

P-05-805 Fair Deal For Supply Teachers, Correspondence – Petitioner to Committee, 13.11.19

13th November 2019

Dear Mrs Finch Saunders

Once again we thank the Petitions Committee for your very careful consideration of our petition .

We would like to make the following comments on the feedback from agencies .

We are surprised that only six agencies have replied. There are 64 in operation. The one provider that has the biggest share of the business is significant in its absence from the responses.

We dispute Recruit2schools assertion that LEAs do not employ supply teachers directly and that agencies are the only way available for schools to obtain supply teachers.

Newport City Council has just reopened its payroll to supply teachers after closing it in 2010 . The senior HR /business manager has said that there is a lot of interest from schools in direct employment.

Caerphilly County Borough Council provided me a list of Caerphilly schools that employ supply teachers direct .

There are 2 authorities that still do not have the ability to employ direct despite the Cabinet Secretary for Education stating that schools are free to choose.

The lack of any legislation to mandate agencies that have signed up to the framework has been unfair to both supply teachers and to the agencies that are adhering to its terms . It has meant that now, in the 11th working week of this term, supply teachers are still being asked to work for £90 a day. The supply teachers who are getting the minimum M1 rate are now £37 a day better off than the ones who have often been forced to accept the lower rate due to their circumstances. We think it unfair to blame those supply teachers who have to do this to pay their bills when in fact it is lack of legislation that has led to this .

A huge problem is the use of unqualified staff in schools. In secondary schools teacher absence is frequently being covered by cover supervisors who are paid as little as £60 a day. This is because schools are refusing to pay for a qualified teacher. We did a Freedom of Information request and found one school in Monmouthshire used unqualified agency people to cover 4322 days of teacher absence in 2018/19. This is shocking at a time when we tell our learners about

the importance of punctuality and attendance on their learning, and then put people in their classroom who are not allowed to teach them.

After all the work that has gone into the Framework Agreement this is appalling . Supply Teachers have had years of exploitation. A legal slot has been designated for discussion of legislation. We have asked NPS for the date but as yet have not heard back .

The Framework Agreement states that M1 is a minimum pay rate but many adverts that we receive just state that £127.72 is the rate .

Regarding employer's contribution to a pension scheme agencies generally pay between 3% to 5% . The employer's contribution into Teachers' Pension Scheme is significantly higher at 23.68 % (Sept 2019 increased from 16.48%)

The Teachers ' Pension Scheme can only be accessed by those supply teachers who are paid direct . This is a recognition of the status of supply teachers as qualified teachers . The inability to be part of Teachers Pension Scheme will lead to hardship in later life.

The six agencies pointed out that they were providing CPD. This is safer recruitment and much of what they stated would be necessary, safeguarding training etc .

Provision of CPD is a requirement of the Framework Agreement. There is no mention of the New Curriculum. Supply Teachers need to be fully informed of the changes . We would like to know how this will happen .

As £114m of taxpayers money went from 19 LAs from 2015-2018 to agencies whilst we agree agencies may provide good service we consider the money could be better spent providing direct pay and conditions as this is the fairest way . No undercutting , no circumventing of agreements , a minimum is not the maximum . Pay & conditions will reflect qualifications and experience. The Taskforce worked hard on this. The unions and their lay activists, of which we are part , have worked hard on this . This is about getting the very best in a fair system for all to benefit our learners , our supply teachers and our support staff.

The evaluation of the [School Based Cluster Supply Model Project](#) was published yesterday and as expected showed the benefits of direct employment of supernumerary teachers.

We have heard support within the Committee for a public sector solution. We ask you to put one into place as soon as possible. We were told that primary legislation would be necessary and would take two years to bring in a public sector solution . This was at a our meeting with Welsh Government officials in April 2018. Had that process been able to have been started then instead of tinkering around the edges we would be well on the way to fairness for all supply teachers . The Scottish and Northern Ireland models are both excellent solutions as ultimately we believe teachers should be employed directly to schools with all the recognised benefits to learners, schools and teachers that go with it.

In conclusion it may interest you to know that just last week a highly qualified specialist teacher currently working in a Pupil Referral Unit asked her Framework Agency to put her pay up to the minimum Framework rate, she had been working there since the start of term and was very well thought of. She is a single parent. The agency refused, so the teacher asked the school. On her way to school the next day she was phoned by the agency and told that the school had told them to tell her she was no longer welcome at the school.

Kind regards

Sheila Jones