



Supply Teachers

annual survey of experiences



Contents

Introduction	4
The Survey	4
Nature of work	4
Access to work	5
Availability of work	5
Pensions	7
Welcome to work and access to facilities	8
Supply teacher deployment	11
Rates of pay	12
Compliance with legislation	14
Training and behaviour management support	16
Trends over the period 2014-2017	16
Nature of work	16
Availability of work	17
Welcome to work and access to facilities	17
Rates of pay	17
Training and behavioural support	18

Introduction

The NASUWT annual survey of supply teachers in England and Wales was undertaken between May and June 2017.

Over 840 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:

- just under a sixth (14%) stated that they were concerned about the workload in schools;
- 13% stated that it was because they wanted to have greater flexibility over what they did;
- just over one in ten (12%) were motivated to work on a supply basis due to bullying by their previous employer;
- over one in ten (13%) reported that they had not been able to find permanent work;
- over one in 20 (7%) said they felt demoralised in their previous job;
- one in 20 (5%) stated that they had become a supply teacher because of the pressure of high-stakes accountability within schools; and
- around 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.

Access to work

Four fifths (79%) said they were employed through a supply agency, whilst around one quarter (27%) said they were employed directly as a supply teacher by a school and less than one in ten (7%) were employed via a local authority supply pool.

Over two fifths (42%) of respondents stated that they had signed up to one agency in order to obtain work as a supply teacher. One quarter (25%) reported that they were signed up to two agencies, and a sixth (17%) stated 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. Almost one third (29%) of supply teacher respondents said they had been provided with work from two agencies in the last 12 months.

Of those supply teachers working for supply agencies, 8% indicated that they had been asked to sign an exclusivity clause with the agency in order to get work.

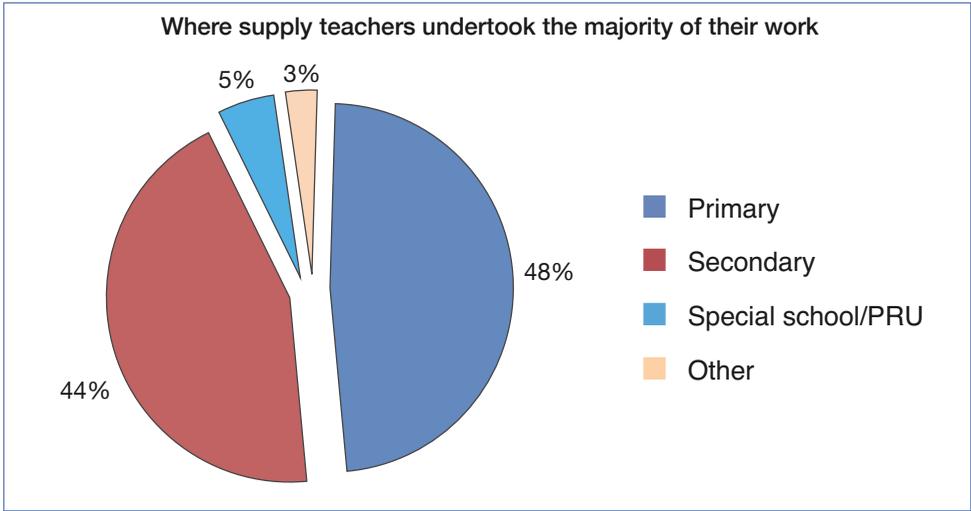
Of those supply teachers working for supply agencies, 8% indicated that they had been asked to sign an exclusivity clause with the agency in order to get work.

Just over four fifths (81%) of supply teachers who work for a local authority obtain their work from one local authority, whereas 14% reported that they obtained work from two 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 (48%) 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. 44% of respondents stated that the majority of their work was in secondary schools. Only one in 20 (5%) 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).



There is so little work, I feel that qualified supply teaching may soon become a thing of the past, which is a depressing prospect. Schools are routinely using classroom assistants to cover staff absence or requesting a cheaper ‘cover supervisor’, but expecting them to do a teacher’s role.

