



Supply Teachers

Annual survey of experiences

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	3
THE SURVEY	4
Nature of work	4
Access to work	5
Availability of work	5
Working for a school during the academic year 2022/23.....	7
Health and safety issues for supply teachers during the academic year 2022/23	12
Financial situation during the academic year 2022/23	12
Training and behaviour management support	13
Ways in which the Scottish Government could best support supply teachers moving forwards.....	14
CONCLUSION	15

INTRODUCTION

Supply teachers are integral to the education system. Without supply teachers, many pupils would be denied the opportunity to be taught by hard-working and dedicated teachers who ensure that schools can continue to provide the education to which children and young people are entitled. Supply teachers make a vital contribution to securing high educational standards for all children and young people.

NASUWT's annual survey of supply teachers in Scotland aims to examine the changing experiences of supply teachers, including issues and trends.

The 2022/23 survey was undertaken during June.

This report provides the main findings from the survey of supply teachers and highlights the experiences of supply teachers during the 2022/23 academic year.

THE SURVEY

Nature of work

Supply teachers were asked why they carried out supply teaching work. The top five reasons cited by supply teachers were:

- 39% reported that it was because it gave them greater flexibility over what they did;
- 39% stated that they were undertaking ad hoc supply work whilst seeking a permanent position;
- 6% stated that they were concerned about the workload in schools;
- 6% stated that they were concerned about the high-stakes accountability within schools; and
- 6% reported that the school where they had previously worked had failed to address their concerns about student behaviour.

'Fits in better with the work/life balance choices I have made for my family.'

When asked what other advantages/disadvantages were associated with being a supply teacher, 30% cited the lack of job security, a fifth (20%) noted the lack of resources, and a fifth (20%) noted the fact that they did not have to go back to a school. One in ten (10%) referenced the poor pay supply teachers receive, one in ten (10%) noted the lower stakes associated with supply teaching, and one in ten (10%) noted the fact that supply teachers are able to decline work.

Supply teachers were asked about the ability to secure work teaching during the academic year 2022/23. Over two-fifths (43%) reported that they had no problems securing work, whereas a third (33%) reported that they had some problems securing work. Just under a quarter of supply teachers (24%) reported that they had significant problems getting supply work.

'If I get treated badly in a particular school, I don't have to go back there.'

Access to work

During the academic year 2022/23, over three-quarters of supply teachers (77%) reported that they were working for one local authority, 17% reported that they were working for two local authorities, and 3% reported that they were working for three local authorities. Three per cent of supply teachers reported that they were working for more than five local authorities.

When asked if this was more or less than the number of local authorities they had worked for during the previous academic year (2021/22), just over one in ten supply teachers (11%) stated that it was more, and just under nine out of ten (89%) stated that it had stayed the same.

Over half of supply teachers (54%) reported travelling between 0-10 miles for an assignment, 30% reported travelling between 11-20 miles, one in ten (10%) reported travelling between 21-30 miles, and 3% reported travelling between 31-40 miles for an assignment. Three per cent of supply teachers reported travelling over 100 miles to undertake an assignment during the academic year 2022/23. Just over a fifth of supply teachers (21%) reported that they had to travel further than in previous years in order to secure work.

Twenty-nine per cent of supply teachers stated that the cost-of-living crisis had a detrimental impact on how far they were willing to travel to undertake an assignment.



Since the new Teacher Booker system was adopted by Edinburgh Council, I am not managing to get much work.'

