



# Supply Teachers

annual survey of experiences



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## Introduction

The NASUWT's annual survey of supply teachers in England and Wales was undertaken between May and June 2018.

A total of 1,080 supply teachers responded to the survey.

This Report provides the overarching findings from the survey of supply teachers. Where there are significant variations in the data as compared with previous surveys, these are highlighted in the body of this Report.

## The Survey

### Nature of work

Supply teachers were asked about why they carried out supply teaching work:

- 16% stated that it was because they wanted to have greater flexibility over what they did;
- 15% reported that that they had not been able to find permanent work;
- 14% stated that they were concerned about the workload in schools;
- just over one in ten (11%) were motivated to work on a supply basis due to bullying by their previous employer;
- almost one in ten (8%) said they felt demoralised in their previous job;
- almost one in 20 (4%) were motivated to become a supply teacher because they felt they were not valued as a professional in the school where they previously worked;
- 3% stated that they had become a supply teacher because of the pressure of high-stakes accountability within schools; and
- 2% stated that they wanted greater autonomy.

## Access to work

Over four fifths (83%) said they were employed through a supply agency, whilst just over one fifth (21%) reported that they were employed directly as a supply teacher by a school and less than one in ten (8%) stated that they were employed via a local authority supply pool.

Over two fifths (44%) of respondents stated that they had signed up to one agency in order to obtain work as a supply teacher. A quarter (25%) reported that they were signed up to two agencies, and 16% reported that they were signed up to three agencies.

Three fifths (60%) of supply teachers indicated that they had only been provided with work from one agency in the last 12 months. Over a quarter (27%) said they had been provided with work from two agencies in the last 12 months. A tenth (10%) of respondents reported that they had been provided with work from three agencies in the last 12 months.

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**Only 8% of supply teachers reported that they were employed via a local authority supply pool.**

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*I have no choice but to work through a supply agency as the schools refuse to employ supply teachers directly – as do the local authority.*

*I preferred the local authority system, where the authority held a bank of supply staff. Staff were paid directly by the council and contributions were made to the Teachers' Pension Scheme.*

*It is now more difficult to get supply work direct with schools through the local authority than in the past. Therefore, I rely on agency work.*

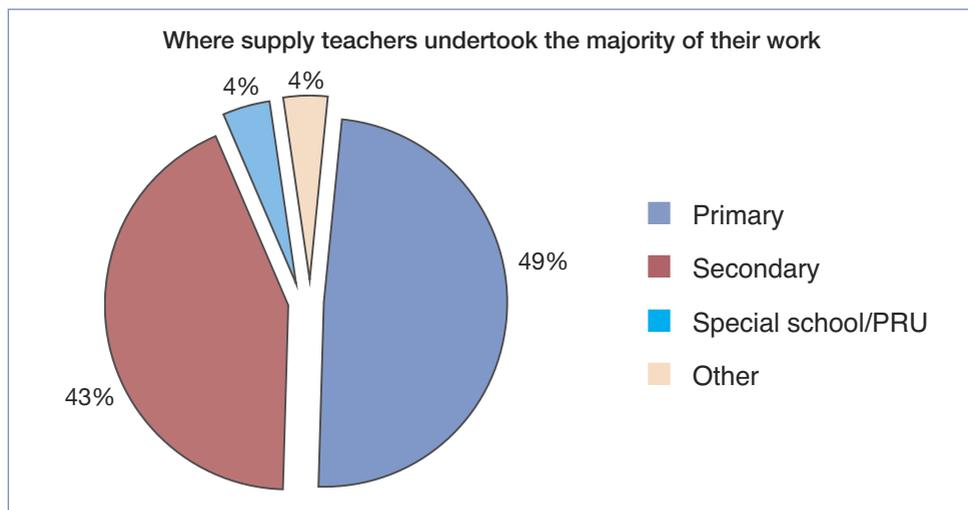
Of those supply teachers working for supply agencies, 7% indicated that they had been asked to sign an exclusivity clause with the agency in order to get work.

Just over four fifths (81%) of supply teachers who work for a local authority obtain their work from one local authority, whereas just over a tenth (12%) stated that they obtained work from two local authorities, and 6% of supply teachers reported that they obtained work from three local authorities.

### Availability of work

Supply teachers were asked about where and when they were able to obtain work and whether they face any difficulties in doing so.

