

P-05-805 Fair Deal for Supply Teachers, Correspondence – Petitioner to Chair, 10.04.19

Dear Ms Finch Saunders,

Following the Committee's interview with Kirsty Williams on April 2nd we would like to say :

We appreciate you asking Kirsty Williams coming in and addressing your and our concerns and thank you for asking her. We thank the Cabinet Minister for her time .

We commend that the new Framework Agreement provides improvements to the current system

We welcome the setting of M1 as a step in the right direction.

We are really pleased about the abolition of the Swedish Derogation which has caused the loss of thousands of pounds to supply teachers in the lack of uplift of pay after twelve weeks.

We welcome the transparency of fees and the accreditation of agencies.

However, we ask the following questions :

As at present there is nothing in place that will mandate the agencies not signing up to the Framework Agreement to adhere to the improvements in it and to the Code of Practice for Ethical Employment do we presume they can continue in business operating with the same low pay rate they have been using ?

We hope schools would choose those agencies that are signed up to the Framework Agreement but budget constraints could mean that they turn to cheaper agencies . We were told at a meeting with Welsh Government officials that there are over 50 agencies and to our knowledge only 35 are signing up to the Framework Agreement .

Now we have devolved powers when exactly can they be used to provide a system that gives the same set of pay and conditions for all supply teachers working in Wales ?

This is an equality issue . It doesn't come under the characteristics of the Equality Act but ,as has already been, said it is very wrong that supply teachers working via agencies have not had the same benefits of being paid to scale and with access to Teachers' Pension Scheme as those paid direct by local authority payroll have . Leanne Wood asked Kirsty Williams when devolved powers would make a difference question but the opportunity to answer was not given as it seems like there was not enough time .

The use of agencies in education has led to supply teachers being asked to work in roles such as teaching assistants , cover supervisors and even as a creche worker . It is truly shocking that we, as qualified professionals , have been undervalued and underpaid for some time with the loss of thousands of pounds in pay and pension scheme contributions.

Could the framework agreement have been put out for a shorter time for a better solution to be found more quickly? What exactly are the barriers to getting rid of agencies and having no public money in education as in, for example, Denmark as Leanne Wood previously suggested to Carwyn Jones some time ago in the Chamber?

Kirsty Williams to Mike Hedges: "We continue to have discussions with the WLGA and there is nothing to stop them setting up or re-establishing the systems that you refer to ." We would like to know what their response is to this . **Are they concerned about the exploitation that has been going on and what are their plans?**

Our counterparts in Northern Ireland and Scotland are paid to scale . We do not want the minimum rate of M1 to become the maximum (a concern expressed by Mark Drakeford in his role as Cabinet Secretary for Finance when we went to see him in August last year).

The statistics in the Taskforce Report of 2016 shows, as below:

30. In 2016, 20.8% of supply teachers were under the age of 29 and 31.7% are over 55. Therefore the majority of supply teachers have a great deal of experience. We need to have the skills and experience of those supply staff recognised and properly remunerated as they were in the past.

Can the Cabinet Secretary for Education use her staff to do research on the use of unqualified staff in our schools? It is an issue that needs to be addressed. We consider learner outcomes to be of paramount importance too but it should not be for supply teachers to have to investigate and whistle blow on this surely ?

There is no doubt that the cuts to budgets from Westminster have led to some of the problems with the supply system . Authorities looked to make savings on their supply bills and have thought using agencies would be more cost effective. Some authorities closed their payrolls for supply teachers . Even if savings were made this has been at the expense of paying supply teachers properly and is indeed a social justice issue as Mike Hedges pointed out .

Thank you to the Committee for all you have done and are continuing to do . Supply Teachers in Wales are very grateful for your recognition of the injustice of the situation and the time you have given to the issues outlined on our petition . We

need that fair system as soon as possible . Five hundred supply teachers left supply teaching between 2014-2016 according to EWC figures .

Kind Regards

Sheila Jones.