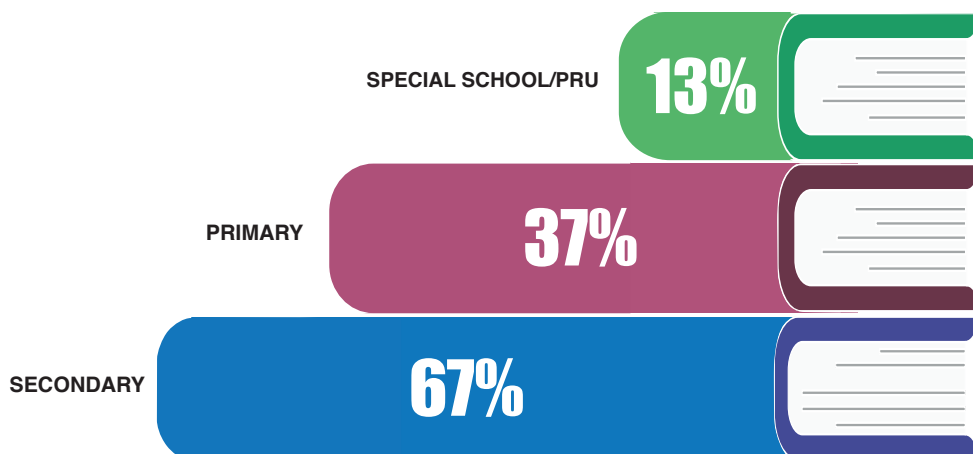


Availability of work

Supply teachers were asked where they were able to obtain work during the academic year 2022/23.

Over a third of supply teachers (37%) who responded to the survey stated that they were able to secure work in primary schools, just over two-thirds (67%) stated that they were able to secure work in secondary schools, and 13% reported that they were able to secure work in special schools/pupil referral units (PRUs).

Where supply teachers undertook the majority of their work during the academic year 2022/23:



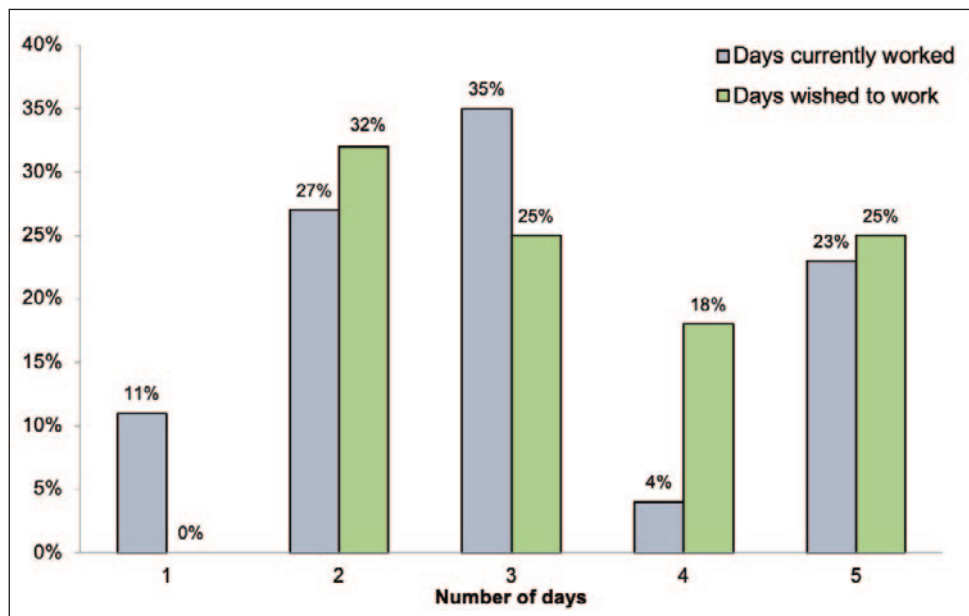
For those supply teachers who reported that they were able to secure work during the academic year 2022/23, well over a third (37%) reported that the majority of their supply teaching was short-term supply (e.g. ad hoc for two days or fewer), and over three-fifths (63%) stated that the majority of their supply teaching was on longer term assignments (e.g. placements in excess of two days).

Of those supply teachers on a long-term assignment, just over a fifth (21%) said that this was weekly supply work, and just over a quarter (26%) stated that this was monthly supply work. Just over a fifth of supply teachers (21%) reported that the majority of their work was termly supply work, and a third (32%) stated that the majority of their supply teaching was on longer term assignments in excess of a term.

When supply teachers were asked how many days on average they were able to obtain work during the academic year 2022/23, just over one in ten (11%) said they secured work one day a week, over a quarter (27%) secured work two days a week, and over a third (35%) secured work three days a week. Just under one in 20 of supply teachers (4%) in the survey said they were able to secure work for four days a week, and just under a quarter (23%) stated that they were able to secure work five days a week. However, over two-fifths (43%) said that they would like to work either four or five days a week.

Just over two-fifths of supply teachers (42%) stated that the amount of supply work had decreased during 2022/23, compared to the previous academic year, whereas 15% of supply teachers stated that the amount of supply work had

increased. Just over two-fifths of respondents (42%) stated that the amount of supply work they were able to secure had stayed the same.