Almost half (49%) of supply teachers who responded to the survey stated that the majority of their supply work in the last 12 months took place in primary schools. Over two fifths (43%) stated that the majority of their work was in secondary schools. Just under one in 20 (4%) of supply teachers reported that the majority of their supply work in the last 12 months took place in a special school/pupil referral unit (PRU).



Just under three fifths of supply teachers (58%) stated that they experienced some problems obtaining work. Of these, 2% reported that they could not find any supply work.

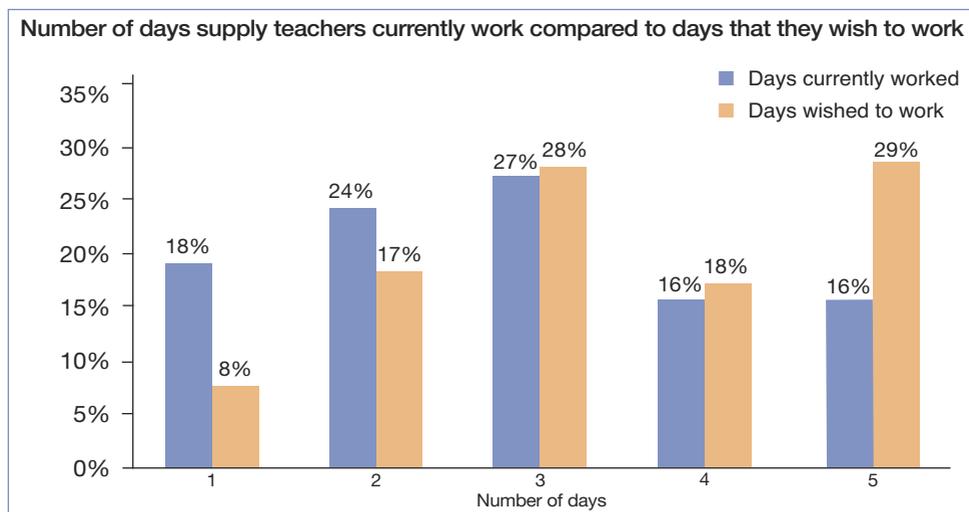
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**Almost a third of supply teachers (31%) reported that there had been a decline in the work available to them in the last 12 months.**

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When asked how many days a week, on average, they had worked in the last 12 months, 18% said they worked one day a week, just under a quarter (24%) two days a week, and over a quarter (27%) three days a week.

Only 16% of supply teachers in the survey said they regularly work four days each week and a further 16% stated that they regularly work five days each week. However, almost a third (29%) said that they wanted to work five days a week.



Supply teachers were asked about whether their work is primarily on a daily or longer term basis.

Over half (56%) stated that they undertook daily supply work; a tenth (10%) reported that they undertook weekly supply work; less than one in 20 (3%) worked on a monthly basis; less than one in ten (9%) on a termly basis; and almost a quarter (23%) on a longer term basis in excess of a term.

## Pensions

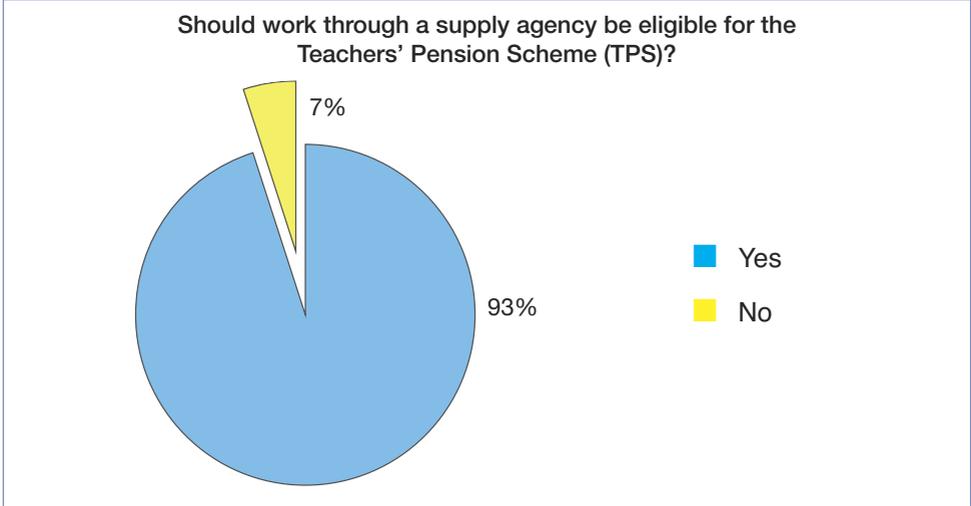
Just over four fifths (81%) stated that they are members of the Teachers' Pension Scheme (TPS). Of these, just under a third (31%) reported that they were active members; over a quarter (27%) reported that they were deferred members; and over two fifths (22%) reported that they were drawing a pension.

