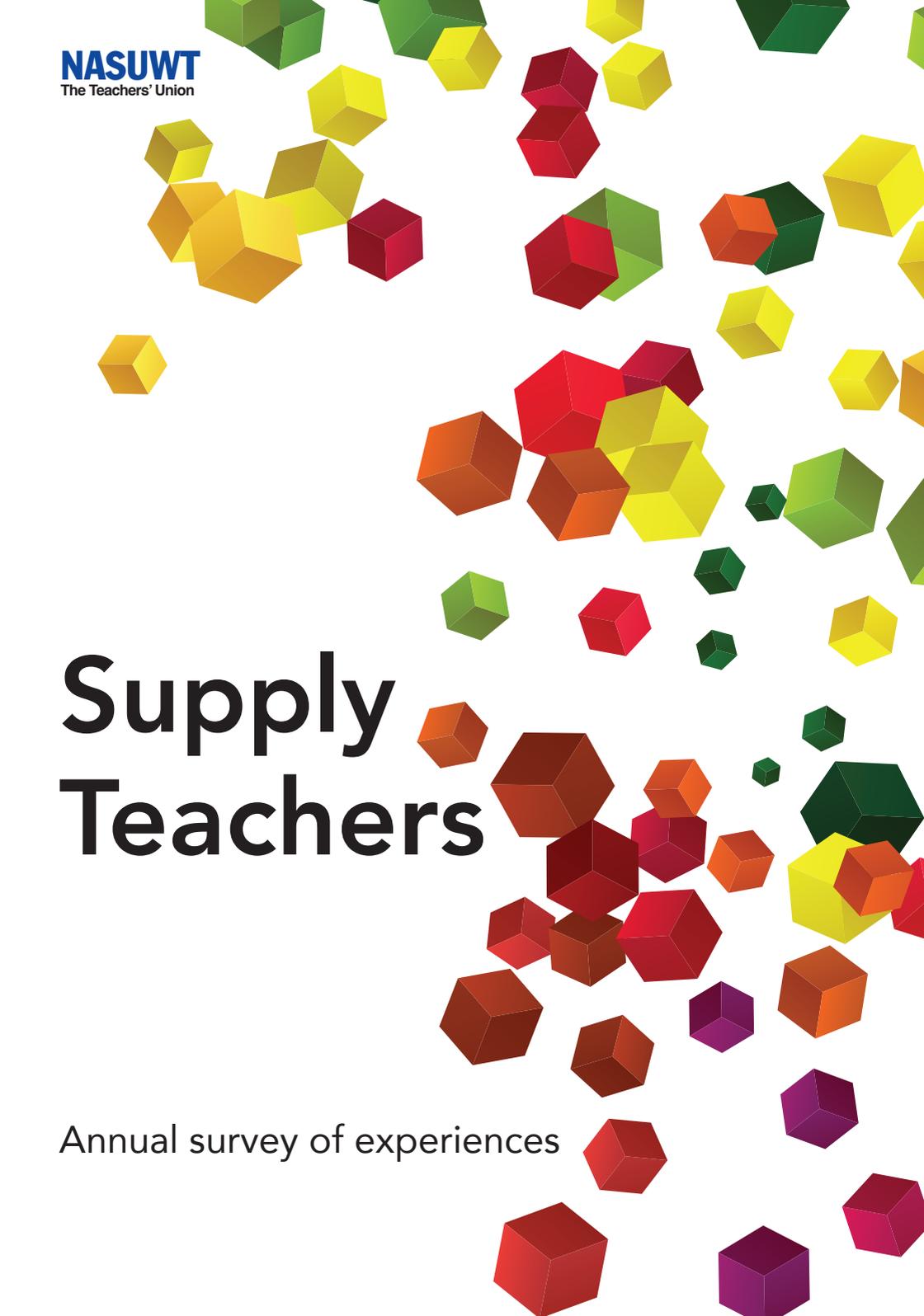


# Supply Teachers

Annual survey of experiences



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## INTRODUCTION

Supply teachers are integral to the education system, a fact that has been brought into sharp focus as schools have continued to deal with the fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic during 2021/22.

Without supply teachers, many pupils would be denied the opportunity to be taught by qualified and dedicated teachers who ensure that schools can continue to provide the education to which children and young people are entitled. Supply teachers make a vital contribution to securing high educational standards for all children and young people.

Despite this, the experiences of many supply teachers suggest that developments such as deregulation have had a detrimental impact upon the deployment of supply teachers and their pay and working conditions, particularly when considered alongside teachers with a permanent contract of employment.

The NASUWT's annual survey of supply teachers in England aims to examine the changing experiences of supply teachers, including issues and trends.

The 2022 survey was undertaken between July and August.

A total of 455 supply teachers responded to the survey.

