,
15.01.20**

Dear Mrs Finch Saunders

We thank the Cabinet Secretary for Education for her recent correspondence.

NPS have been very helpful and we received our own update from them in December. We note the increased spend from September 2018 to September 2019. We await the information on the on/ off framework spend. One of the off framework agencies has told me that they only pay the minimum rate for assignments of more than 12 weeks. It is a real shame that these agencies are in operation as has been said previously they are undermining the Framework rate and other terms. It is good that predominately schools are using framework agencies as well as the long awaited minimum pay rates the other aspects of the framework should be adhered to.

One of these is provision of CPD. Mrs Williams states that 300 workers have received training through agencies. This is a very small amount compared to the number of supply teachers employed by agencies. In the light of the need of supply teachers to be up to date with new initiatives especially in respect of the new curriculum it is very concerning.

The Mick Waters' report Teaching A valued profession states in Recommendation 20

“Supply teachers should be expected to be able to demonstrate their growth against the professional standards for teaching each year. As part of that process, they should be expected to demonstrate the impact of professional learning. Supply teachers should spend seven days engaged in professional learning in each school year, regardless of the extent of their supply work. Their agency should organise and manage four of these and three of the days should be managed by the individual. Where supply teachers are not registered by an agency, it should be their responsibility to find appropriate professional learning opportunities with schools or other providers. “

It is disappointing that there are 3 out of the 27 agencies that have not signed up to the Code of Practice for Ethical Employment as this has not been mandatory. The adherence to the Code will need to be carefully monitored .

The 12% of bookings mentioned that were not paid at the correct rate owing to schools saying they are unable to pay means for all the hard work of NPS there are supply teachers who are using that agency who have signed up to the terms are not getting the correct rate . Adequate funding is essential so that all schools using framework are able to stick to the same terms .

But as you know we want all supply teachers to be paid according to their qualifications and experience directly in a fair system for example directly by schools as in the Northern Ireland model or as in Scotland by local authorities. This is a workers ' rights issues and if not put right Wales will not be able to be Fair Work Wales.

Supply teachers have been exploited for far too long . We have had the Wales Audit Office report in 2013 , Welsh Government Inquiry into Supply Teaching 2015 , Taskforce Report

Feb 2016 , numerous meetings of the Supply Working group to discuss the recommendations of the Taskforce Report and now we are waiting on the final evaluation of the supply cluster that only benefitted 50 supply teachers.

An enormous amount of time and money has been spent on this issue. Agencies have signed up to the Framework Agreement for FOUR years. That does not suggest any urgency to find a fair solution for all supply teachers that will put their pay and conditions in line with Scotland and Northern Ireland. We reiterate the need for supply teachers to be able to access Teachers Pension Scheme like their permanent counterparts and that this is only able to happen with direct payment. The impact on supply teachers in later life facing hardship could be a very real one as agency pension scheme is poor . There seems to be considerable benefits to the supply cluster scheme as there will be direct payment but it could take a long time to roll out.

As you will know our concerns are for the bigger picture of getting the best education there can be for our learners in Wales. We have stressed over and over how important it is to have a qualified teacher in every class. The increased use of unqualified staff should be looked at closely in terms of the impact on outcomes and wellbeing of our learners. Behaviour has been noted as particularly bad by supply teachers who have been placed in schools to work as cover supervisors as no active learning takes place just supervision.

We thank the Petitions Committee for all the work they have done on what is a workers' rights issue and even more importantly the future of our learners in Wales. We welcome your report on this .

Kind Regards

Sheila Jones