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Of those supply teachers who indicated they were not members of the TPS, almost two fifths (38%) reported that they did not have any alternative pension scheme provision.

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When asked if employment as a supply teacher through an agency should be pensionable under the TPS, over nine out of ten (93%) answered yes.



*I would like to continue to pay into my TPS pension and be paid a fair wage, sickness and holiday pay.*

*I think that it is appalling that we are unable to be part of Teachers' Pensions.*

*I pay into the workplace pension but this is nothing in comparison to the TPS.*

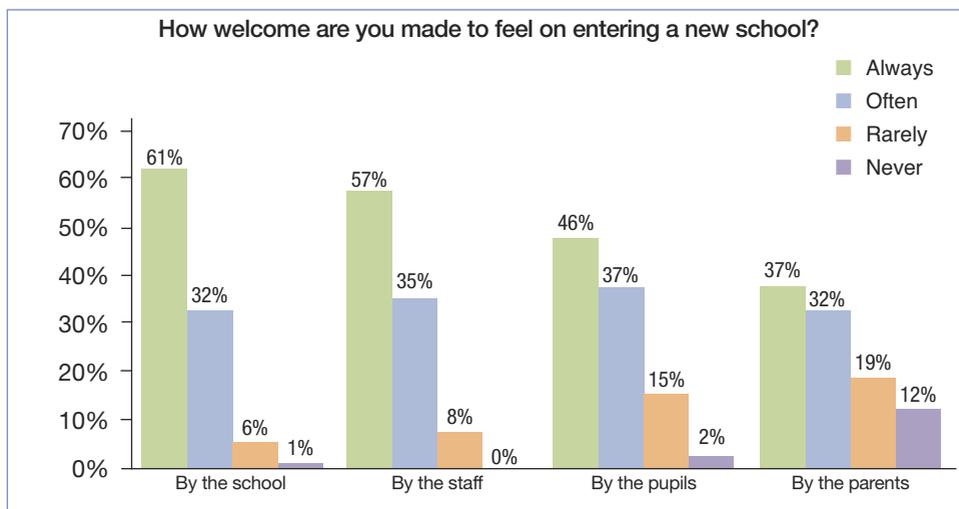
## Welcome to work and access to facilities

The survey asked supply teachers about the extent to which they felt welcome within the schools where they teach and whether they have access to appropriate facilities within schools.

Just over three fifths of supply teachers (61%) reported that they are always made to feel welcome *by the school* and just under a third (32%) stated that they are often made to feel welcome when entering a school. However, just over one in 20 respondents (6%) said that they are rarely made to feel welcome by the school and 1% of respondents reported that they are never made to feel welcome by the school.

When asked about how welcome they are made to feel *by the staff in the school*, just under three fifths (57%) reported that they are always made to feel welcome and over a third (35%) reported that they are often made to feel welcome when entering a school. Almost one in ten (8%) reported that they are rarely made to feel welcome by the staff.

When asked about how welcome they are made to feel *by the pupils in the school*, almost half (46%) reported that they are always made to feel welcome and almost four fifths (37%) reported that they are often made to feel welcome by the pupils when entering a school. 15% reported that they are rarely made to feel welcome by the pupils and 2% reported that they are never made to feel welcome by the pupils.



In respect of being made to feel welcome *by the parents*, almost four fifths (37%) stated that they are always made to feel welcome and almost a third (32%) stated that they are often made to feel welcome. Almost a fifth (19%) stated that they are rarely made to feel welcome by the parents and over one in ten (12%) stated that they are never made to feel welcome by the parents.

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**60% of supply teachers reported that they do not feel they are treated with respect and dignity.**