This Report provides the findings from the 2022 survey of supply teachers and highlights the experiences of supply teachers during the academic year 2021/22.

## THE SURVEY

### Nature of work

Supply teachers were asked about their ability to secure work teaching during the academic year 2021/22. Well over four fifths (85%) reported that they had no problems getting supply work, whereas 15% reported that they had problems securing work. Of those who reported problems securing supply work, 1% stated that they had significant problems securing work, and 1% stated that they could not secure any supply work.

*On the back of COVID-19, schools were using reduced numbers of supply teachers to cover lessons. These appeared to be covered by 'in-house' staff/teachers.*

*From Easter 2021 to Easter 2022, there was unprecedented demand for supply teachers. In fact, I would say demand exceeded for the only time in the 16 years I have been on supply.*

### Access to work

During the academic year 2021/22, just under a fifth of supply teachers (19%) reported that they were working for one school, just over one in ten (11%) reported that they were working for two schools, 9% reported that they were working for three schools. Just under one in ten (9%) reported that they were working for four schools, and well over one in ten (14%) reported that they were working for five schools. Just under two fifths of supply teachers (38%) reported that they were working for more than five schools.

Of those supply teachers who reported that they were able to secure work during the academic year 2021/22, almost nine out of ten supply teachers (89%) said that they had secured work through a supply agency, whilst 15% reported that they had secured work directly as a supply teacher by a school, and 1% stated that they had secured work via a local authority supply pool.

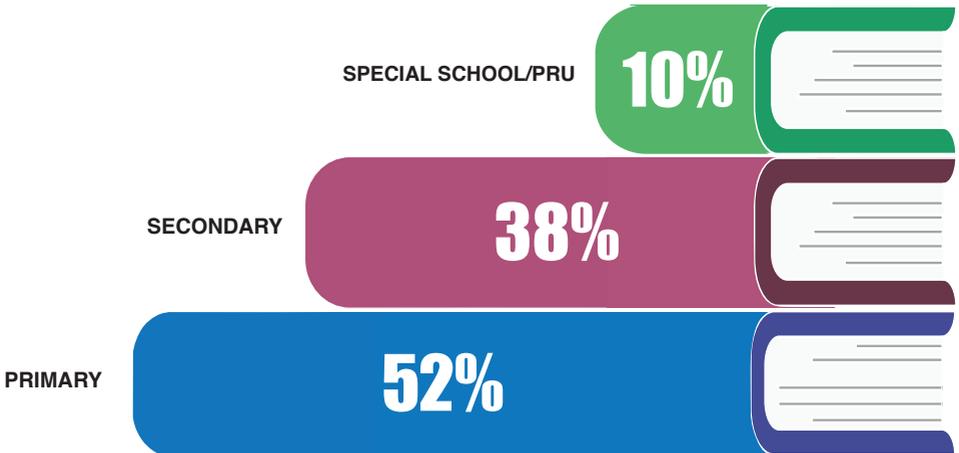
*In most of the country, the only way to get work (unfortunately) is through agencies. Most schools will not consider employing directly.*

## Availability of work

Supply teachers were asked where they were able to obtain work during the academic year 2021/22.

Over half of supply teachers (52%) who responded to the survey stated that their supply work took place in primary schools. Just under two fifths (38%) stated that their work was in secondary schools, and one in ten supply teachers (10%) reported that their supply work took place in a special school/pupil referral unit (PRU).

### Where supply teachers undertook the majority of their work during the academic year 2021/22



For those supply teachers who reported that they were able to secure work during the academic year 2021/22, well over two fifths (46%) reported that the majority of their supply teaching was ad hoc/daily work, 8% said that this was weekly assignments, and just under one in 20 (4%) stated that this was monthly assignments. Well over one in ten of supply teachers (14%) reported that the majority of their work was termly assignments, and 28% stated that the majority of their teaching was on longer term assignments in excess of a term.

When supply teachers were asked how many days on average they were able to obtain work during the academic year 2021/22, one in 20 (5%) said they obtained work one day a week, 16% two days a week, and over two fifths three days a week. Fifteen per cent of supply teachers in the survey said they were able to obtain work for four days a week, and just over two fifths (41%) stated that they were able to obtain work five days a week.

Just 8% of supply teachers stated that the amount of supply work had *decreased* during the academic year 2021/22, compared to the previous academic year. Just under half (48%) stated that the amount of supply work had *increased*, and well over two fifths (44%) of respondents stated that the opportunities had stayed about the same.

Just under a quarter of supply teachers (23%) reported that they had to travel further than in previous years in order to secure work.

## **Working through an agency and/or an umbrella company during the academic year 2021/22**

Supply teachers were asked about their experiences working through an agency and/or umbrella company during the academic year 2021/22.

