

National Assembly for Wales
Children, Young People and Education Committee

ST 36

Inquiry into Supply Teaching

Evidence from : Supply Teacher

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?

Supply teachers are not only used to cover short term sickness or for when teachers are on courses but to cover long term absences such as maternity. They are also often used to teach in positions where there are not covering a permanent member of staff rather they are used as a cheap way of staffing a school. Sometimes used for years.

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

The supply teacher is obviously exploited in long term cover posts when payed via agencies as they receive significantly less than an NQT and have no protection, pension and sick pay etc.

Supply teachers do a good job in often difficult situations and do their utmost to reduce the impact on pupils.

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

1 – This is a key, urgent problem.

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

▪ 3 – This is a minor problem

4 – Not a problem.

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?

Supply teachers cover all classes within schools as and when the need arises. They are all qualified but the lack of access to CPD for supply teachers makes it difficult for them to stay on top of current pedagogy. Lessons conducted by supply teachers varies greatly from person to person, the circumstances of their placement and whether work has been left or support given to them.

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

Allowing greater access to CPD. Ensuring schools give greater support to supply teachers.

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.

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▪ 3 – This is a minor problem

4 – Not a problem.

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)?

Pupils obviously try to exploit the situation of having a supply teacher but many like myself have excellent class control. Outcomes for pupils are obviously affected as it takes time for a teacher to get to know their class, which allows them to differentiate correctly.

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

There is little that can be done to change how pupils react to having a new teacher other than the school supporting them closely.

Pupil outcomes will be affected in the short term until the new teachers gets to grips with their new class but this differs greatly on the type of the children in the class and the quality of the teacher.

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.

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

There is a significant lack of CPD available to supply teachers which doesn't require them to pay or give up payed work to attend. The lack of support, care and guidance given to them obviously creates a situation where many supply teachers are not able to stay up to date of educational changes in a meaningful way.

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

Simply by giving supply teachers a fund they can tap into to access CPD courses they feel will be of interest to them. The fund could be linked the number of days teaching they perform a year and once they reach a certain threshold they get a day paid CPD. The money should not come out of their pay as this would only further impoverish supply teachers.

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.

Question 5 – What are your views on performance management arrangements for supply teachers?	
Quite often there is little or none as a supply teacher may only be in a school for a single day. If a supply is in a long term cover situation then many heads observe a lesson.	
If you think there are problems in this area, how do you think they could be resolved?	
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.	▪ /
Question 6 – Do you consider that local authorities and regional consortia have sufficient oversight of the use of supply teachers?	
No I do not. Supply teachers in my county are left for the private sector to exploit and have no contact with the LEA.	
If you believe there are problems in this area, how do you think they could be resolved?	
Remove private agencies and ensure all supply teachers are paid via the county and then in turn can be scrutinised and overseen by the LEA.	

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.	
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?	
<p>Having spoken to colleagues there does seem to be many variations. The main one being that in some areas supply teachers are more likely to be paid properly through the county instead of by a supply agency who take a 40% cut.</p>	
If you believe there are problems in this area, how do you think they could be resolved?	
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.	

Question 8 – Do you have any views on supply agencies and their quality assurance arrangements?	
Agencies have no real assurances other than checking your a qualified teacher and that you have DBS. Unless a complaint is received about a teacher.	
If you believe there are problems in this area, how do you think they could be resolved?	
Get rid of supply agencies.	
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.	
Question 9 – Are you aware of any specific issues relating to Welsh medium education? If so, what are they?	
Supply teachers often receive a higher rate of pay.	
If you believe there are problems in this area, how do you think they could be resolved?	

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.	
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?	
<p>Abolish the use of private supply agencies and pay all supply teacher properly and fairly through the county against the teachers pay scale. This would keep good teachers in the profession, allow supply teachers to give up their second jobs and allow them to focus more on teaching. This would also be morally right.</p>	
Question 11 – Do you have any other comments or issues you wish to raise that have not been covered by the specific questions?	
<p>The exploitation of supply teachers. Supply teachers are affectively zero hour contract workers who have no rights, stability, sick pay, proper holiday pay and support. They are in a position which some Head teachers exploit, forcing supply teachers to work beyond their contracts for no extra pay for fear of being told not to come back in tomorrow or by being promised jobs which do not materialise. Some supply teachers have worked full time in schools for years via supply agencies. Putting them well below M1 on the teachers pay scale.</p>	