

National Assembly for Wales
Children, Young People and Education Committee
CYPE(4)–10–15 – Paper 1
Inquiry into Supply Teaching
Evidence from : University of Wales Trinity Saint David

Question 1 - What are your views on whether there is a prevalence in the use of supply teachers on a planned and unplanned basis?	
Practice varies. We have identified categories such as the 'Career Supply Teacher' as well as teachers who work as occasional cover and those seeking permanent employment. Their needs and qualities are different but they are part of the whole teaching workforce in Wales, not a small detached section of individuals. What is meant here by prevalence? There is a reduction in the use for planned absence such as CPLD, and schools use internal cover for the initial days of absence. This should indicate that most supply teacher appointments are planned. However, our discussions with supply teachers indicate that this is not always the case. Changes to teacher employment arrangements resulting from reduced school budgets impact on the use of supply teachers (often required to cover classes outside their trained areas of expertise) and nature of work they are required to undertake.	
If you believe that this results in problems (for example, for schools, pupils or teachers), how do you think they could be resolved?	
Unplanned use of supply cover will inevitably be problematic for all parties. Our work with supply teachers has provided a number of options which we would be happy to share as oral evidence. A key issue is that information on the quality and use of supply teachers is anecdotal, with some evidence available from Estyn. UWTSD is engaging in research into the use of supply teachers in Wales but no funding exists to continue this at present. Specific and detailed research evidence is needed to ensure that national, regional and school policies are effectively informed.	
How significant is this issue? (Please select one option)	
1 – <i>This is a key, urgent problem.</i>	☒ X
2 – <i>This is a problem that needs to be addressed.</i>	☐
3 – <i>This is a minor problem</i>	☐
4 – <i>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?	
The use is variable. Demand for supply teachers often occurs when schools are under pressure. Our information points to there being no consistent approach to the use of supply teachers and that there is evidence of supply teachers being deployed outside their areas of expertise.	

If you believe there are problems in this area, how do you think they could be resolved?	
At the heart of this issue is the need to ensure continuity of effective learning and teaching rather than become too pre-occupied with the use of supply teachers. Supply teachers are part of the solution that schools can use to maintain high quality teaching and learning when established teachers are out of school. There are other alternatives. High quality teaching requires teachers to be away from their classes occasionally to engage in CPLD. Schools should be confident that pupil learning is not compromised. Having access to well-trained supply teacher cover is an essential part of this. In some countries the term 'substitute teacher' is used. The implication here is that they are team members who are used strategically. Our work with supply teachers has provided a number of options which we would be happy to share as oral evidence.	
How significant is this issue? (Please select one option)	
1 – <i>This is a key, urgent problem.</i>	☒ X
2 – <i>This is a problem that needs to be addressed.</i>	☐
3 – <i>This is a minor problem</i>	☐
4 – <i>Not a problem.</i>	☐
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)?	
Again, practice varies. It depends on many factors including the quality of the supply teacher but also the arrangements made for cover by the school itself. There is a need for more research between the links between disadvantage, behaviour, the use of supply teachers and pupil outcomes.	
If you believe there are problems in this area, how do you think they could be resolved?	
The focus should be on the provision made by the school to cover for teacher absence and to support supply teachers in the classroom. There is a need for leadership teams to identify clear responsibilities for deploying and supporting supply teachers and for there to be visible policies which set out requirements for normal teaching staff and pupils as well as replacement teachers.	
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3 – <i>This is a minor problem</i>	☐
4 – <i>Not a problem.</i>	☐