For those supply teachers working through an agency during the academic year 2021/22, almost half (49%) stated that they were signed up to one agency to secure work, 30% reported that they were signed up to two agencies, 14% reported that they were signed up to three agencies, and just under one in 20 (4%) reported that they had signed up to four agencies. One per cent reported that they were signed up to five agencies, and 2% of respondents reported that they were signed up to more than five agencies.

Well over one in ten supply teachers (16%) stated that this was more agencies than they were signed up to during the previous academic year, whereas 15% reported that this was less, and 69% stated that it had stayed the same. Just over a quarter of those who responded (26%) stated that this was the direct result of the way in which they were treated by the agency/agencies during the COVID-19 pandemic.

*I left the agencies that offered no support via the furlough scheme.*



**ONLY 34%** of supply teachers who obtained work through a new supply agency reported that they had been provided with a Key Information Document (KID) detailing how they would be paid and associated deductions, as well as other key details.

*They have not provided me with a KID, despite asking many times in an email.*



6%

of supply teachers stated that they had been asked to undertake a 'free trial' by an agency at a school prior to undertaking paid work.

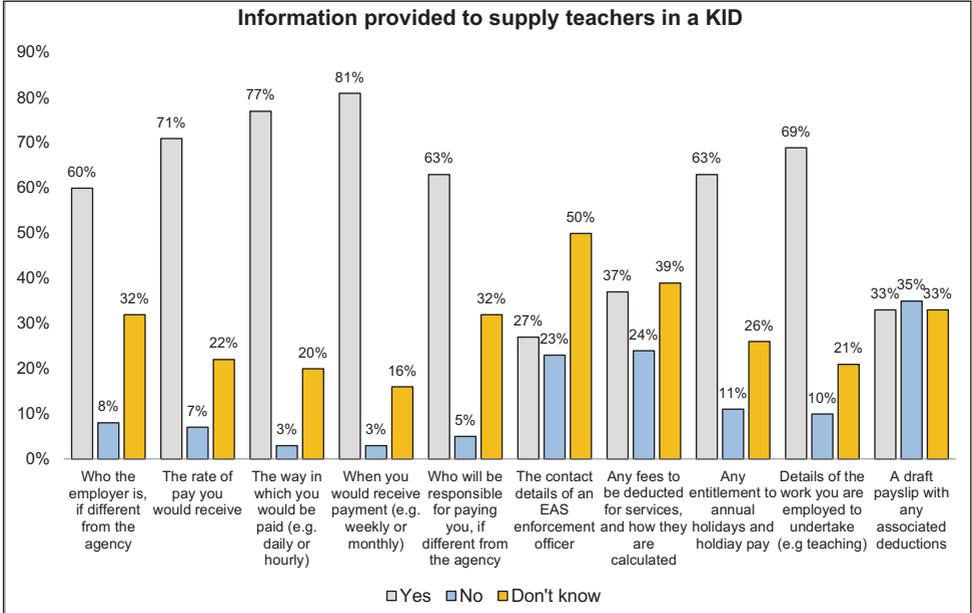
*I went for an observation lesson, was asked to stay the whole day, refused the job and the agency insisted that I was told that it was a free trial.*

CANCELLED

15%

of respondents stated that work had been cancelled on specific longer term assignments at, or approaching, the 12 weeks' qualification period for the Agency Workers Regulations (AWR).

Information provided to supply teachers in a KID



### Working through a local authority during the academic year 2021/22

Supply teachers were asked about their experiences working through a local authority during the academic year 2021/22.

For those supply teachers working for a local authority during the academic year 2021/22, just over three fifths (61%) reported that they were working for one local authority, just over one in ten (11%) stated that they were working for two local authorities, just over one in 20 (6%) reported working for three local authorities, and just 1% reported working for four local authorities. One per cent of supply

teachers reported working for five local authorities, and a fifth (20%) reported working for more than five local authorities.

A quarter of supply teachers (25%) stated that this was more local authorities than they were signed up to during the previous academic year, 10% reported that this was less, and just under two thirds (65%) stated that it had stayed the same. Fourteen per cent of those who responded stated that this was the direct result of the way in which they were treated by the local authority/authorities during the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **Working directly for a school during the academic year 2021/22**

Supply teachers were asked about their experiences working directly for a school during the academic year 2021/22.

For those supply teachers working directly for a school during the academic year 2021/22, over two thirds (68%) stated that they were working directly for one school, just 8% reported working directly for two schools, and just under one in 20 (4%) were working directly for three schools. One per cent of respondents stated that they were working directly for four schools, and just under a fifth of respondents (20%) stated that they were working directly for more than five schools.