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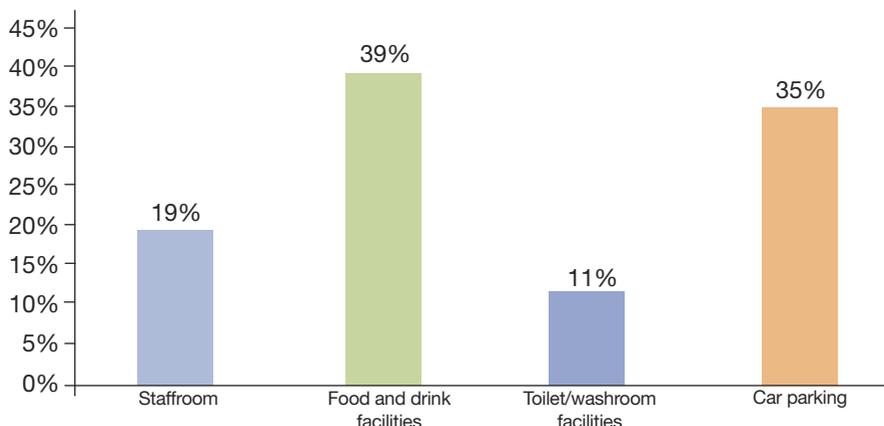
*The lack of respect from students and the school's failure to deal with it is the worst thing.*

*I find I am often not treated with respect by schools as a supply teacher and am sometimes seen as inferior. I sometimes don't feel welcome to go into the staffroom or use facilities available to other staff.*

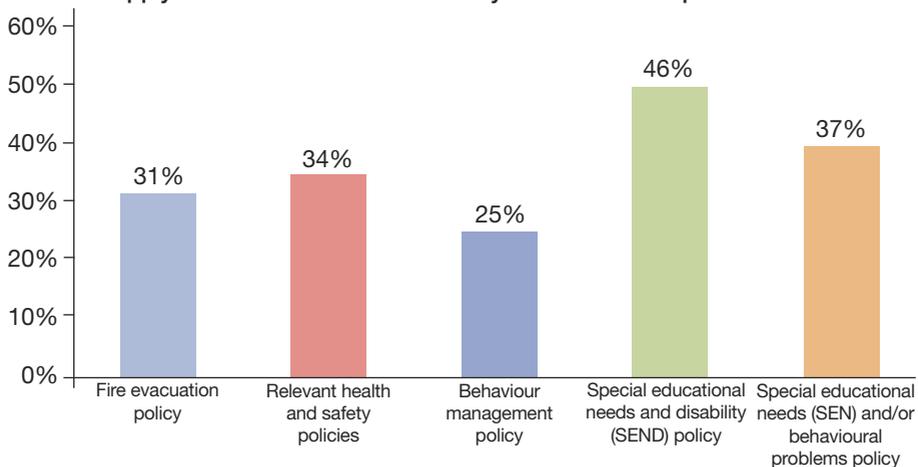
When asked about their most recent assignment, almost a fifth of supply teachers (19%) stated that they do not always have access to staffrooms where they were available, almost two fifths (39%) stated that they do not always have access to food and drink facilities and over one in ten (11%) said that they do not always have access to toilet/washroom facilities. Over a third (35%) reported that they do not always have access to car parking.

When questioned about their awareness of key information and policies used within schools, just under a third of supply teachers (31%) reported that they are not given clear information on the school's fire evacuation policy, just over a third (34%) of respondents stated that they are not given clear information regarding relevant health and safety policies, a quarter (25%) are not given clear information on behaviour management policies, including who to contact, well over two fifths of respondents (46%) stated that they are not given the school's policy on children with special educational needs and disability (SEND), and 37% reported that they are not given information on the young people in school with special educational needs (SEN) and/or behavioural problems.

Supply teachers denied access to facilities in schools (%)