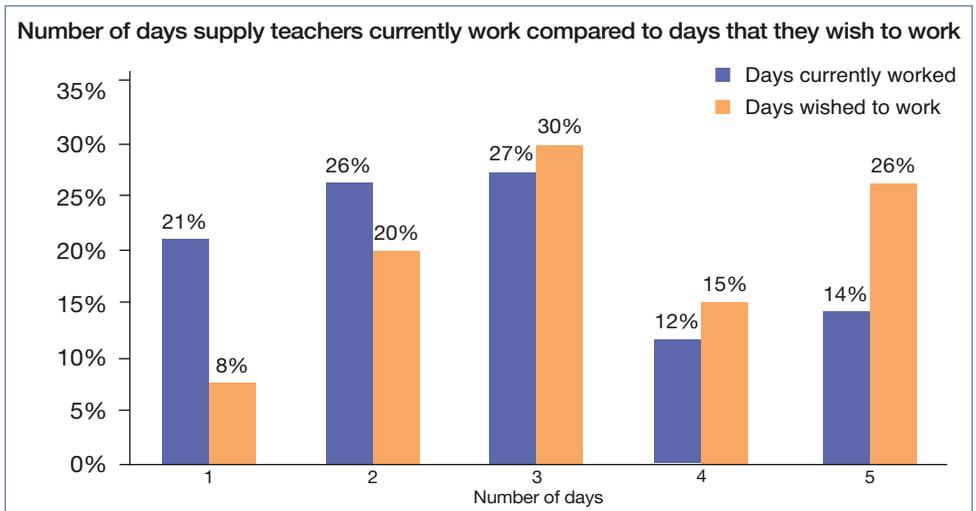
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Over three fifths of supply teachers (62%) reported that they experienced some problems obtaining work. Of this, 2% reported that they could not find any supply work.

When asked how many days on average they worked a week in the last 12 months, over a fifth (21%) said they worked one day a week, over a quarter (26%) two days a week, and over a quarter (27%) three days a week.

Only 12% of supply teachers in the survey said they regularly worked four days each week and 14% work five days each week. However, more than one quarter (26%) 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. Almost three fifths (59%) stated that they undertook daily supply work, only 8% reported that they undertook weekly supply work, less than one in 20 (4%) worked on a monthly basis, less than one in ten (9%) on a termly basis and just over a fifth (21%) on a longer term basis in excess of a term.

Pensions

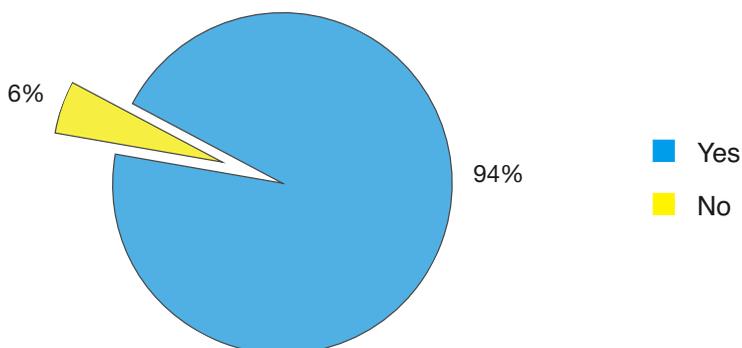
Over four fifths (84%) stated that they are members of the Teachers' Pension Scheme (TPS). Of these, a third (33%) reported that they were active members, a quarter (25%) that they were deferred members and over a quarter (26%) that they were drawing a pension.

Of those supply teachers who indicated they were not members of the TPS, around half (49%) 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 in ten (94%) answered yes.

Should work through a supply agency be eligible for the Teachers' Pension Scheme (TPS)?



I think it is unfair that supply teachers are ring-fenced outside the Teachers' Pension Scheme... I worked for the same school for over 2.5 years and got zero TPS contributions.