Just under a third of supply teachers (32%) stated that this was more schools than they were signed up to during the previous academic year, 12% reported that this was less, and well in excess of half (56%) stated that it had stayed the same. Over a quarter of those who responded (28%) stated that this was the direct result of the way in which they were treated by the local authority/authorities during the COVID-19 pandemic.

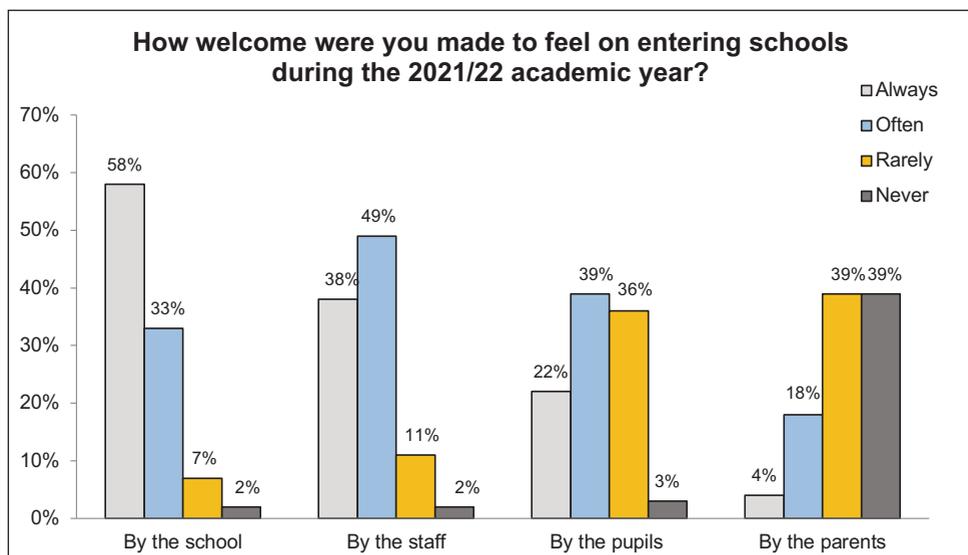
*Schools which I worked directly for gave me much less work, yet didn't like the idea that I might be in any other school.*

### **Experiences of supply teachers when undertaking work in schools during the 2021/22 academic year**

Just under three fifths of supply teachers (58%) reported that they are always made to feel welcome *by the school*, and a third (33%) stated that they are often made to feel welcome by the school. However, over one in 20 (7%) said that they are rarely made to feel welcome by the school, and 2% reported that they are never made to feel welcome by the school.

When asked how welcome they are *made to feel by the staff in schools*, just under two fifths of supply teachers (38%) reported that they are always made to feel welcome, and almost half (49%) reported that they are often made to feel welcome by the staff in schools. However, just over one in ten (11%) reported that they are rarely made to feel welcome by the staff in schools, and 2% reported that they are never made to feel welcome by staff in schools.

When asked how welcome they are made to feel *by the pupils in schools*, over a fifth of supply teachers (22%) reported that they are always made to feel welcome, and just under two fifths (39%) reported that they are often made to feel welcome by the pupils in schools. However, well over a third (36%) reported that they are rarely made to feel welcome by the pupils, and 3% stated that they are never made to feel welcome by the pupils. In respect of being *made to feel welcome by the parents*, 4% of supply teachers stated that they are always made to feel welcome, and 18% stated that they are often made to feel welcome by the parents. However, almost two fifths (39%) stated that they are rarely made to feel welcome by the parents, and almost two fifths (39%) stated that they are never made to feel welcome by the parents.



Supply teachers who were able to secure work during the 2021/22 academic year were asked about the provision of key information by the agency and/or the school when undertaking an assignment.

Over one in ten supply teachers (13%) stated that they were given the school's overall risk assessment *by the agency*, compared to just over two fifths of supply teachers (41%) who stated that they were given the information *by the school*. Thirty-seven per cent stated that they were not given the information, and almost one in ten (9%) stated that they were not sure.

Over one in ten supply teachers (13%) stated that they were given the procedures and protective measures for staff to follow to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19 *by the agency*. This compares to 56% of supply teachers who stated that they were provided with the information by the school. Over a quarter of supply teachers (27%) stated that they were not provided with the information, and just under one in 20 (4%) stated that they were not sure.

*Usually I had to ask for this information - it was rarely provided.*

Just under a fifth of supply teachers (18%) stated that they were given the arrangements in place for supply teachers to report safely to the workplace *by the agency*, compared to well over two fifths (43%) who stated that they were provided with the information *by the school*. Twenty-nine per cent stated that they were not provided with the information, and one in ten (10%) stated that they were not sure.

