



New National Procurement Service framework published

Following intensive lobbying by the NASUWT and following negotiation, the Wales National Procurement Service has now issued a significantly revised national framework for the employment of supply teachers.

The NASUWT had raised serious issues with the previous framework that had resulted in New Directions gaining the tender across Wales, and local authorities pressing schools to use only New Directions. The NASUWT's concerns related to the rates of pay, finder's fees and the avoidance of teachers' rights under the Agency Workers Regulations by use of so-called 'guaranteed contracts' (the Swedish Derogation).

The new framework has the potential to improve the pay and terms and conditions of supply teachers considerably, as well as providing improved access to professional learning opportunities. It has been initially welcomed by the NASUWT as a large step in the right direction, although there remain some questions to be answered and a number of outstanding issues.

The new framework allows providers to bid on a local, regional or all-Wales basis, whereas the previous framework had to be met on an all-Wales basis, meaning that only New Directions could bid. This move will bring some welcome diversity and local provision. It will also allow schools and local authorities to continue to employ supply staff directly without the use of an agency.

The other main elements of the framework are:

- a minimum rate of pay at least the minimum point in the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document (STPCD);
- the Swedish Derogation banned;
- agencies must sign up to the Welsh Government ethical code of practice for temporary workers;
- built-in industry quality standards;
- temporary workers will not be utilised in a role to which they have not been appointed (e.g. paying a teacher as a cover supervisor but then expecting them to teach);
- sliding scale of payments for transferring staff to permanent contracts (finder's fee) diminishing to zero after two weeks; and
- free-of-charge professional learning opportunities.

The new framework would not give teachers access to Teachers' Pensions provision and full salary entitlements, but is nevertheless a significant improvement on the current situation.

The NASUWT still favours local authorities organising supply pools and schools directly employing teachers to give full pay and pension rights, and continues to look to the Welsh Government, local authorities and education consortia to protect supply teachers fully.

Continued overleaf

The Welsh Government also intends to amend the Staffing of Maintained Schools (Wales) Regulations to only allow school governing bodies to hire supply teachers through the new framework. This would be a very welcome change but there is currently no space in the Welsh Government legislative timetable to allow the amendments to be put in place and, therefore, there is no implementation date.

The new framework has been circulated to potential bidders and the status will be awarded in the spring of next year for implementation in September 2019.

The NASUWT continues to campaign for supply teachers to access the Teachers' Pension Scheme and for pay and conditions to be commensurate with teachers who work in schools.

Professional Learning opportunities – supply teachers

The National Approach to Professional Learning (NAPL), announced on Monday 12 November 2018 by Education Secretary Kirsty Williams, will see £9 million invested in teachers in this financial year, increasing to £15 million next financial year.

The Welsh Government says that the funding will give schools the time and resources they need to plan ahead for the new curriculum and ensure that changes are made in a way that will prioritise the wellbeing of teachers and minimise disruption to pupils' learning.

The funding will also help ensure that there is cover for staff to be released for professional learning.

The Welsh Government has also assured the NASUWT that supply teachers will get access to the funding to support their own learning.

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