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Cymru Director
Tim Pratt

Janet Finch-Saunders AM
Chair of Petitions Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

26th June 2019

Dear Janet

In response to the questions in your letter of 29th April 2019, we would offer the following observations:

1. *"The viability of a public sector solution for employing supply teachers in Wales, for example in a similar vein to the system which operates in Northern Ireland, or the recent pilot project based on cluster arrangements".*

This sort of arrangement can work well; however, it relies on a sufficiency of funding to allow schools to pay supply teachers at a fixed rate, rather than "shopping around" for the best deal. Current funding levels would make this type of arrangement unworkable and would almost certainly cause schools even greater financial difficulties.

2. *The improvements which could potentially arise out of new framework contract arrangements developed by the National Procurement Service (including letting the contract on the basis of individual local authority 'lots', a minimum daily pay rate and greater transparency over agency fees);*

We would support the proposed changes to the contract arrangements with supply companies. It is important that supply teachers can be sure of their rights as workers being respected, and that they will be paid a fair wage. We feel it would be appropriate that supply agencies be required to meet agreed operating standards in order to be allowed to work in this area.

3. *Any potential opportunities or risks for supply teaching arising from the devolution of pay and conditions for teachers;*

There is an opportunity to ensure that the specific role of supply teachers is recognised within any new Wales-specific pay & conditions document, and appropriate pay scales and conditions of service are framed.

4. *Arrangements for professional learning for supply teachers, particularly in light of current education reforms.*

This is an area that is not easy to resolve. If supply teachers are employed by agencies, then there is a real problem over who is responsible for providing professional learning, and indeed being sure that quality of provision is equitable across Wales. We do not feel it would be appropriate to make supply teachers responsible for all their own professional learning, as not all may have access to high quality provision. Central provision of professional learning for supply teachers will be expensive and difficult to coordinate; however, this does not mean that it should not be examined carefully.

I hope these observations are helpful; do please contact us again if you wish to discuss any of these matters further.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tim Pratt', with a stylized, cursive script.

Tim Pratt