Just under one in ten supply teachers (8%) stated that they were given the details of the procedures and arrangements to ensure there was adequate time for supply teachers to be made aware of, and understand, the systems in place in the school, including in respect of COVID-19 *by the agency*. This compares to 45% of supply teachers who stated that they were provided with the information *by the school*. Just over a third of supply teachers (34%) stated that they were not provided with the information, and well over one in ten (13%) stated that they were not sure.

Just 14% of supply teachers stated that they were provided with the details of any designated contact(s) for any questions, problems or emergencies (COVID-specific or otherwise) *by the agency*. This compares to well in excess of two fifths of supply teachers (47%) who stated that they were provided with the information *by the school*. Twenty-eight per cent of supply teachers stated that they were not provided with the information, and just over one in ten (11%) stated that they were not sure.

Just 7% of supply teachers stated that they were provided with the details of the arrangements to maintain social distancing and minimise contact, as well as how pupils are expected to be managed to ensure social distancing *by the agency*,

compared to just over three fifths of supply teachers (62%) who stated that they were provided with the information *by the school*. A quarter of supply teachers (25%) stated that they were not provided with the information, and just over one in 20 supply teachers (6%) stated that they were not sure.

*Procedures were in place... but rules were not always adhered to regularly.*

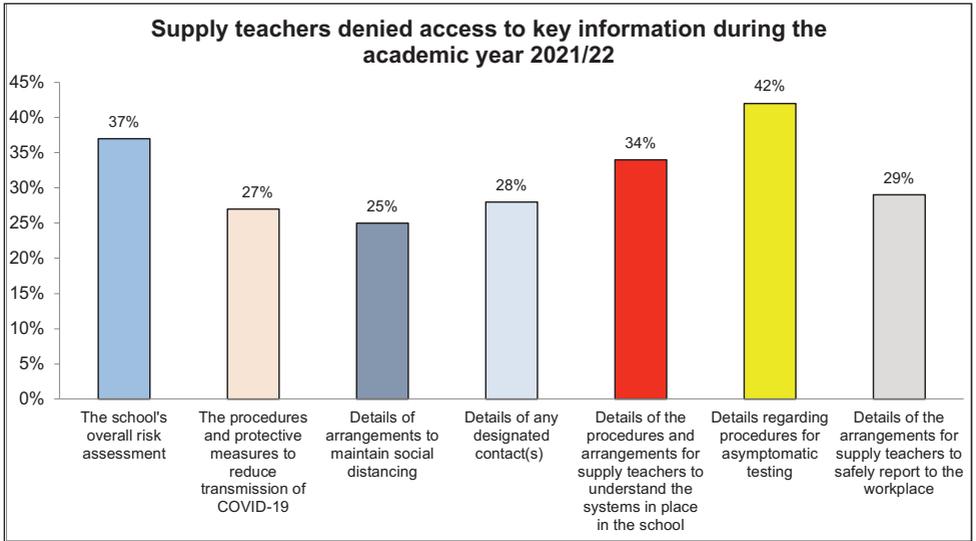
Just over one in ten supply teachers (12%) stated that *the agency* did provide them with the details of the steps and procedures in place for twice-weekly asymptomatic testing of all staff, including for supply teachers. This compares to 36% of supply teachers who stated that they were made aware of the details *by the school*. Just over two fifths of supply teachers (42%) stated that they were not provided with the information, and one in ten (10%) stated they were not sure.

*I was fully briefed as any other member of staff in the school.*

Just 7% of supply teachers stated that they were provided with the details of the contact person for obtaining the relevant NHS Test and Trace notification from the school, should they have needed to apply for the Self-isolation Support Scheme Payment, *by the agency*. This compares to just under a quarter of supply teachers (24%) who stated that they were provided with the information *by the school*. Well in excess of half of supply teachers (54%) stated that they were not provided with the information, and 15% stated that they were not sure.

*This varied from school to school, some were more serious about these obligations than others.*

*No information was given and when I tried to get the Test and Trace number to claim for time off, they refused to give it to me.*



When asked about the assignments undertaken during the academic year 2021/22, just under three fifths of supply teachers (58%) reported that they had access to a designated contact person all of the time, whereas 23% reported having access to a designated contact person some of the time. Thirteen per cent of supply teachers reported that they did not have access to a designated contact person, and 6% reported that they did not know.

### Health and safety issues for supply teachers during the academic year 2021/22



...stated that they were at greater vulnerability to COVID-19 reported that their employer did not complete an individual risk assessment with them before undertaking an assignment.

**68%**  
of supply teachers...



...stated that they may have been penalised or had work cancelled for disclosing personal information about their health and safety.

**5%**  
of supply teachers...



...who secured work during the academic year 2020/21 stated that they were concerned about their health and safety when in schools.