Supply teachers denied access to key information and policies

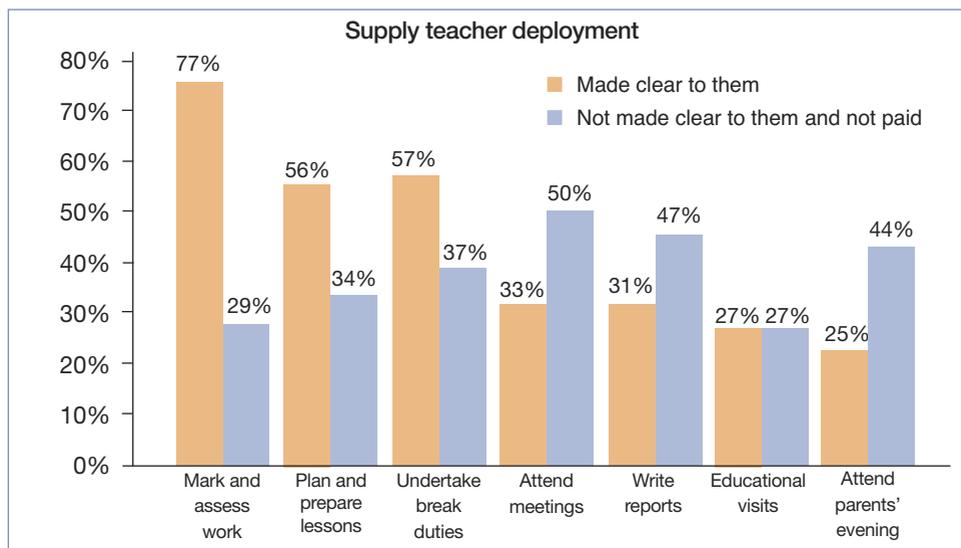


For those supply teachers who did receive information in respect of key policies within schools, three fifths (60%) reported that this was provided by the school, with a fifth (20%) stating that this was provided by a designated contact in the school. Only 2% stated that this information was provided by the supply agency.

When asked about their most recent assignment, over a quarter (27%) of supply teachers reported that they did not have access to a designated person or contact.

## Supply teacher deployment

Over three quarters of supply teachers (77%) stated that they were expected to mark and assess work, but 29% stated that this was not made clear to them and that they were not paid to undertake the work.



*The precarious nature of the work is a disadvantage, but we are often the 'cavalry coming over the hill' for schools, and do a job that many others would reject.*

Almost three fifths (57%) of supply teachers said that they were expected to undertake break duties, yet almost two fifths (37%) of those who did this stated that this was not made clear to them and they were not paid to undertake the work.

Well over half (56%) said that they were expected to plan and prepare lessons, but just over a third (34%) of those who did this stated that this was not made clear to them and they were not paid to undertake the work.

A third (33%) of supply teachers reported that they were asked to attend meetings (during or after school), but half (50%) of those who did this reported that this was not made clear to them and they were not paid to undertake the work.

Almost a third (31%) of respondents were expected to write reports, but almost half (47%) of those who did this reported that this was not made clear to them and they were not paid to undertake the work.

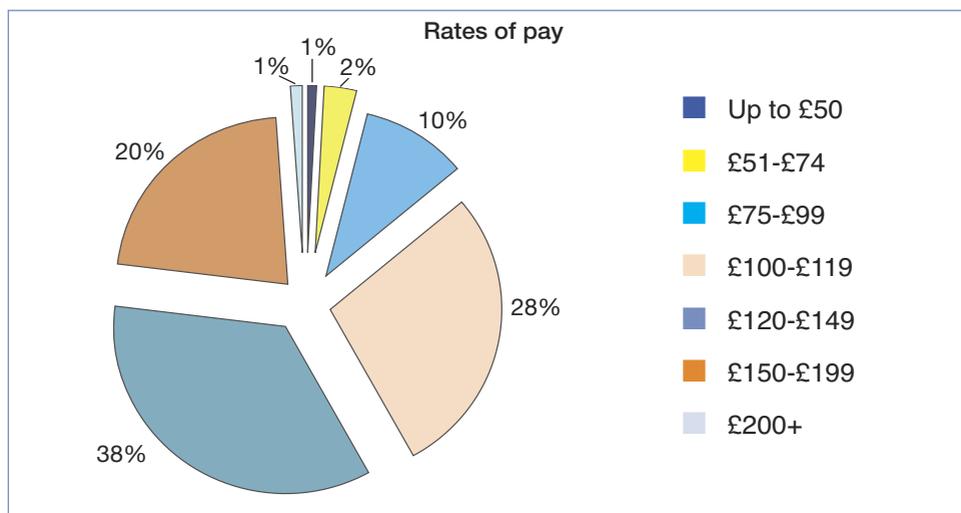
Over a quarter (27%) of supply teachers stated that they were expected to participate in educational visits. Of those who did this, over a quarter (27%) reported that this was not made clear to them and they were not paid to undertake the work.

A quarter (25%) stated that they were expected to attend parents' evening, but well over two fifths (44%) who did this reported that this was not made clear to them and they were not paid to undertake the work.

### Rates of pay

Two fifths of supply teachers (40%) stated that they are paid between £51 and £119 per day; almost two fifths (38%) are paid between £120 and £149 per day; a fifth (20%) are paid between £150 and £199 per day; and only 1% report that they are paid over £200 per day. 1% said they are paid less than £50 per day.