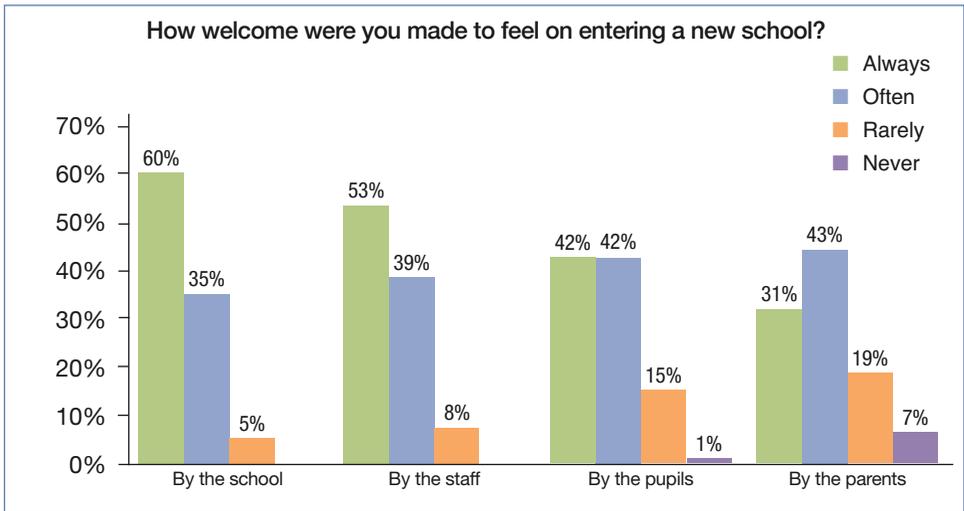
The biggest issue for me is denial of rights to pay into TPS while working as supply. This has to change so that supply staff have the same rights as permanent staff.

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.

Three fifths of supply teachers (60%) stated that they are 'always made to feel welcome by the school' and just over a third (35%) that they are often made to feel welcome when entering a school. However, one in 20 respondents (5%) said that they are rarely made to feel welcome by the school.

When asked about how welcome they are made to feel 'by the staff in the school', over half (53%) reported that they are always made to feel welcome and just under two fifths (39%) 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’, over two fifths (42%) reported that they are always made to feel welcome and just over two fifths (42%) reported that they are often made to feel welcome by the pupils when entering a school.

Over a sixth (15%) reported that they are rarely made to feel welcome by the pupils, and 1% reported that they are never made to feel welcome by the pupils.

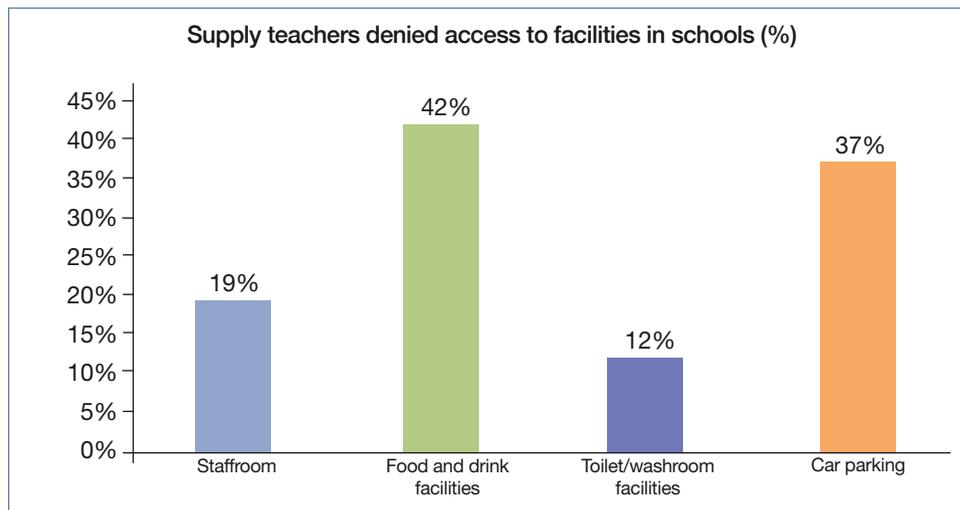
41% of supply teachers reported that they do not feel they are treated with respect and dignity.