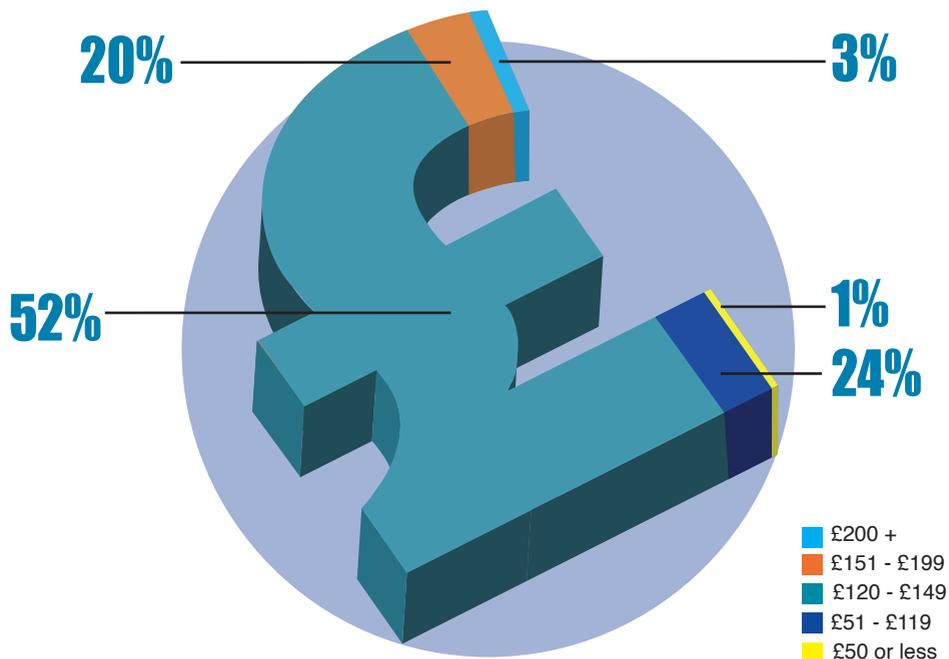
**41%**  
of supply teachers...

*“Schools often want to take you straight to your classroom on arrival, without time for the toilet, a look around, or to be shown where the staffroom is. A timetable can simply be thrust into your hand with an ‘off you go attitude’.*”

Just over two fifths of supply teachers (41%) who secured work during the academic year 2021/22 stated that they were concerned about their health and safety when in schools, and one in 20 (5%) stated that they may have been penalised or had work cancelled for disclosing personal information about their health and safety.

Over two thirds of supply teachers (68%) at greater vulnerability to COVID-19 reported that their employer did not complete an individual risk assessment with them before undertaking an assignment.

### Rates of pay for supply teachers during the academic year 2021/22



Supply teachers were asked about the rates of pay they were able to secure for assignments undertaken during the academic year 2021/22.

Just under a quarter of supply teachers (24%) stated that they were paid between £51 and £119 per day for assignments, just over half (52%) stated that they were paid between £120 and £149 per day for assignments, and one fifth (20%) stated that they were paid at between £151 and £199 a day for assignments. Three per cent said that they were paid at over £200 per day for assignments, whereas 1% said they were paid at less than £50 per day for assignments.

*Because of the shortage of supply teachers, I upped my rate. Luckily, it paid off.*

*I have 34 years' experience as a teacher and was on the Upper Pay Spine 3 on my last contract. I have been paid the same as an NQT as a supply teacher and am fighting for work with agencies who want to pay even less.*

Well in excess of three fifths of supply teachers (63%) indicated that the rates of pay received during the academic year 2021/22 were the same as those they were able to earn in the previous academic year, whereas just 14% reported that the rates of pay received were less than those they were able to earn in the previous academic year. Just over a fifth (22%) said that the rates of pay received had increased, compared to those they were able to earn in the previous academic year.

*As a supply teacher for 14 years, my daily rate has never gone up. When a pay increase is requested, an agency responds that 'that school won't pay more than that', or we have a special agreement with that school and they pay a fixed rate.*

*I have struggled this academic year as my pay has been cut so much I am on benefits, and I have had to take a part-time job over the summer.*

When asked if the agency/agencies where they undertook work during the academic year 2021/22 operated a ceiling in respect of their remuneration, just over a third of supply teachers (34%) reported that the agency/agencies did.

Of those who responded, 2% stated that the ceiling was up to £99 per day, over a quarter (27%) stated that the ceiling was up to £119 per day, and 47% stated that the ceiling was up to £149 per day. Just under a fifth (18%) stated that the ceiling was up to £199 per day, and one in 20 (5%) stated that the ceiling was £200 per day or more. One per cent stated that the ceiling was up to £50 per day.

