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NASUWT

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Rt Hon Bridget Phillipson MP
Secretary of State for Education
Department for Education
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Dear Bridget

Use of Supply Teachers in Schools

I am writing to you following the recent publication of the DfE commissioned research into the use of supply teachers in schools.

We know that you recognise and appreciate the important and valuable contribution that qualified supply teachers make to the education of children and young people, as well as the invaluable support they provide to schools during the academic year.

However, over the last fourteen years the pay and terms and conditions of supply teachers have suffered significantly, particularly in comparison to their permanent counterparts working in schools.

The recent research published by your Department confirms that:

- The demise of local authority supply pools has meant that schools are increasingly reliant on supply agencies operating for profit when procuring a supply for an assignment.
- Dissatisfaction with pay and conditions of service is the top reason for supply teachers wanting to leave supply teaching (59%), with 63% of supply teachers reporting that they were dissatisfied with the rate of pay in 2022/23.
- Those who worked directly for a school or through a local authority pooled supply arrangement were more likely to report being satisfied with their pay in comparison to those working through a supply agency.
- The high cost of supply in schools is not reflected in the rates of pay received by the supply teacher, with the average charge to a school reported at £232 per day, yet supply teachers report receiving on average only £142 per day. This is approximately £20 less per day than the daily rate for a supply teacher on the bottom of the Main Pay Range for the academic year 2024/24. It should also be noted that many supply teachers should attract a higher rate of pay based on their skills and experience, but this is clearly not the case.

- The Crown Commercial Services (CCS) framework commissioned by the DfE for the procurement of supply teachers has failed to produce greater parity and transparency in the rates of pay for supply teachers, with less than 0.5% of school leaders reporting that they had obtained supply teachers via the CCS framework.
- Schools and supply teachers are aware of the differential fees and rates of pay offered and would welcome greater parity and consistency, including through greater regulation of agencies to address the inequalities in the system.
- 42% of supply teachers cited dissatisfaction with holiday and sickness entitlement as a reason for wanting to leave supply teaching.
- Just over a third of supply teachers (35%) stated that dissatisfaction with pension contributions was a reason for wanting to leave supply teaching.
- Although not among the top five reasons, some supply teachers surveyed considered leaving the market because of stress and/or poor wellbeing (17%), high workload (10%), and poor mental and/or physical health (10%). This is significant when you consider that these factors contribute to why some teachers leave teaching and enter supply teaching.
- Many supply teachers had not had access to career professional development (CPD), or had found themselves in a situation where they had to fund it themselves.
- Despite the insecure, intermittent and precarious nature of supply teaching, 50% of supply teachers reported that they were attracted to supply teaching because of the flexibility it offered, with many entering the supply market having previously held permanent positions at some stage during their career.

Disappointingly, this does not come as a surprise to us and resonates with the extensive research undertaken by NASUWT into the supply teacher experience. This research confirms that the ever increasing role played by supply agencies and market forces has failed schools, but most importantly supply teachers, whose pay and terms and conditions have significantly diminished year-on-year in comparison to their permanent counterparts.

As such, the supply teacher market in England is in desperate need of repair and I would welcome the opportunity to discuss with you in detail the solutions to the problems and challenges faced by supply teachers in light of this recent research.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely



Dr Patrick Roach
General Secretary