

National Assembly for Wales
Children, Young People and Education Committee
ST 34

Inquiry into Supply Teaching

Evidence from : Torfaen County Borough Council Education Service

Consultation questions

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

The data available to the authority suggests that the majority of supply cover relates to unplanned sickness absence. However there is a significant minority of cover that results from teachers attendance at planned courses.

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

Whether absence is planned or unplanned this can have a disruptive impact upon teaching and learning. Pupils attainment and behaviour can be affected by absences and the use of supply cover.

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

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| <i>1 - This is a key, urgent problem.</i> | |
| <i>2 - This is a problem that needs to be addressed.</i> | YES |
| <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?

Having received comments from some of our schools it is difficult to respond to this question. There appears to be a wide range of classes covered and learning activities undertaken under the supervision of supply staff. The query about the relevance of the subject for the supply teacher can only be confirmed by individual schools.

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

See above

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 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)?

The key issue is the disruption to pupils in terms of both teaching and learning and behaviour that may result from the use of supply staff. Again detail on this question can only be secured from schools themselves.

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

See above

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?

Clearly there is a need to ensure that supply teachers are suitably qualified and have undertaken CPD to ensure their skills and knowledge remain current.

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

The contractual relationship with the supply agencies can include reference to CPD and training for supply staff. The arrangement locally with a nominated supplier includes reference to CPD. Schools themselves should also require training of supply staff particularly if the appointment is of a longer term nature.

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.

YES

3 - This is a minor problem

4 - Not a problem.

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

There would appear to be no structured approach to performance management for supply staff.

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

Clear requirements should be placed upon employers to ensure that supply staff are included in performance management arrangements.

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.

YES

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?

Oversight of supply staff currently rests with individual schools under delegated responsibility. Locally a preferred supplier has been secured the contract for which considered quality and efficiency issues but performance at a school level can only be monitored by the individual schools.

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

As schools have delegated responsibility they need to determine a monitoring scheme which provides assurance that the use of supply teachers is cost effective and quality assured. Key aspects to consider:

- Quality assurance
- CPD
- Monitoring of impact on teaching and learning
- Costs

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

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|--|-----|
| <i>1 - This is a key, urgent problem.</i> | |
| <i>2 - This is a problem that needs to be addressed.</i> | YES |
| <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?

Locally schools can choose supply staff as required and therefore there are a number of agencies in use. The choice of supply agency/staff is based on the preference of schools and their experience of use of agencies and individual supply teachers.

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

The use of multiple agencies by schools can result in varying quality and value for money. A preferred supplier, arranged either as an authority or regionally, can provide greater assurance that the quality of supply staff is defined and subject to a contractual relationship. Also because of a collective approach there can be greater assurance that value for money is obtained.

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

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|--|-----|
| <i>1 - This is a key, urgent problem.</i> | |
| <i>2 - This is a problem that needs to be addressed.</i> | YES |
| <i>3 - This is a minor problem</i> | |

4 - Not a problem.

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

The quality assurance arrangements are defined in the contractual relationship between the supplier and the school. Clearly where this has been sought via a collective arrangement then the procurement process would include reference to quality assurance. This should be developed with schools and supply agencies. There is a need to ensure that there is a proper feedback route for quality assurance.

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

Clearly defined monitoring and assessment processes should be introduced to ensure feedback on the use of supply staff and the supply agencies. This can be fed back to any procurement group so that issues can be identified and resolved. In particular feedback should inform any future supply agency procurement exercise.

Potentially schools could collectively report, perhaps at an authority level, on the quality of agencies and staff so that schools within the locality have information on which to base decisions on the use of agencies and staff. This may of course be extended to a regional level.

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.

YES

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?

No specific feedback from schools, again this question needs to be answered by individual schools. However given the difficulties in securing Welsh Medium teaching staff it is considered that this would extend to supply staff.

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

See above

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?

The impact of the use of supply staff on teaching and learning should be monitored more closely and schools should review its use of supply staff as part of the generally monitoring of performance within the school.

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

Clearly the use of supply teachers within schools is a concern with various national reports and local feedback from schools indicating a range of issues.

The aspect that needs to be noted is that the use of supply staff results from staff absence within schools, hence there is a need to ensure that absence management within schools is well managed. This should result in a reduced need for supply staff and hence reduce the impact of the issues previously discussed.