Working for a school during the academic year 2022/23

Supply teachers were asked about their experiences working for a school during the academic year 2022/23.

Experiences with schools, staff, parents and pupils when undertaking assignments

Seventy-one per cent of supply teachers reported that they are always made to feel welcome *by the school*, and 29% stated that they are often made to feel welcome by the school.

When asked how welcome they are made to feel *by the teaching staff in schools*, a third of supply teachers (33%) reported that they are always made to feel welcome, and well over two-fifths (45%) reported that they are often made to feel welcome *by the staff in schools*. However, just over one fifth (22%) reported that they are rarely made to feel welcome by the staff in schools.

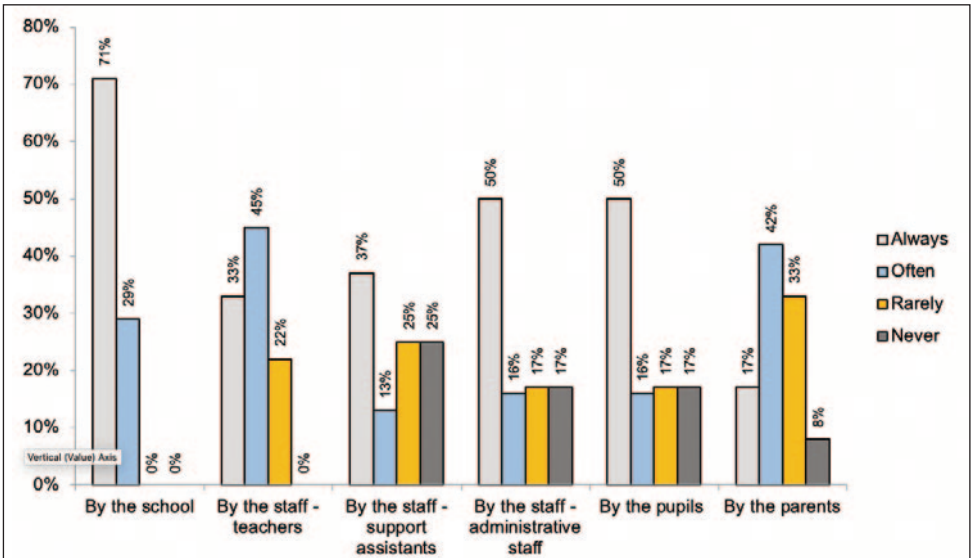
When asked how welcome they are made to feel *by the support assistants in schools*, 37% of supply teachers reported that they are always made to feel welcome, and well over one in ten (13%) reported that they are often made to feel welcome by the support assistants in schools. However, a quarter (25%)

reported that they are rarely made to feel welcome *by the support assistants in schools*, and another quarter (25%) reported that they are never made to feel welcome by the support assistants in schools.

When asked how welcome they are made to feel by the administrative staff in schools, half of supply teachers (50%) reported that they are always made to feel welcome, and 16% reported that they are often made to feel welcome by the administrative staff in schools. However, 17% reported that they are rarely made to feel welcome by the administrative staff in schools, and another 17% reported that they are never made to feel welcome by the administrative staff in schools.

*I feel I am not considered an equal subject teacher by staff or pupils.
I always get low ability classes.*

When asked how welcome they are made to feel by the pupils in schools, just 17% of supply teachers reported that they are always made to feel welcome, and just over two-fifths (42%) reported that they are often made to feel welcome by pupils in schools. A third of supply teachers (33%) reported that they are rarely made to feel welcome by the pupils, and 8% stated that they are never made to feel welcome by the pupils.



In respect of being made to feel welcome *by the parents*, three-fifths of supply teachers (60%) stated that they are rarely made to feel welcome, whereas two-fifths (40%) stated that they are never made to feel welcome by the parents.

Provision of key information when undertaking assignments

Of those supply teachers able to secure work during the 2022/23 academic year, over half (52%) stated that they were not given the school's overall risk assessment, and 12% stated that they were not sure.

Just over half of supply teachers (52%) stated that they were not given the arrangements in place for supply teachers to report safely to the workplace, and just under half (48%) stated that they were not given the details of any procedures and protective measures in regards to Covid-19, including any financial support available.

Twenty-eight per cent stated that they were not provided with the details regarding access to, and availability of, hand sanitiser, and just under a third of supply teachers (32%) reported that they were not provided with the details in place to ensure classrooms and work areas were well ventilated.

