

17 February 2015

**JS/15/52****Report of Supply Teacher Review Group**

Dear Colleague

As part of the 2013-15 Pay and Conditions Agreement a working group was established to consider issues related to teacher supply. The group was chaired by Cllr Douglas Chapman and the final report is appended.

You are asked to consider the local implementations of the report at LNCT.

As Joint Secretaries, we are required to report back to the SNCT on the recommendations within the report. We will contact each Council in the near future seeking assurance the recommendations have been considered and information on any actions taken.

Yours sincerely

Tom Young (Employers' Side)  
Drew Morrice (Teachers' Panel)  
Stephanie Walsh (Scottish Government)

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Scottish Negotiating Committee for Teachers

## Supply Teachers Review Group – Final Report

**Following the 2013-2015 Pay and Conditions of Service Agreement** a tri-partite working group chaired by COSLA was established and tasked with identifying practical answers to common issues with the availability of supply teachers.

### **Group Membership**

Chair: Cllr Douglas Chapman, COSLA Spokesperson for Children and Young People

#### Employers' side:

Sharon Faulkner (COSLA Adviser, Society of Directors of Personnel)

Zoe Thomson (COSLA Adviser, Society of Directors of Personnel)

Geraldine Lyden (COSLA Adviser, Association of Directors of Education)

Ellen Docherty replaced by Mary Arthur (COSLA Adviser, Association of Directors of Education)

#### Teachers' side:

Tom Tracey (EIS)

Alan Robertson (VOICE)

Jane Peckham (NASUWT)

Phil Jackson (EIS)

Euan Duncan (SSTA)

Helen Connor (EIS)

#### Scottish Government:

Rachel Sunderland

Chris Graham

John Gunstone

#### Also in attendance:

Drew Morrice (Teachers' Side Joint Secretary)

Dave McGinty (Teachers' Side Secretariat)

Stephanie Walsh (Scottish Government Joint Secretary)

Fiona MacDonald (Scottish Government Secretariat)

Tom Young (Employers' Side Joint Secretary)

Hayley Wotherspoon (Employers' Side Secretariat)

Kieran Jackson (Employers' Side Secretariat)

### **Timings of Meetings:**

The group met 5 times between May 2014 and November 2014

### **The SNCT agreed the following remit for the Review Group:**

- Within the scope of the SNCT, to consider common issues related to the management and availability of supply;
- To identify practical answers to common issues with the availability of supply teachers;
- To engage stakeholders if necessary with regard to any related matters;
- To provide progress reports to the SNCT through Joint Chairs;
- To consider the interaction between supply and teacher workforce planning;
- To produce a final report with recommendations to SNCT through Joint Chairs, detailing possible answers to common issues with the availability of supply teachers alongside benefits and risks, setting out a possible way forward by Dec 2014;
- For the SNCT and/or SNCT Joint Chairs to review current provisions contained in the SNCT Handbook in light of the recommendations.

Supply Teachers pay rates did not form part of the remit of this group. Pay discussions sit under the auspices of the full SNCT and will be considered as part of the annual pay negotiations.

### **Background**

To inform this report the Review Group agreed to work with eight local authorities to consider common issues relating to the availability and management of supply. These authorities were Aberdeenshire, Aberdeen, Argyll and Bute, East Lothian, Glasgow, Highland, North Lanarkshire and West Dunbartonshire. The authorities were selected to provide a geographical spread and included some authorities that were particularly struggling to recruit and retain supply teachers. The eight authorities completed a detailed questionnaire and participated in a discussion session.

The Review Group also engaged with South Lanarkshire Council, the City of Edinburgh Council, School Leaders Scotland, the Association of Heads and Deputies Scotland, the General Teaching Council, the National Parents Forum, Scottish Parent Teachers Council and supply teachers. A short note of the discussion sessions have been attached at Appendix A.

The key themes that emerged from the discussion sessions included:

- all authorities faced difficulties in recruiting and retaining supply teachers,
- significant shortages in particular subjects and geographic areas,
- local authorities faced significant difficulties in identifying what supply teachers were available,
- there was little coordination across local authority boundaries leading to supply teachers facing multiple recruitment processes and disclosure checks if they wanted to be a supply teacher in more than one authority,
- Some local authorities were taking a proactive approach to look at better use of existing resources and internal solutions.

As set out in the remit, the Review Group considered the interaction of supply and teacher workforce planning. Both discussion sessions acknowledged that there was long-term workforce planning which built in an additional allocation for supply cover but that this may need to be reviewed. This final report will be submitted to the National Workforce Planning Group for consideration.

## Recommendations

The group stressed the importance of local authorities identifying appropriate local solutions to supply shortages, where appropriate in consultation with the LNCT.

### 1. Stability of employment

The Group noted that many newly qualified teachers were seeking more stable employment and that permanent posts offered stability to those individuals.