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Supply teachers are totally unappreciated, undervalued, disrespected and taken advantage of...

Sometimes I feel like I am just a body to make up ‘the numbers’ so that the agency can secure their fee! Qualified teachers are being made to feel they need to accept lesser pay and conditions because of a shortage of quality work commensurate with qualifications and experience.

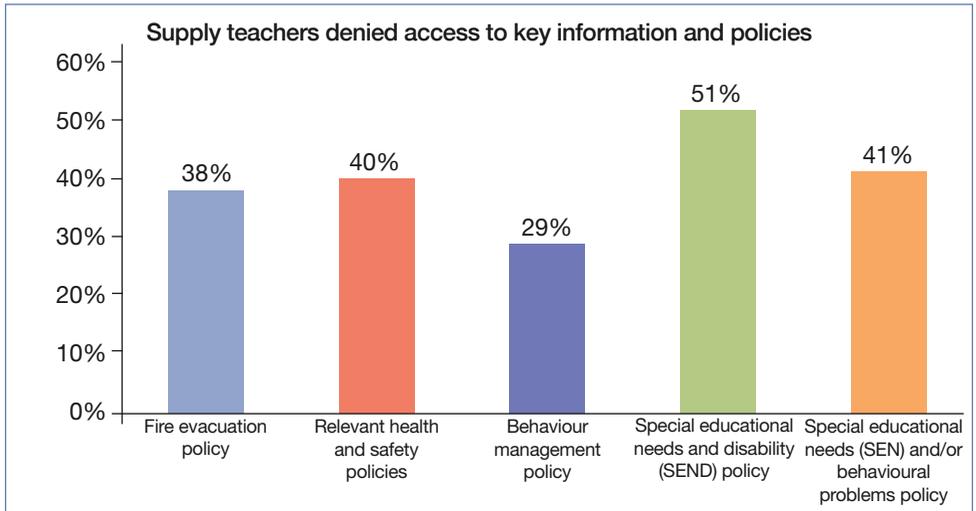
In respect of being ‘made to feel welcome by the parents’, just under a third (31%) stated that they are always made to feel welcome and just over two fifths (43%) stated that they are often made to feel welcome by the parents. Almost a fifth (19%) stated that they are rarely made to feel welcome by the parents and almost one in ten (7%) stated that they are never made to feel welcome by the parents.



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, over two fifths (42%) stated that they do not always have access to food and drink facilities, and over one in ten (12%) said that they do not always have access to toilet/washroom facilities. Over a third (37%) reported that they do not always have access to car parking.

When questioned about their awareness of key information and policies used within schools, well over a third of supply teachers (38%) reported that they are not given clear information on the school’s fire evacuation policy, two fifths (40%) stated that they are not given clear information regarding relevant health and safety policies, 29% are not given clear information of behaviour management policies, including who to contact, over half of respondents (51%) stated that they are not given the school’s policy on children with special educational needs and disability (SEND) and just over two fifths (41%) reported that they are not given information on the young people in school with special educational needs (SEN) and/or behavioural problems.

For those supply teachers who did receive information in respect of key policies within schools, over two fifths (43%) reported that this was provided by the school, with over a sixth (17%) stating that this was provided by a designated contact in the school.



