

Kirsty Williams AC/AM
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Addysg
Cabinet Secretary for Education



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

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Dear David,

Thank you for your correspondence of 21 February about the current open petition on supply teaching.

There have been a number of reports into the position for supply teachers in recent years. The Children, Young People and Education Committee examined the issues surrounding supply teachers and made recommendations in 2015. In response to the Committee's report recommendations my predecessor, Huw Lewis, established a Supply Model Taskforce to consider the possibility of introducing an alternative delivery model for Wales. The Taskforce identified a number of complex issues and barriers involved in implementing a single delivery model and recommended a number of practicable options for supporting and developing supply teachers in its report published in February 2017.

Although the Taskforce was unable to recommend a central supply model at that time, the Welsh Government has continued to investigate alternative new models for supply teaching. The model in Northern Ireland promoted by the Fair Deal for Supply group is linked to the setting of teachers' pay and conditions (including supply teachers). The power to set teachers' pay and conditions is yet to be transferred to Welsh Ministers with September 2019 being the earliest date by which a teachers' pay system would come into force in Wales. These powers will provide opportunities to set teachers' pay to underpin our aspirations for the wider education system, to raise standards and support and develop the teaching profession including those who undertake supply work.

Welsh Government doesn't employ teachers, school governing bodies and local authorities do. There is more work to do in working with the sector to develop new

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

models to support the delivery of temporary cover arrangements, but this will take time. The legislative and contextual landscape in Wales is quite different to that in Northern Ireland and there are a range of legal and policy issues to be addressed. Therefore, it is important that we look at all alternative systems as well as trial new and innovative ways of providing supply teacher provision such as the £2.7m school-based supply cluster pilot I announced on 24 October 2017 which is currently being rolled-out across 15 local authority areas. The aim of the pilot is to trial a more sustainable, collaborative model of working and support the professional learning of our newly qualified teachers. The pilot evidences our commitment to ensuring that a number of our recently qualified teachers who might otherwise find themselves in supply roles are supported at the beginning of their career. The Welsh Government will monitor the pilot closely to see if this approach offers a viable alternative model that could be rolled out more widely.

To date, to support the broader recommendations contained in the Taskforce's report, we have also undertaken the following actions:

We have addressed important issues in terms of employer roles and responsibility for safeguarding. Officials have issued regular communications directly to commercial supply agencies operating in Wales, Local Authorities and schools to remind them of their legal obligations in terms of undertaking appropriate identity and Disclosure and Barring Service checks. Guidance factsheets have also issued to commercial supply agencies on matters affecting the qualification and registration of supply teachers; including the terms of the statutory specified work requirements on who can teach in maintained schools.

We have also issued guidance on the Agency Worker Regulations 2010, which includes an explanation of the Swedish Derogation issue and an induction model policy which sets out the information and support that commercial supply agencies should make available to supply teachers from day one of their temporary placement. Employment law is not devolved to Wales. The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy in Westminster is responsible for setting out the requirements and restrictions placed on private supply agencies. In response to the Taylor Review of modern working practices published last summer the Westminster Government is consulting on changes to the Agency Worker Regulations which if implemented will alter the way in which private supply agencies conduct business.

A Supply Working Group which includes representatives of the wider education sector, including education workforce representatives and employers, has been convened to support the implementation of the Taskforce recommendations and to discuss, consider and support workable solutions to address related issues as they arise.

We have put in place arrangements for all supply teachers to register for personal access to professional learning resources and opportunities on Hwb the Welsh Government's education learning platform. Hwb is an integral part of teaching and learning which enables all teachers, including our supply teachers, to access and share resources to broaden their pedagogical development. These arrangements will enable supply teachers, including newly qualified teachers undertaking supply, to have full and continuing access to Hwb regardless of length of temporary placement

or school. As part of this arrangement work is underway to develop a network facility for supply teachers to communicate and share resources and best practice. Supply teachers also have access to Professional Learning Passports to support their professional development.

To support schools we have published streamlined guidance on the '*Effective Management of School Workforce Attendance*' to share the good practice that schools and local authorities have adopted in managing absence - both planned and unplanned.

We have circulated and promoted the Welsh Government's *Toolkit Guide – Code of Practice – Ethical Employment in Supply Chains* to the education sector including commercial recruitment agencies. The Code and related guidance will help ensure that workers in supply chains are treated fairly and commit public, private and third sector organisations to a set of actions that tackle illegal and unfair employment practices.

It might be helpful for you to know that I met with representatives of the Fair Deal for Supply Teachers group on the 25 October 2017 to hear their views first hand and to outline our proposals to support supply teachers, schools and our learners moving forward. Members of the group, including the petitioner Sheila Jones, met with my officials and representatives of the Supply Working Group on 21 and 22 February respectively to discuss their on-going concerns in detail.

Many of the concerns raised by the lobby group involve the use of commercial supply agencies to meet the demand for teachers to cover staff absence and the use of the private supply agency, New Directions, the current Welsh local authorities' preferred managed service provider. Arrangements are in place for the National Procurement Service to review the terms of the current contract and officials within Education, Value Wales and the National Procurement Service will be meeting with members of this group in March to discuss the terms of any future contractual arrangement and the tender process.

I would like to assure the Petitions Committee that Welsh Government will continue to explore all options available including the feasibility of centralised or regionalised supply model. I want to see successful models for deploying temporary supply cover in all our schools and we are working toward a system where good quality teaching staff are available, providing a positive impact on learner outcomes, and where teaching staff are treated fairly and developed appropriately.

Yours sincerely



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