- Local authorities to consider the use of permanent supply options.
- Local authorities to consider alternative staffing complements

Examples of good practice identified by the Review Group include South Lanarkshire Council's Absence Cover Scheme and Glasgow City Council's Permanent Supply Pool.

### 2. Better Administration

The group noted there was a variation in the administration of supply and recommended a more streamlined approach. This would free up local authority time and resources and prevent supply teachers receiving multiple requests.

- Development of a supply teachers 'booking out' internet based system.

Such a system would allow teachers to inform local authorities of their availability.

This may be possible through SEEMIS but other options should also be considered.

- Options to address the need for supply teachers to have multiple PVGs should be identified. This would require discussions with Disclosure Scotland and local authorities. Examples of where a solution has been found to this problem is within the NHS for bank (on-call) nurses.
- Development of a recruitment framework to avoid duplication of recruitment procedures. A recruitment framework for councils to work within would save time and perhaps encourage supply teachers to be more widely available. This may provide local authorities with the reassurance needed to negate the need for multiple PVGs.
- Local authorities to keep supply opportunities open throughout the year (for those subjects, sectors and geographical areas that are experiencing shortages)
- Liaise with the GTCS in relation to better administration and registration issues.

### 3. Maximising Resources

- Local authorities to support teachers who are about to retire and wish to do supply work to join their supply list and remove any unnecessary barriers.
- Approaches should be made to training providers to develop dual qualification programme options for current teachers. This should be done on a multi authority basis if appropriate.

A good example was provided by Glasgow whereby they are working in partnership with Strathclyde University to develop dual accreditation in areas such as modern languages, drama (for current English and Music teachers) and sciences.

The GTCS are also supporting dual accreditation during teacher training and have offered to further assist councils in developing partnership work with TEs.

- Local authorities to consider offering existing permanent part-time staff supply opportunities.
- Local authorities should consider opportunities to provide supply across Council boundaries.
- A coordinated approach should take place to encourage those who have left the profession (to work in another profession) to return to teaching. This should be a targeted approach focusing on subject specific and geographical shortages. Support should be coordinated at a local, regional or national level for those returning to teaching

### 4. Supporting Supply Teachers

- The terms of each engagement should be explicit at the outset in accordance with the SNCT Code of Practice on the Engagement of Short Term Supply Teachers (Part 2, Appendix 2.8 A, SNCT Handbook).
- Supply teachers should be paid in accordance with Part 2, paragraph 1.7 of the SNCT Handbook.
- Schools to consider preparing information packs to be issued to supply teachers outlining school procedures including disciplinary procedures.
- Schools to communicate any significant areas of concern in classes allocated to supply teachers.
- Councils to consider CPD for supply teachers to address curricular changes, new qualifications and professional update.

### Reporting and monitoring of recommendations

The Joint Chairs will be asked to consider who should take forward the actions listed above. It is suggested Joint Secretaries progress the actions and the final report is issued to all LNCTs for consideration of local implications. Progress on the recommendations would be reported to the SNCT through Joint Chairs.

6<sup>th</sup> October 2014

## **Supply Teachers Review – Local Authority Discussion Session**

### Present:

Aberdeen City Council  
Argyll and Bute Council  
East Lothian Council  
Glasgow City Council  
North Lanarkshire  
South Lanarkshire Council  
West Dunbartonshire Council

### Apologies:

Highland Council  
Aberdeenshire Council

The group discussed and considered common issues relating to the availability and management of supply. A number of key points and issues were raised. The points noted below are not an exhaustive list and should be considered in conjunction with the survey responses received to the supply questionnaire issued to authorities in June 2014. Suggestions to overcome these issues or innovative approaches that local authorities are already using or piloting have been set out below.

The group noted all authorities faced difficulties in recruiting and retaining supply teachers.

Suggestions for consideration to address the issue:

- Permanent supply teachers to be recruited  
e.g. South Lanarkshire's Secondary School Absence Cover Scheme where a supply teacher is placed within a particular school. This offers job security for the teacher, one place of work and access to all CPD opportunities. It provides the school with supply cover as required from a known individual.  
e.g. Glasgow City Council's permanent supply pool approach. Teachers remain in this pool for 2 years and are then offered a permanent post.
- Returners to teaching - There is potentially a group of people within local communities with a teaching qualification that could be supported back into the

profession. It may be worthwhile exploring any action required at a local, regional or national level e.g. press 'advertorial' campaign, provision of local 'reintroduction/welcome back' courses with peer support etc.

- Professional update - It was suggested that there may be an issue with Professional Update for returners. This will be picked up in the discussion with the GTCS.
- Local authorities to support teachers who are about to retire to join their supply list and remove any unnecessary barriers e.g. extended interview and recruitment.
- Local authorities to keep recruitment opportunities open throughout the year (for areas where supply cover is needed)
- Local authorities considering closer working arrangements regarding management of supply lists.
- Multiplicity of PVG for supply staff – might be worth a discussion with PVG policy leads

The group expressed the difficulties faced in knowing what supply teachers were available.

