

P-05-805 Fair Deal For Supply Teachers – Correspondence from the petitioner to the Committee, 06.09.18

Dear Petitions Committee

With reference to the correspondence from the Cabinet Secretary we would like to raise the following points :

Schools in some authorities are unable to employ direct even if they so wish. These include Blaenau Gwent , Swansea, Newport, Neath Port Talbot and Wrexham. (We are awaiting the results of recent FOIs to see if there are other LAs.)They have no supply lists and do not have a payroll facility in place so no arrangements to pay supply teachers are available . Just because schools are free to choose how they employ supply teachers is repeatedly stated or is in a document does not make it true. Heads in Newport tell teachers that they are not allowed to employ short term supply teachers directly. The choice is not there! We should all be treated equally .

The pilot

We were told by Gail Deane at a meeting in April this year that only 37 out of the 50 places in the pilot scheme costing £2.7 m have been taken up. We don't fully understand how attaching a teacher / teachers to a cluster of schools could work but that figure does not bode well for the success of the scheme. We believe it is to be reviewed in October, a year after it was put in motion. It has only been of benefit to those teachers and for the rest of the supply teachers employed by agencies there has been no improvement at all.

Improvements

We understand improvements are to be put in the framework agreement given by NPS for 2019- 20 . Whilst we are pleased to see there is a recognition that improvements need to be made these are not far reaching enough. We have been told that when devolved powers come in then better pay and conditions would ensue. Indeed Carwyn Jones told Leanne Wood this in the Senedd in answer to her question about Wales not having private money in education. Is setting a minimum pay rate at M1 with agencies for 2019-20 all that can be achieved ?

Scotland have always paid their supply teachers directly and on the teachers pay scale, unless they were only in the school 2 days. Since January, those daily supply teachers have also returned to being paid to scale according to their experience. None of taxpayers money is going to an agency! Scotland also has local management of schools yet supply teachers are paid through LAs. Why are Wales lagging behind their counterparts in Scotland and Northern Ireland ?

Quality Assurance

'We are working with the Supply Working Group to explore how implementing quality assurance standards might improve provision. If implemented

What are the barriers to quality assurance standards being implemented? We welcome those standards particularly in regard to safeguarding . We have discussed the need for safeguarding training with NPS. We would hope the training could be done with a provider rather than online. It is shocking to think there are 64 agencies in existence that have been largely unregulated and only some will 'choose' to be in 2019-20.

The revised specification would include requirements for ensuring supply teachers received proper learning opportunities.'

We need proper learning opportunities . We have asked for them for some time as we need and want to be kept up to date with new initiatives and we welcome this revision.

However, we also need proper pay. It is proper PAY that pays bills and enables people to be supply teachers. It is proper pay that raises standards first and foremost . It enables retention of the supply teacher workforce.

Welsh government could get so much more out of their supply teaching workforce, but at present has still been unable to formulate a plan to pay fairly and unfortunately, for Wales, it is NOT only supply teachers who are losing out, but a generation of children taught by this demoralised supply teacher workforce.

We are pleased that the Cabinet Secretary has acknowledged the anger and upset felt by supply teachers and that she does not want to see any of us exploited. However another year will pass with the "missed opportunity " of any improvement into the existing framework agreement. Anything you can do to expedite our situation is appreciated. We have been losing out on fair pay , access to Teachers' Pension Scheme and access to CPD for some time as you know . We have also seen the use of unqualified staff become more prevelant. We want the learners of Wales to have the best supply teachers they can have. The improvement of learner outcomes is paramount . Thank you for your work in considering our petition.

Kind Regards

Sheila Jones