*Since starting supply teaching in November 2014, I have been paid the same £120 per day. It would be fairer to have an annual increase in pay.*



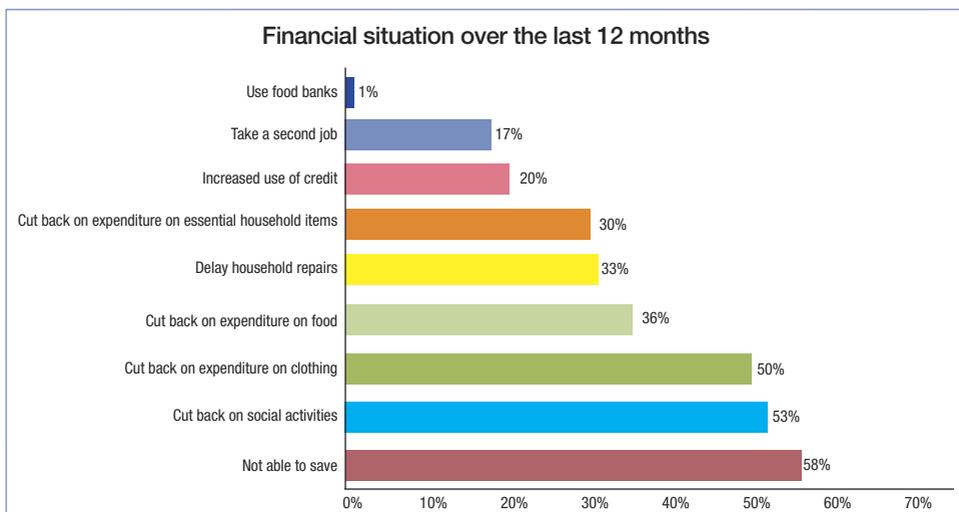
Just over seven out of ten supply teachers (71%) reported that the agency where they undertook their last assignment operated a ceiling in respect of remuneration.

Almost four fifths (79%) of respondents indicated that this was between £75 and £149 per day, whereas only 16% stated that this was between £150 and £199 per day. 2% reported that the ceiling was between less than £50 per day and £74 per day. Only 1% reported a ceiling of over £200.

72% of supply teachers reported being paid more for an assignment when employed directly by a school compared to being employed through an agency.

*“Supply teachers are leaving the profession because they cannot live on the miserable wages they are paid, have no pension to fall back on and so have to work till they drop just to survive.”*

*“My agency never offers to increase my pay as I work on a day-to-day basis. No increase in five years.”*



Seven out of ten supply teachers (70%) indicated that their rate of pay had remained the same over the course of the last 12 months, whereas 16% reported that their pay had decreased during the same period. Only 8% said that their rate of pay had increased.

15% of supply teachers reported that they have had to claim Jobseeker's Allowance since becoming a supply teacher and over one in ten (11%) reported that they have had to claim other state benefits.

Seven out of ten supply teachers (70%) reported that they have been offered roles that do not utilise their skills and knowledge as a teacher, and, where they have been offered these roles, over three quarters (77%) reported that these were offered at a lower rate of pay.



*I have been plunged into poverty, unfavourable working conditions and a load of anxiety and stress that I have to endure for another eight years; even then, I will still have to live in poverty because by the time I retire at 66 I will be too ill and too exhausted to be able to continue working to supplement my national pension so that I can pay my basic bills at least.*



## Compliance with legislation

Almost three fifths (59%) of supply teachers reported that they were not made aware that after 12 weeks of working in the same workplace they were entitled to the same pay and conditions as permanent members of staff.

14% of supply teachers said that they have been asked to waive their right to qualify for the same pay and conditions after the 12-week qualifying period.

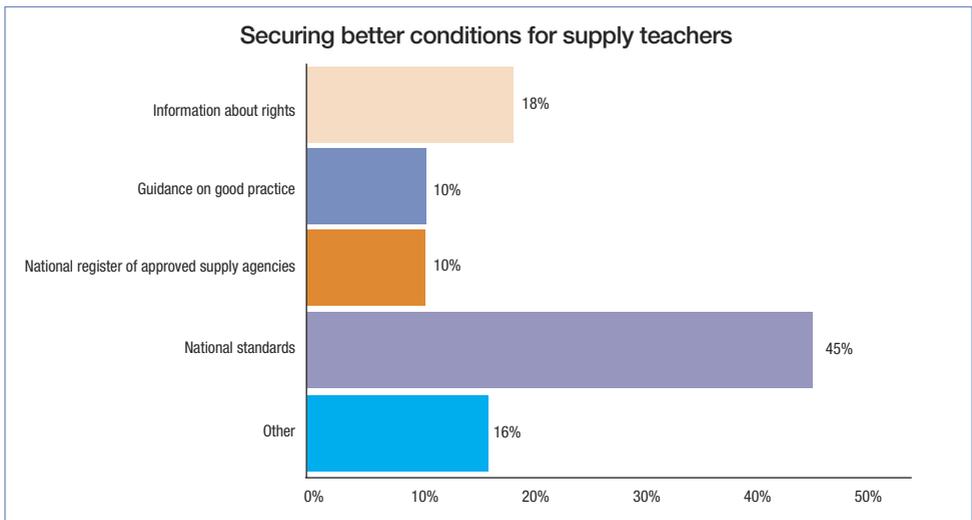
Over a fifth (22%) of respondents stated that work had been cancelled on specific longer term assignments at or approaching the 12 weeks' qualification period for the Agency Workers' Regulations (AWR).