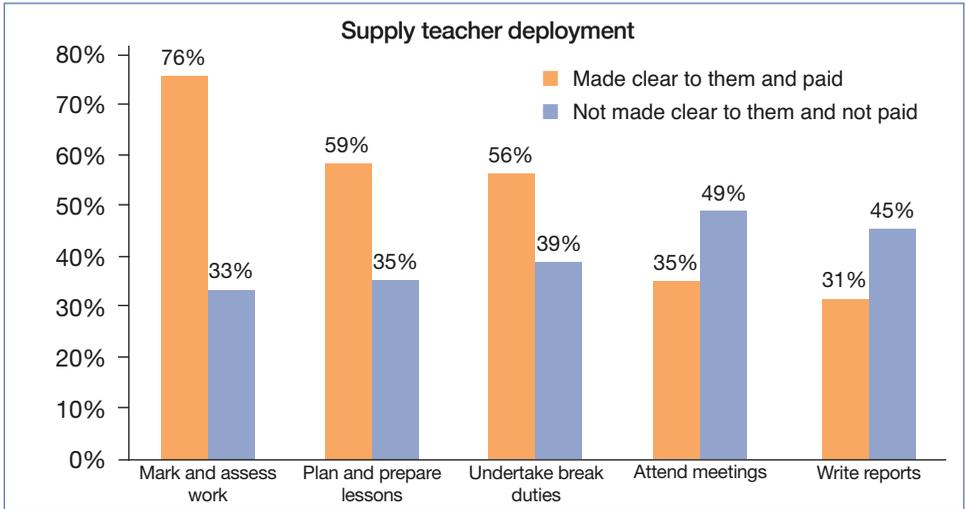
“Supply work is difficult, going into new schools, especially where often you are not given adequate information about pupils and rules, but you have to ask.”

Only 1% stated that this information was provided by the supply agency. When asked about their most recent assignment, over a quarter (27%) of supply teachers stated that they did not have access to a designated person or contact.

Supply teacher deployment

Over three quarters of supply teachers (76%) stated that they were expected to mark and assess work, but a third (33%) reported that this was not made clear to them and that they were not paid to undertake the work.

Almost three fifths (59%) said that they were expected to plan and prepare lessons, but over a third (35%) stated that this was not made clear to them and they were not paid to undertake the work.



Schools need supply staff, but all too often they treat them like a general dogsbody and you can be given the worst behaved pupils.

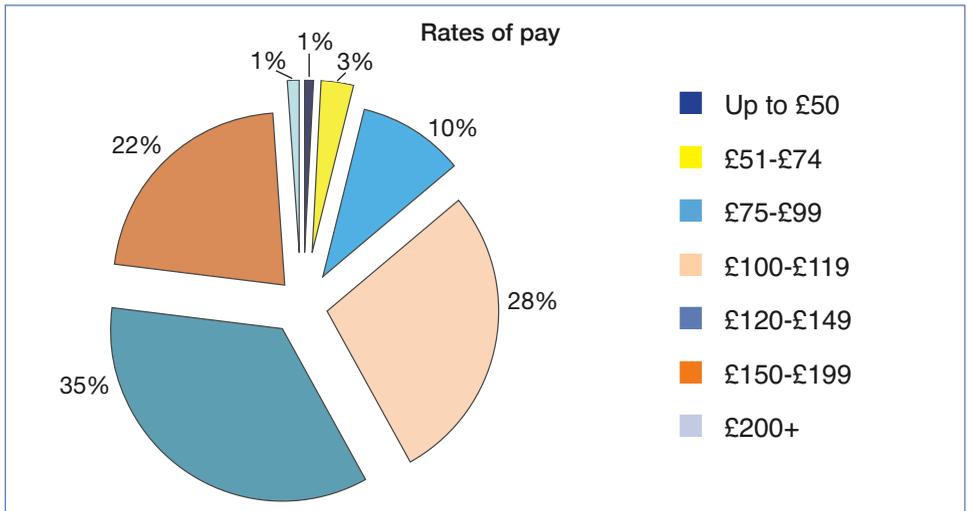
Well over half (56%) of supply teachers said that they were expected to undertake break duties, yet almost two fifths (39%) of those who did this reported that this was not made clear to them and they were not paid to undertake the work.

Over a third (35%) of supply teachers reported that they were asked to attend meetings (during or after school), but just under half (49%) stated 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 well over two fifths (45%) reported that this was not made clear to them and they were not paid to undertake the work.

Rates of pay

Over two fifths of supply teachers (41%) stated that they are paid between £51 and £119 per day, just over a third (35%) are paid between £120 and £149 per day, just over a fifth (22%) are paid between £150 and £199 per day and only 1% reported that they are paid over £200 per day. 1% said they are paid less than £50 per day.