**Nineteen per cent of supply teachers stated that they were able to secure more money when working through a local authority or directly with a school in comparison to supply work through an agency.**

*£60 more per day, but getting direct work was almost impossible.*

*£35 a day plus contribution to teachers' pensions.*

Just 13% of supply teachers stated that they were able to secure work through the National Tutoring Programme (NTP) during the academic year 2021/22.

*NTP wanted a full-time commitment and were paying about half the amount of an NQT entrant's salary.*

*Applied, but the whole situation is disorganised with limited slots that are unworkable (e.g. two hours a day is not going to provide a living wage).*

Of those who secured work through the NTP, just 37% of supply teachers reported receiving rates of pay which were more than they normally received as a supply teacher, whilst just under a quarter (24%) reported receiving rates which were less than they normally received as a supply teacher.

### Financial situation during the academic year 2021/22

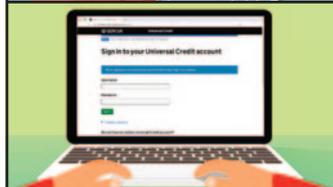
Supply teachers were asked about their financial situation during the academic year 2021/22.



**27%** reported that they had sourced work elsewhere other than teaching during the academic year 2021/22.



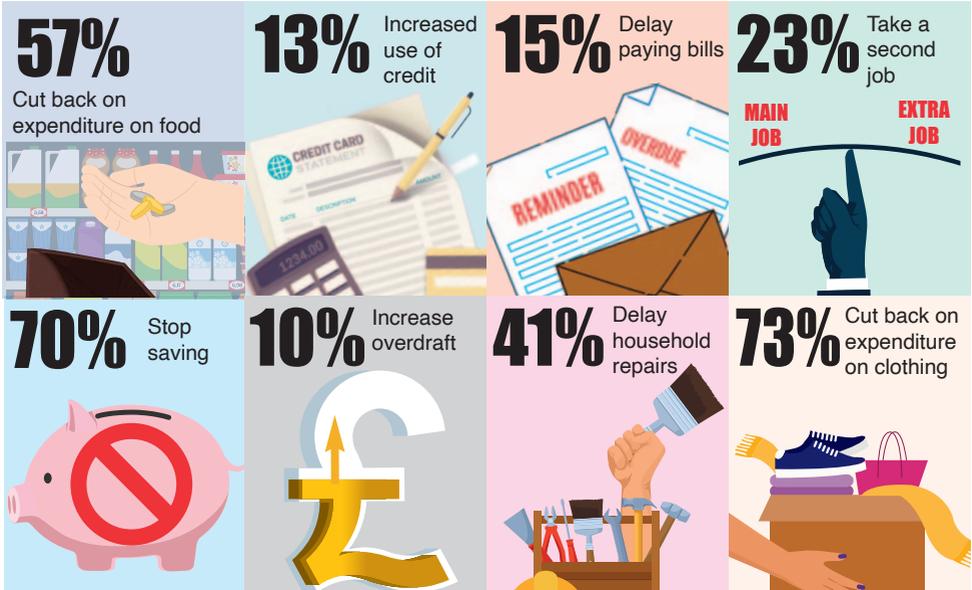
**77%** stated that the work sourced elsewhere other than teaching failed to provide the same level of financial income that they would have obtained had they been able to secure work teaching.



**16%** of supply teachers reported having to claim some form of state benefit during the academic year 2021/22 (e.g. Universal Credit).

Over two fifths of respondents (43%) stated that they had experienced financial hardship as a supply teacher over the same period. Of those, just over two fifths (41%) reported that this was a result of the situation in regards to COVID-19.

**Forty-three per cent stated that they had experienced financial hardship as a supply teacher.**



Well over half of supply teachers (57%) reported that they were required to self-isolate during the academic year 2021/22. Of those, over three fifths (62%) reported that their employer did not make them aware of whether they were eligible for Statutory Sick Pay (SSP), and 17% of supply teachers reported that they did not know.

Only one in 20 of supply teachers (5%) reported that they were eligible for a Test and Trace Support Payment,<sup>1</sup> and just over half (52%) reported that they did not know.

<sup>1</sup> The Test and Trace Support Payment Scheme ended on 24 February 2022, but an eligible supply teacher would have been able to submit an application up to 42 days after the first day of isolation if your first day of self-isolation was before this date.

## Concerns supply teachers have over national insurance increase



**Well over three quarters of supply teachers (78%) reported that they are concerned about the UK Government's proposals to allow agency workers to be used in schools during industrial action.**

### Training and behaviour management support

Well over two fifths of supply teachers (45%) stated that they had not been given access to continuing professional development (CPD) opportunities in the last 12 months.

For those supply teachers who had access to CPD, the primary sources of training were obtained via a supply agency (46%), the schools at which they worked (31%), funded personally (12%) or from their trade union (10%).

