

Supply Agencies

the facts





“Working through an agency is not the best solution as this does not give you access to proper remuneration in line with salary.”

Schools are increasingly reliant on the use of agency staff.

£1.13 billion was spent by maintained schools and academies on supply teachers for the period 2015/16 and 2016/17.¹

Of this, approximately **£792 million** went to supply agencies.²

Just **£346 million** was used to pay supply teachers.

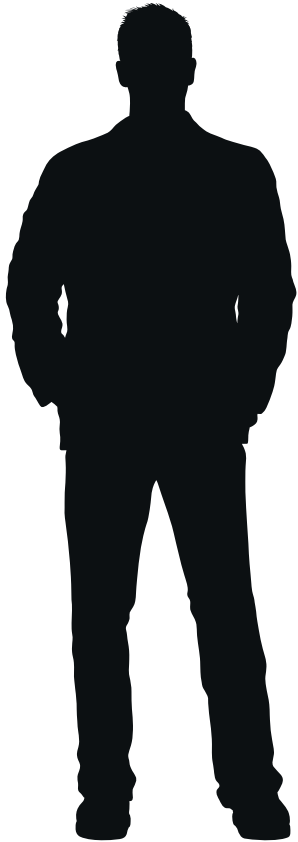
¹ www.gov.uk/government/statistics/la-and-school-expenditure-2016-to-2017-financial-year.

² Based on an analysis of income and expenditure figures provided by academies in England, found at: www.gov.uk/government/statistics/income-and-expenditure-in-academies-in-england-2015-to-2016.



"I am upset that I'm paid £50 a day less via an agency compared to direct employment by a school."

79% of supply teachers report that the use of **private supply agencies is now the only way they are able to obtain work.**³



"It doesn't matter how hard you work, you cannot make a living."

Schools are charged up to a **40%** **commission fee which goes direct to the agency.**

This equates to over **£109** million for academies and

£220 million for local authority maintained schools. This is the equivalent of an extra **13,483** teachers.⁴

⁴ Based on teachers being paid at the rate of M1 which is £22,917 for the academic year 2017/18.



"Schools said that they had to use agency staff to cover vacancies in shortage subjects until they were successful in recruiting a full-time employee."⁵

In England, **£76** is spent per pupil on supply teachers in primary academies.

Of this amount, approximately **£30** per pupil is paid out in agency commission fees.

This figure rises to **£88** per pupil for secondary academies.

Of this amount, approximately **£35** per pupil is paid out in agency fees.⁶

⁶ Based on a supply teacher being recruited from a supply agency charging commission of 40% to schools.



“How desperate the schools were also influenced negotiations about charges and rates.”⁷

45 multi-academy trusts **spent in excess of £1 million on supply teachers.**

This resulted in a **loss of over £36.8 million to agencies in commission fees.**⁸

Over **£2.2 million in commission fees** was spent by one multi-academy trust alone in 2015/16.⁹

⁸ Based on a supply teacher being recruited from a supply agency charging commission of 40% to schools.

⁹ Ibid.



"I feel the finder's fees are constantly denying me any chance to gain permanent employment."¹⁰

Transfer fees

Many schools report that agencies adopt aggressive negotiation tactics over transfer fees.¹¹ Agencies exploit and exacerbate the recruitment challenges in schools.

Many student teachers are encouraged to sign up to agencies to improve their prospects of finding work.

One in six supply teachers (15%) said that they had been denied access to permanent employment as a result of the imposition of a finder's fee by an agency they had worked for.

Some schools report transfer fees in excess of £10,000.

¹¹ www.niesr.ac.uk/sites/default/files/publications/NIESR_agency_working_report_final.pdf



"Agencies do not reward loyalty or provide progression in pay if you remain with them for longer than a year. I'm trying to break into direct schools rather than agency but it is difficult."

Pay

School managers said **they were not aware what proportion of the agency charge rate went to the supply teacher.** A large proportion of the difference between the charge rate and the **supply teacher pay went into the agency's profits.**¹²

65% of supply teachers stated that they are not being paid commensurate with their level of experience. This has increased by 8% since 2014 and by 24% since 2012.¹³

¹² www.niesr.ac.uk/sites/default/files/publications/NIESR_agency_working_report_final.pdf

¹³ www.nasuwt.org.uk/uploads/assets/uploaded/4287af7f-21d8-4416-beb8e638b8f7b993.pdf



"For me, the best days of supply teaching are in the past. I have had an amazing 16 years of working between schools, doing what I do best, using my experience and talents to cover for friends and colleagues in a way that is greatly appreciated by the schools I work in. However, it's all changing and money seems to be at the core."

The changing nature of supply teaching

More and more agencies are emerging in education. It is estimated that the **number of education agencies has increased from 280 to 500.**¹⁴ The increase in agency working has led to a **worsening in the pay, conditions of service and pensions of supply teachers.**

Conclusion

There has to be a better way. **Many employers are in favour of a state-run national or regional agency for temporary supply teachers,** citing the benefits to quality assurance and costs.¹⁵

With approved standards, agencies would not be able to **manipulate or blackmail supply teachers into accepting unreasonable working conditions and pay.**

¹⁴ www.niesr.ac.uk/sites/default/files/publications/NIESR_agency_working_report_final.pdf

¹⁵ Ibid.

Find out more about the NASUWT's
work and campaigns around supply teaching at:
www.nasuwat.org.uk/supply