Just under a third (32%) stated that they were not provided with the details of any designated contact(s) for any questions, problems or emergencies, and a fifth of supply teachers (20%) reported that they were not given the details of who and where to report to each day, including details of the signing in process.

Well over two-fifths of supply teachers (46%) reported that they were not provided with the details of how to raise any concerns about health and safety, and well over half (56%) reported that they were not provided with the details of how to call for assistance, including first aid. Furthermore, well over half of supply teachers (56%) reported that they were not provided with the details of the nearest first aid room or appropriate area.

In regards to the school's fire evacuation plans, including routes and procedures, two-fifths of supply teachers (40%) reported that this was not provided to them when undertaking assignments in schools during the 2022/23 academic year.

Only a quarter of respondents (25%) stated that they had been given a tour of the school site, including identifying where they would be teaching when undertaking assignments in schools.

In respect to the timetable, including breaks and lunch periods, as well as expectations on staff during such times, a fifth of supply teachers (20%) reported that information regarding this had not been provided to them when undertaking assignments in schools.

A fifth of respondents (20%) reported that they had not been provided with the details of the registration process and expectations for the appropriate movement of pupils around the school site between lessons, at breaks, at lunchtimes, and at the end of the school day when undertaking assignments during the 2022/23 academic year.

In regards to teaching, well over half of supply teachers (56%) reported that they were not provided with details of how to access relevant information on schemes of work for the subjects they were expected to teach, and two-fifths (40%) reported that they had not been provided with access to relevant teaching materials.

During my time in high school, I was hardly given any details of behaviour management policy, uniform expectations, who to contact for emergencies etc. It took months for me to have an account to put referrals in.

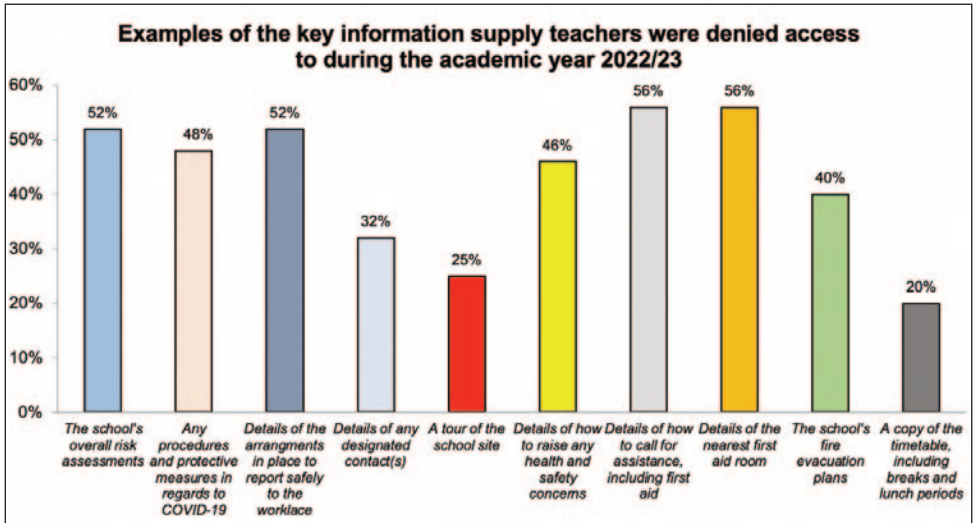
In addition, 28% of supply teachers stated that they were not provided with the details regarding access to computers, with log-in details and what to do at the end of the school day, and two-fifths (40%) reported that they were not provided with the details of any resources they might reasonably be expected to provide to students, such as pens.

Over a third of respondents (36%) stated that they were not provided with a list of the pupils in the class(es) they would be teaching, including details of any additional information, such as those with medical conditions or additional support needs (ASN), and well over half of supply teachers (54%) stated that they had not been provided with the details of any pupils known to be potentially violent, and how this should be managed.

Furthermore, just under a half of supply teachers (48%) reported that they had not been provided with the behaviour management policy when undertaking assignments in schools, including who to contact.

Over a third of supply teachers (36%) reported that they had not been provided with the details of any events, meetings or specific activities taking place, and just over three-fifths of supply teachers (61%) stated that they had not been provided with the arrangements for school transport, as appropriate, when undertaking assignments during the 2022/23 academic year.