Seven out of ten supply teachers reported that the agency where they undertook their last assignment operated a ceiling in respect of remuneration. 69% of respondents indicated that this was between £100 and £149 per day, whereas only 19% stated that this was between £150 and £199 per day.

I, with 15 years' experience, am currently paid the same as an NQT – that can't be right.

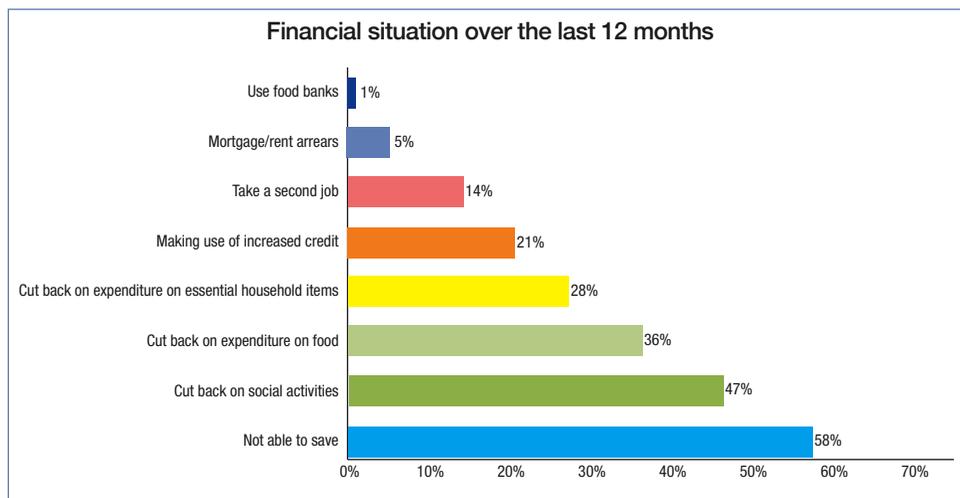
Almost one in ten (9%) indicated this was between £75 and £99 per day. 2% reported that the ceiling was between less than £50 per day and £74 per day. Only 1% reported a ceiling of over £200.

Three quarters of supply teachers (75%) reported being paid more for an assignment when employed directly by a school compared to being employed through an agency.

Almost three quarters (72%) of supply teachers indicated that their rate of pay had remained the same over the course of the last 12 months, whereas over a sixth (18%) reported that their pay had decreased during the same period. Only 9% said that their rate of pay had increased.

I fully agree with the idea that any work taught by me should be marked by me. However, I often have three sets of books to mark and when I take into account the time spent marking as well as teaching, I am often actually earning less than the minimum wage.

Almost a fifth of supply teachers (18%) reported that they have had to claim Jobseeker's Allowance since becoming a supply teacher and over one in ten (12%) reported that they have had to claim other state benefits.



Seven out of ten supply teachers (70%) said 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, three quarters (72%) reported that these were offered at a lower rate of pay.

Compliance with legislation

41% 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.

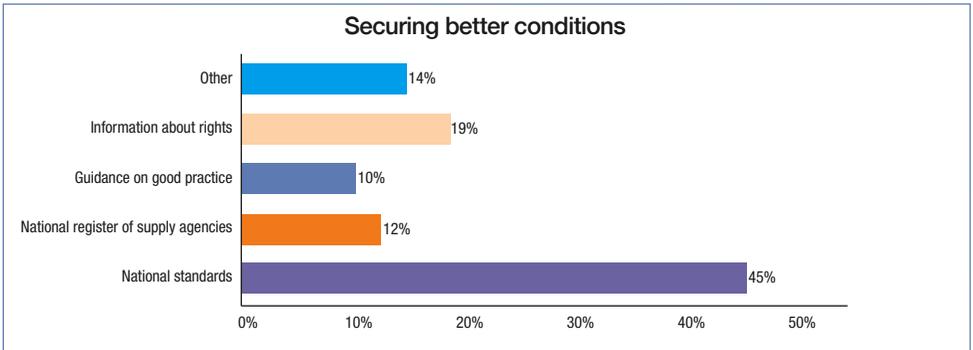
Almost a sixth (14%) of supply teachers said that they have been asked to waive their right to qualify for the same pay and conditions after the 12-week qualifying period.