Three fifths of supply teachers (60%) reported that they have been asked to sign a contract or agreement with an umbrella company when working through a supply agency. Almost half of those respondents (49%) stated that their pay had included deductions in respect of both employee and employer National Employer Contributions (NICs).

*Supply agencies should be required to provide complete transparency with regard to pay and the use of umbrella companies.*

Almost three quarters (74%) of supply teachers reported that the agency where they undertake the majority of their work does not fully disclose all of the fees and charges they make for the services they provide. Some 15% of those who responded stated that they did not know what charges were made.

**When asked what should be the priority to securing better conditions for supply teachers, over two fifths (45%) said national standards for supply agencies.**



Around one fifth (18%) of respondents said providing information to supply teachers about their rights would help to secure better working conditions, and one in ten (10%) said that a national register of approved supply agencies was needed to secure good practice.

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**15% of supply teachers 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.**

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*I applied for a permanent position at the school in which I currently work. They have said that currently they cannot employ me due to the finder's fee and their current budget.*

*When a job came up in a school I had been working at for some time, I was advised that if I applied I may not be successful as it would cost the school to 'buy' me from the agency.*

Over half (52%) of supply teachers reported that they are concerned for their rights and protections as agency workers following the UK's 2016 vote to leave the European Union.

### **Training and behaviour management support**

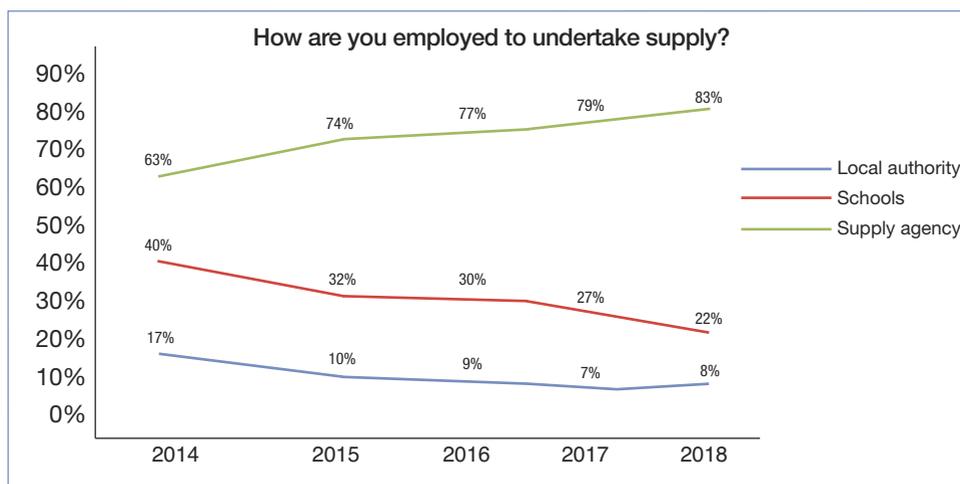
Over half (52%) of supply teachers stated that they had not been given access to continuing professional development (CPD) opportunities by the agencies which they had worked for in the last 12 months.

For the minority of supply teachers who had access to CPD, the primary sources of training were obtained via the agency (49%), directly from schools (39%), from their trade union (17%), or funded personally (13%).

## Trends over the period 2014-17

### Nature of work

The dominance of supply agencies in the market continues, up again from 79% last year to 83% in 2018. Since 2014, the use of supply agencies by supply teachers has risen by 20%. The number of local authorities providing work has remained stable since the last survey at 8%, whereas the number of schools providing direct employment has almost halved from 40% in 2014 to 22% in 2018.



### Availability of work

Fewer supply teachers have reported problems securing work, down from 62% in 2017 to 58% in 2018.