'I ask for anything I need, so I am proactive.'



Access to facilities and amenities in schools when undertaking assignments

When asked about their most recent assignment, over a third of supply teachers (36%) stated that they do not always have access to staff rooms where they were available, almost half (48%) stated that they do not always have access to staff food and drink facilities, and almost a quarter (24%) said that they do not always have access to toilet/washroom facilities. Just under two-fifths (38%) reported that they do not always have access to car parking.

Just under half of respondents (48%) stated that they do not always have access to staff food and drink facilities when undertaking assignments.

Health and safety issues for supply teachers during the academic year 2022/23

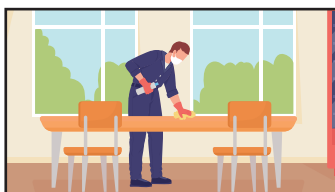
Two-fifths of supply teachers (40%) who secured work during the academic year 2022/23 stated that they were concerned about their health and safety when undertaking supply work in schools.

Financial situation during the academic year 2022/23

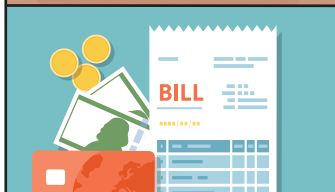
Supply teachers were asked about their financial situation during the academic year 2022/23.

Over two-fifths of supply teachers (43%) reported that they had sourced work elsewhere other than teaching during the academic year. Of those, nine out of ten (90%) stated that the work sourced elsewhere other than teaching failed to provide the same level of financial income that they would have obtained had they been able to obtain work teaching.

A quarter of supply teachers (25%) reported having to claim some form of state benefit during the academic year (e.g. Universal Credit), and over two-fifths of respondents (43%) stated that they had experienced financial hardship as a supply teacher over the same period.



43% reported that they had sourced work elsewhere other than teaching during the academic year.

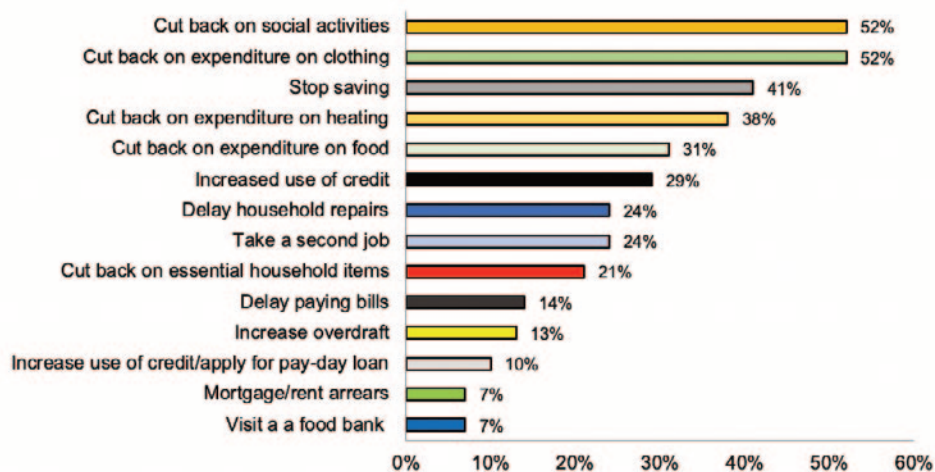


90% stated that the work sourced elsewhere other than teaching failed to provide the same level of financial income that they would have obtained had they been able to obtain work teaching.



25% reported having to claim some form of state benefit during the academic year (e.g. Universal Credit).

Financial situation during the academic year 2022/23



'I rely on my partner's income.'

Over two-fifths of respondents (43%) stated that they had experienced financial hardship as a supply teacher.

Training and behaviour management support

Two-thirds of supply teachers (60%) stated that they had not been given access to career long professional learning (CLPL) in the last 12 months.

