

## **P-05-805 Fair Deal for Supply Teachers, Correspondence – MPS Education to Chair, 23.10.19**

Dear Ms. Finch-Saunders,

Please find below as requested, MPS Educations response to Petition P-05-805 Fair Deal for Supply Teachers.

The first two points (1 and 2) are concerned directly with the content of the text of the petition as stated in the Welsh Assembly circular dated 7<sup>th</sup> August 2019.

1. MPS Education offer on an annual basis, a full programme of training including 5 *paid* sessions of support for NQTs, which is well supported by the target group. Other training opportunities, however, are not.
  2. MPS Education respectfully suggest that the Welsh Assembly check the accuracy of the percentages quoted re pay reduction.
- MPS Education applied for and gained National Procurement Service 'Approved Supplier' status - a very time and resource consuming process.
  - However, monitoring by MPS Education, confirms that agencies (within and obviously outside of the framework) are not paying the agreed minimum rate to qualified teachers.
  - For whatever reason, (e.g. proximity to a given school or reduced travel, etc.) qualified teachers are prepared to accept significant variances in relation to their working rate, when compared to the recently agreed minimum rate established by the National Procurement Service.
  - The acceptance of any rate below that of the nationally agreed minimum, by qualified teachers, completely undermines and dilutes the overarching principle of the petition.
  - It would prove an interesting exercise, through working with the professional unions, if the National Assembly establish the number of qualified teachers who are still prepared to operate in this manner – undermining their own unions, colleagues and the rationale of the petition.
  - A contextual point on this front, is that a significant number of qualified teachers are afraid of losing regular employment and are thus prepared to 'go along' with remuneration below the nationally agreed minimum benchmark. School budgets have certainly not been adjusted to reflect the increased costs.
  - The increased minimum rate clearly means that school budgets do not stretch as far – resulting in potentially less employment opportunities for qualified teachers.
  - As a direct consequence schools are requesting TA / HLTA cover where, in the first instance it would have been a qualified teacher covering the class.
  - Reduced school budgets coupled with increased pay rates has created the "Perfect Storm" viz classes being covered by non-teacher personnel and reduced employment opportunities for qualified teachers!

- The National Procurement Service appears reluctant to act when informed of such concerns – even indeed when there is clear flouting of the framework guidance and its benchmarked payment requirements.
- From its strategic financial monitoring position, the National Procurement Service will routinely possess the necessary data on budget spends and is, therefore, in a pivotal position to confirm the current reality of the on-going undermining of the minimum pay entitlement for qualified teachers – as established by them.
- Schools hold significant autonomy regarding their budget and have every right to seek supply teachers from wherever they deem as appropriate. Schools however need to understand *fully*, the impact and implications for pay and employment for supply teachers, should they choose to employ outside of the National Procurement Service framework.