Suggestions for consideration to address the issue:

- Development of a national 'booking out' system where teachers would indicate if/when/where they were available. This would free up local authority staff time and resources and prevent teachers receiving a number of requests. This could potentially be developed through SEEMIS.

The group expressed the shortage of supply teachers for particular secondary subjects e.g. STEM subjects, home economics, drama.

Whilst it is recognised that this will be picked up in Workforce planning discussions, there were some suggestions as to how this might be overcome at a local level:

- Closer working with teacher education institutions through local partnership arrangements to provide qualification/courses to enable dual accreditation to allow subject specific teachers to teach other appropriate subjects e.g. English teachers teaching drama.
- More innovative timetabling and use of IT to expand subject choices and allow teachers to teach more pupils e.g. between two schools (this could also alleviate some geographical/rural shortages).

13<sup>th</sup> October 2014

## **Supply Teachers Review –Discussion Sessions**

### Association of Head Teachers and Deputes Scotland School Leaders Scotland

The group discussed and considered common issues relating to the availability and management of supply. Much of the issues mirrored those discussed at the Local Authority Discussion Session.

The group raised concerns around the reality and perception of the role and value of Supply Teachers including pay (however there was an acknowledgement that restoring supply pay rates to pre-2011 levels is unlikely to encourage teachers back) and the ability of teachers to get on supply lists.

The group suggested longer term consideration around workforce planning and the distribution of training places had to be considered e.g. more training places in the North/North East Scotland or less in the central belt. This would fall within the remit of the Workforce Planning Group.

The group identified that many of those teachers who would be on a supply lists were being used to cover maternity, flexible working arrangements etc. There are a significant number of teachers covering temporary, backfill posts.

The group identified that supply teachers were being used for teachers to attend CfE courses. This should reduce as CfE develops.

The group were supportive of any support that could be developed locally, regionally and nationally to support those wanting to return to the profession. The group suggested the GTCS would have contact details for those who were still registered but currently not teaching and suggested contact could be made using that route.

The group noted that in most Councils supply lists were managed at a corporate level and this could lead to timescales delays e.g. recruitment and any system/database that could be developed at a national level to assist with the management of supply.



The group noted that the multiple PVGs (and associated costs) required for a teacher to be on more than one supply list may act as a barrier for some teachers. The group considered if 'partnership agreements' between authorities may overcome some bureaucratic burdens.

The group discussed the merits and difficulties around recruitment incentives e.g. could probationers be offered a 1 year permanent contract in schools/geographical areas that needed teachers following their training year.

### The City of Edinburgh Council

The focus of this discussion was to understand the use of an agency service for the management of supply.

Edinburgh Council confirmed they use of an external agency for the management of their supply list e.g. contacting supply teachers on a daily basis. The teachers are employees of the Council not of the agency – paid and recruited by the Council etc.

The external contract forms part of a much larger Council wide contract.

This model works similar to Councils that manage supply list centrally e.g. 2 dedicated staff that call (or text) those on the supply list.

Schools have the option to contact known supply teachers directly before seeking assistance from the agency (schools should contact the agency to inform them to avoid duplication).

The agency are currently securing teachers for around 70-80% of requests (around 100 bookings per week, up to 150 at peak times).

Edinburgh Council face the same challenges that were identified at the local authority discussion session namely large list of teachers but significantly less available, difficulties securing cover for disadvantages or outlying schools.

### General Teaching Council Scotland

The discussion focused on understanding any potential barriers that professional update may cause for the recruitment and retention of supply teachers and opportunities where the GTCS could assist to address some of the current shortage.

The GTCS also highlighted that the shortage of supply teachers (and permanent teachers) could partly be addressed through initial teacher training provision e.g. distant learning and courses being taught within local authority or colleague facilities rather than solely at university locations.

The GTCS noted that as professional update required a school to support a supply teacher through the professional update (including signing it off) then this assisted the teacher with professional development and improved the perception of their value.

The GTCS noted there was a high number of individuals registered with the GTCS that were not teaching and the GTCS would be willing to support activity to contact these

individuals with information on routes to returning to teach e.g. via Teaching for Scotland Magazine.

National Parents Forum  
Scottish Parent Teachers Council

The group highlighted that parents were generally unaware of how supply teachers are managed or used within schools.

Parents groups noted that supply issues surrounding the primary and secondary sector should be considered separately. They highlighted concerns around teachers not qualified in a specific subject having to teach that class for periods of time (particularly in the senior phase).

The group felt that permanent supply options could be explored further.

The group questioned what work had been progressed through the Workforce Planning Group and suggested better communications on this work would be welcomed.