Question 4 - What are your views on the Continuous Professional Development of supply teachers and the potential impact of the National Professional Learning Model?	
This has been an issue for many years and we have met on a number of occasions with WG/Welsh Assembly representatives to propose solutions. Supply teachers are disadvantaged in accessing relevant CPLD including the WG's own MEP. There is a negative cycle where length of service as a supply teacher may be a disadvantage to many in obtaining permanent employment. This makes access to CPLD difficult and further disadvantages them.	
If you believe there are problems in this area, how do you think they could be resolved?	
We have proposed the introduction of a Certificate to Practice for supply teachers with a requirement that continuing PLD should be mandatory for teachers not on full time permanent contracts. It is essential that there is continuing access so that appropriate updating is available for national, local and school priorities. Trainee teachers on ITET programmes in Wales should be prepared for the possibility of non-permanent contracts and the opening up of ITET programmes to professionals on supply contracts where capacity allows may be a possibility. We would be happy to share proposals for this as oral evidence.	
How significant is this issue? (Please select one option)	
1 – This is a key, urgent problem.	☒ X
2 – This is a problem that needs to be addressed.	☐
3 – This is a minor problem	☐
4 – Not a problem.	☐
Question 5 - What are your views on performance management arrangements for supply teachers?	
The system is currently not workable for supply teachers and acts against the interests of pupil learning.	
If you think there are problems in this area, how do you think they could be resolved?	
We have met with supply teacher agencies and have proposed a model which might work but partnership is required to ensure a coherent approach between schools, agencies, supply teachers and Welsh Government. We are happy to share our thoughts on this in more detail.	
How significant is this issue? (Please select one option)	
1 – This is a key, urgent problem.	☒ X
2 – This is a problem that needs to be addressed.	☐
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?	
No. There has been a lack of understanding of the role and there has been no obligation and very little policy to ensure that LAs / Consortia play a part in this. LAs (partly due to capacity reasons) have encouraged the use of agencies by their schools and some have divorced themselves from taking responsibility for provision and quality.	
If you believe there are problems in this area, how do you think they could be resolved?	
The supply teacher role needs to be explicitly addressed in policy statements from LAs/Consortia. LAs / Consortia should be required to evidence that their schools have effective arrangements to cover for teacher absence without adversely affecting pupil learning.	
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2 – <i>This is a problem that needs to be addressed.</i>	☐
3 – <i>This is a minor problem</i>	☐
4 – <i>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?	
Yes. There is significant variation at all levels across Wales. Practice varies from very good to very poor. Needs vary between local authorities and will sometimes depend on the geography of the region and the availability of suitable provision.	
If you believe there are problems in this area, how do you think they could be resolved?	
Action is required from all stakeholders. Clearly articulated Estyn criteria for ensuring the continuity of learning and teaching for both teachers and pupils is required.	
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3 – <i>This is a minor problem</i>	☐
4 – <i>Not a problem.</i>	☐
Question 8 - Do you have any views on supply agencies and their quality assurance arrangements?	
The requirements are insufficiently robust. There needs to be a consistent approach across all agencies and provision needs to be monitored (preferably by WG). The 'free market' allows	

agencies to exist as businesses with little or no obligation to provide CPLD support for the supply teachers on their books and with little or no quality control requirements. This has been the case for too many years and regulatory action is overdue.

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

There are models of good practice and UWTSD works in partnership with one agency to provide training and further support for supply teachers. This partnership could be extended or replicated across Wales.

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

1 – *This is a key, urgent problem.*

▪ X

2 – *This is a problem that needs to be addressed.*

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?

There are fewer Welsh medium supply teachers with the result that English medium supply teachers have had to be used. In rural areas it is even harder to find an appropriate Welsh speaking replacement. Welsh medium graduates from UWTSD tend to obtain permanent appointments and there are therefore fewer Welsh-medium supply teachers in this 'pool'. It is even more difficult for supply teachers to access high quality Welsh-medium CPLD than for English medium supply teachers. This potentially disadvantages pupils in WM schools.

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

WM schools should produce fully bilingual resources to provide for teacher absence. These should be continually updated. The use of central resource provision and exemplar material is good but resources need further dissemination. This would require support and coordination at national level. We are exploring the use of social media networking for both Welsh-medium and English medium supply teachers.

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

1 – *This is a key, urgent problem.*

▪ X

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?

There should be a mandatory requirement for supply teachers to engage in CPLD and for schools/LAs/WG to provide access to this. Re-certification after a number of years as a supply teacher, based on a portfolio system, should be considered.

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

We would welcome an opportunity to share with you the findings of our research and partnership work in supporting the Professional Learning and Development of Supply Teachers over a number of years.