The number of supply teachers able to work either four or five days a week has increased since the last survey was conducted in 2017 from 26% to 32% respectively.

In addition to this, the percentage of supply teachers reporting an increase in the amount of available work in the last 12 months is up 4% since 2017. Coupled with this is a decline from 37% to 31% respectively, since 2017, in the number of supply teachers reporting that the amount of available work has decreased in the last 12 months.

More supply teachers also report being able to access weekly supply work and supply work in excess of a term, up by 2% respectively since the 2017 survey.

### **Welcome to work and access to facilities**

There has been an increase in the number of supply teachers reporting that they are made to feel welcome when they enter a school.

For example, 57% of supply teachers reported that they are always made to feel welcome by the staff, an increase of 4% since the 2017 survey.

There was an increase of 4% in the number of supply teachers reporting that they are always made to feel welcome by the students, up to 46% in 2018. The amount of supply teachers also reporting that they are always made to feel welcome by the parents has increased from 31% in 2017 to 37% in 2018.

This coincides with a 5% decrease since 2017 in the number of supply teachers reporting that they are never made to feel welcome by the parents.

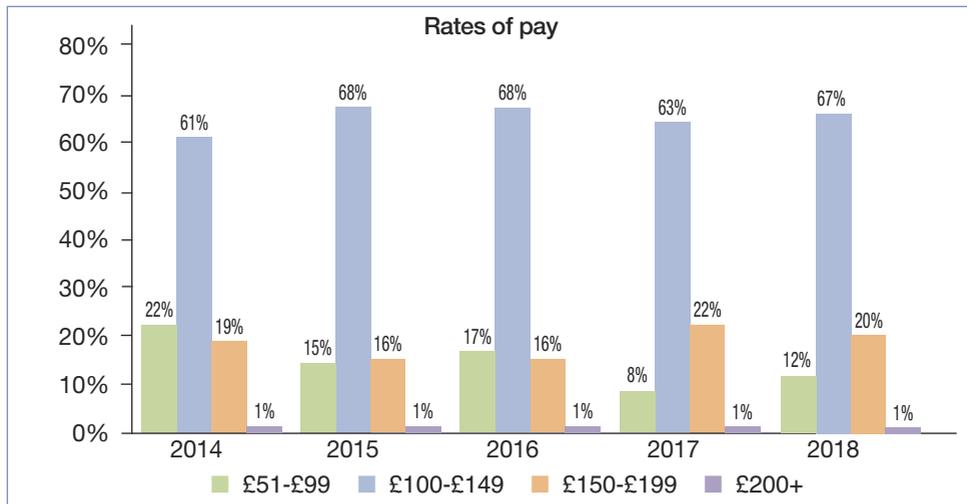
The number of supply teachers reporting that they did not always have access to food and drink facilities decreased from 42% in 2017 to 39% in 2018. The number saying they did not always have access to car parking has decreased from 37% in 2017 to 35% in 2018. This represents a decrease of 13% since 2016.

More supply teachers reported that they are made aware of key information and policies within schools. For example, the amount of respondents who reported that they are not given clear information on the school's evacuation policy dropped from 37% in 2017 to 31% in 2018. Supply teachers are now much more likely to receive information in respect of key policies from the school, up from 43% in 2017 to 60% in 2018.

### **Rates of pay**

With regard to daily rates of pay, it remains the case that the majority of supply teachers still report that they are paid between £100 and £149 per day (67%). This has increased by 4% since the last survey in 2017. The percentage of supply teachers who are paid between £51 and £99 increased by 4% since 2017, whilst the percentage of supply teachers reporting being paid between £150 and £199 decreased from 22% in 2017 to 20% in 2018.

It still remains the case that only 1% of supply teachers report being able to access rates of pay in excess of £200. This figure has not altered since 2014.



Despite pay increases for other teachers, the majority of supply teachers have not seen their remuneration increase substantially since 2014. Many qualified supply teachers are still being paid at rates equivalent to that of unqualified teachers.

Coupled with this, there has been an increase in those supply teachers reporting that they have had to cut back on social activities (up 6%) as well as a 3% rise in those who have had to take a second job.

The percentage of supply teachers reporting that they do not feel they are treated with respect and dignity has increased significantly from 41% in 2017 to 60% in 2018.

*I don't want to be a supply teacher. It's undignified and the agencies have manipulated every aspect of the industry to maximise profits and exploit hard-working professionals. I'm considering labouring on construction sites for similar money and more regular work.*



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