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

Two thirds of supply teachers (66%) reported that they have been asked to sign a contract or agreement with an umbrella company when working through a supply agency. Over four fifths (81%) of those respondents stated that their pay had included deductions in respect of both employee and employer National Employer contributions (NICs).

Over three quarters (78%) of supply teachers reported that the agency where they undertake the majority of their work does not fully disclose all fees and charges they make for the services they provide.

When asked what should be the priority to securing better conditions for supply teachers, over two fifths (45%) said national standards for supply agencies was the best way to secure a better deal for supply teachers.



Around one fifth (19%) said information to supply teachers about their rights would help to secure better working conditions, and around one in ten (12%) said that a national register of approved supply agencies was needed to secure good practice.

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

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

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Over half (51%) 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.

I'm in a position that the school I am teaching at want me, I want to be there...but the school would have to pay a huge finders' fee it cannot afford, or employ me via the agency for a year first, which I cannot afford. Heartbroken.

I feel the finders' fees are constantly denying me any chance to gain permanent employment.

Training and behaviour management support

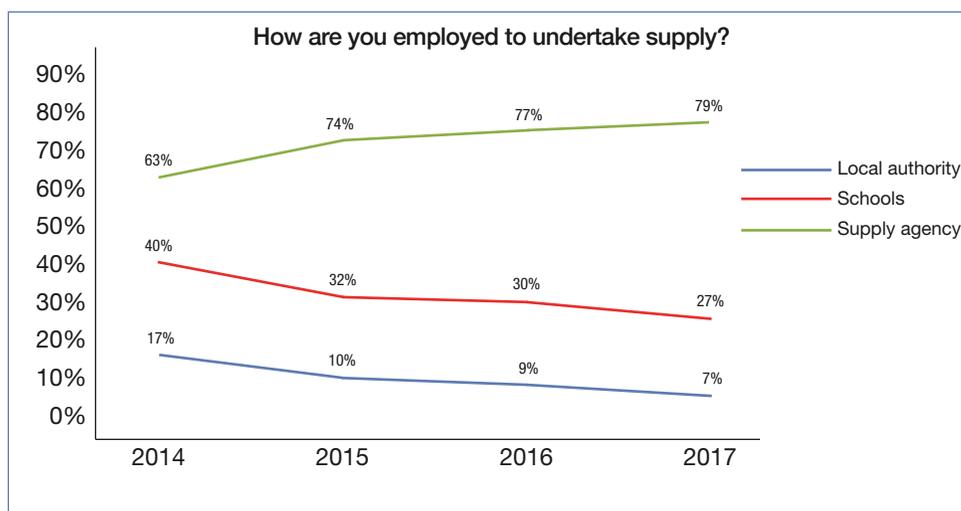
Over half (51%) of supply teachers reported that they had not been given access to continuing professional development (CPD) opportunities from the agencies which they worked for in the last 12 months.

The primary sources of CPD for the minority of supply teachers who had access to it, was obtained: via the agency (48%); directly from schools (37%); from their trade union (23%); or funded personally (14%).

Trends over the period 2014-2017

Nature of work

There has been an increase in the use of supply agencies by supply teachers, up to 79% in 2017 compared to 63% in 2014. The number of local authorities providing work has declined, down from 17% in 2014 to 7% in 2017, and schools providing direct access to employment was also down from 40% in 2014 to 27% in 2017.



Availability of work

More supply teachers have reported some problems securing work, up from 54% in 2014 to 62% in 2017.

The number of supply teachers able to work five days a week has declined again since the last survey was conducted in 2016, from 16% to 14%. Since 2014, there has been a decline of 30% in the number of supply teachers who report that they are able to work five days a week.