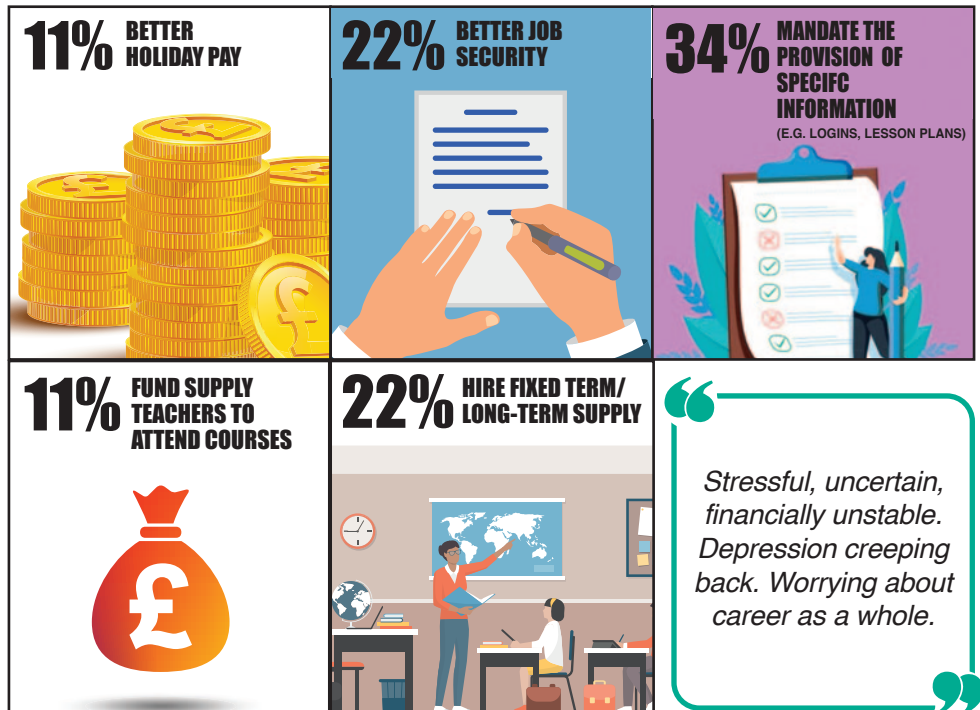
For those supply teachers who accessed CLPL, a quarter (25%) stated that this had been provided by local authorities, a quarter (25%) stated that this had been provided by schools, 15% stated that this had been provided by their trade union, and three-quarters (75%) reported that it had been self-directed CLPL.

Of those supply teachers eligible to complete their professional update in the academic year 2022/23, well over two-fifths (46%) were successful, whereas

just under a fifth (18%) of those who were eligible reported that they were successful, although there were difficulties in getting their professional update signed off. Over a third of eligible supply teachers (36%) reported that they were unsuccessful and there were difficulties in the process. In regards to participating in in-service training (INSET) days provided by schools during the 2022/23 academic year, 17% reported that they were asked to participate in all the INSET days in schools where they undertook assignments, whereas over four-fifths (83%) reported that they were not asked to participate in any INSET provided by the schools where they undertook assignments in.

Four-fifths of supply teachers (80%) stated that they had not been provided with an annual Professional Review and Development (PRD) meeting.

Ways in which the Scottish Government could best support supply teachers moving forwards:



CONCLUSION

The survey of supply teachers emphasises the crucial role that supply teachers have played in schools in Scotland during the 2022/23 academic year.

However, the survey suggests that the experiences of supply teachers throughout the 2022/23 academic year have been varied. For some supply teachers, the opportunities for work has increased, whereas others have found that they have been forced to travel further in order to secure work, despite the ongoing cost-of-living crisis.

Indeed, some supply teachers faced the unenviable situation where the cost of living had a detrimental impact on how far they were willing to travel in order to secure work.

Given the vagaries of intermittent and insecure employment, a number of supply teachers have had to make tough decisions about their expenditure, including cutting back on their expenditure on food and making use of food banks.

In addition, some supply teachers have been forced to claim Universal Credit and there are those who have had to rely on the generosity of family and friends to make ends meet.

Furthermore, the 2022/23 survey indicates that many schools are still routinely failing to provide key information to hard-working and dedicated supply teachers, including in regards to the pupils they are expected to teach, as well as critical health and safety information to enable them to safely discharge their duties as a supply teacher when undertaking an assignment.

There are concerns that these disparities in treatment are impacting disproportionately on women, Black and minority ethnic (BME) groups and disabled teachers, who are more likely to be employed as supply teachers.

In this context, the results from the 2022/23 survey substantiate the pressing need for a better deal for supply teachers which recognises and values the important and significant contribution that they make to the Scottish education system.



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