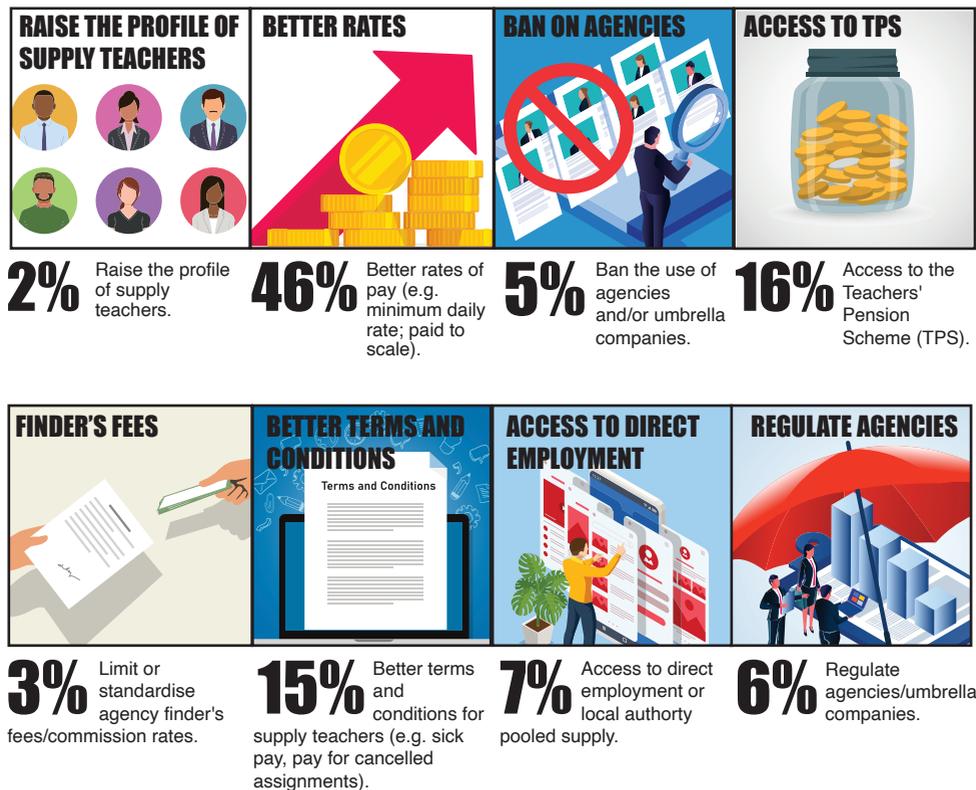
**Well over a third of supply teachers (36%) reported that they do not feel they are treated with respect and dignity.**

*On many assignments, this year in particular, most schools and leadership have treated me as a second-class citizen. This is despite my many years of permanent service prior to supply teaching.*

*Parents, pupils and staff seem to think that we aren't 'real teachers' and have no degree or experience. They also seem to think we're paid loads when we're mostly paid below our pay scale.*

**Based on their experiences as a supply teacher during the academic year 2021/22, just under two fifths of supply teachers (39%) reported that they were looking for work outside of teaching.**

## Ways in which the Government could best support supply teachers moving forwards



## CONCLUSION

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The 2021/22 survey of supply teachers further reinforces the vital role that supply teachers have played as schools and colleges continued to emerge from the worst excesses of the COVID-19 pandemic.

However, the survey suggests that the experiences of supply teachers throughout the pandemic and the academic year 2021/22 have been varied. For a proportion of supply teachers, the opportunities for work have increased, including longer work in excess of a term, whereas others have seen their opportunities for work decrease, to the extent that they have still needed to seek work elsewhere.

The situation for supply teachers has been compounded by the cost-of-living crisis and levels of inflation the likes of which have not been seen for decades. Despite an increase in the level of payment received for daily assignments, for many supply teachers who are subject to the vagaries of intermittent and insecure employment, the cost-of-living crisis is ever more prescient.

The lack of financial support, including for periods of COVID-related self-isolation, coupled with the rise in National Insurance from April 2022, has placed more supply teachers in a precarious financial situation where they have had to make tough decisions about their expenditure, including a significant increase in those supply teachers who are cutting back on their expenditure on food or who have increased their overdraft in order to make ends meet.

Given that the overwhelming majority of supply teachers are female, there are concerns that these disparities in treatment are impacting disproportionately on women, as well as Black and disabled teachers, who are more likely to be employed as supply teachers.

Furthermore, the continued failure of some agencies and schools to address and provide the most basic health and safety information is having a detrimental impact on hard-working and dedicated supply teachers when undertaking an assignment.

In this context, the results from the 2022 survey substantiate the pressing need for a better deal for teachers which seeks to address the concerns of hard-working and dedicated supply teachers.



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