Welcome to work and access to facilities

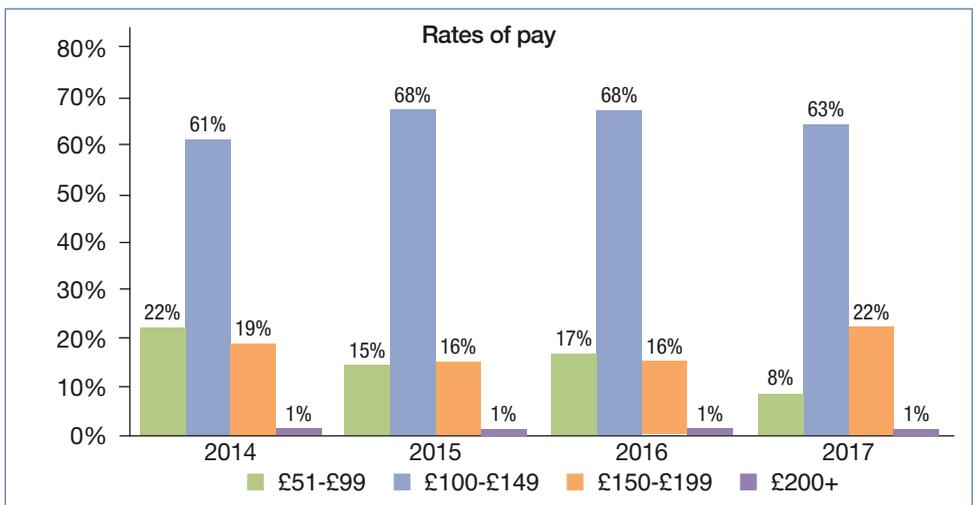
There has been an increase in the number of supply teachers reporting that they are never made to feel welcome when they enter a school, up by 10% since 2014.

Whilst the number of supply teachers reporting that they do not always have access to food and drink facilities remained the same as it did in 2016 at 42%, the number saying they do not always have access to car parking has decreased from 48% in 2016 to 37% in 2017.

The number of supply teachers stating that they do not always have access to toilet/washroom facilities rose again from 9% in 2016 to 12% in 2017. This is an increase of over 5% since 2014.

Rates of pay

With regard to daily rates of pay, the majority of supply teachers still report that they are paid between £100 and £149 per day (63%).



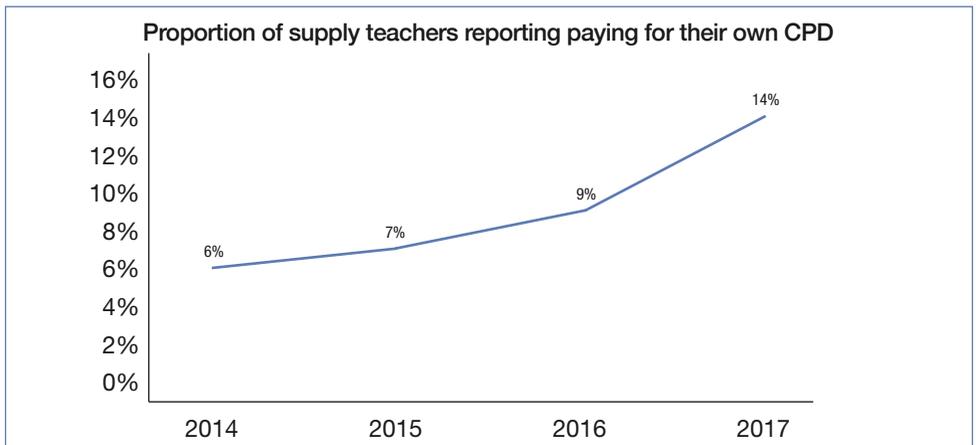
This has declined since 2015, down from 68%. The percentage of supply teachers reporting being paid between £150 and £199 increased from 19% in 2014 to 22% in 2017.

It still remains the case that only 1% of supply teachers are able to access daily rates of £200 or more.

Despite their qualified teacher status, the majority of supply teachers report being paid at rates equivalent to unqualified teachers.

Training and behavioural support

There has been an increase in the number of supply teachers reporting that they are expected to identify and pay for their own CPD, up by 5% since 2016 and 8% since 2014. This has doubled in the space of four years.



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.



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NASUWT

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