

National Assembly for Wales
Children, Young People and Education
Committee

Inquiry into Supply Teaching

December 2015

Cynulliad
Cenedlaethol
Cymru

National
Assembly for
Wales



The National Assembly for Wales is the democratically elected body that represents the interests of Wales and its people, makes laws for Wales and holds the Welsh Government to account.

An electronic copy of this report can be found on the National Assembly's website:
www.assembly.wales

Copies of this report can also be obtained in accessible formats including Braille, large print; audio or hard copy from:

Children, Young People and Education Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
CF99 1NA

Tel: 0300 200 6565
Email: SeneddCYPE@assembly.wales
Twitter: @SeneddCYPE

© National Assembly for Wales Commission Copyright 2015

The text of this document may be reproduced free of charge in any format or medium providing that it is reproduced accurately and not used in a misleading or derogatory context. The material must be acknowledged as copyright of the National Assembly for Wales Commission and the title of the document specified.

National Assembly for Wales
Children, Young People and Education
Committee

Inquiry into Supply Teaching

December 2015

Cynulliad
Cenedlaethol
Cymru

National
Assembly for
Wales



Children, Young People and Education Committee

The Committee was established on 22 June 2011 with a remit to examine legislation and hold the Welsh Government to account by scrutinising expenditure, administration and policy matters encompassing: the education, health and wellbeing of the children and young people of Wales, including their social care.

On 22 January 2014, the Assembly agreed to alter the remit of the Committee to include Higher Education. This subject will continue to be included in the remit of the Enterprise and Business Committee, with both committees looking at Higher Education from their particular perspectives. The Committee was previously known as the Children and Young People Committee.

Current Committee membership:



Ann Jones (Chair)
Welsh Labour
Vale of Clwyd



Angela Burns
Welsh Conservatives
Carmarthen West and South
Pembrokeshire



Keith Davies
Welsh Labour
Llanelli



Suzy Davies
Welsh Conservatives
South Wales West



John Griffiths
Welsh Labour
Newport East



Lynne Neagle
Welsh Labour
Torfaen



David Rees
Welsh Labour
Aberavon



Aled Roberts
Welsh Liberal Democrats
North Wales



Rhodri Glyn Thomas
Plaid Cymru
Carmarthen East and Dinefwr



Simon Thomas
Plaid Cymru
Mid and West Wales

The following Member was also a member of the Committee during this inquiry:



Bethan Jenkins
Plaid Cymru
South Wales West

Contents

1. Chair’s Foreword	5
2. The Committee’s Key Conclusions and Recommendations	7
3. Introduction	11
The Committee’s Inquiry	11
The Committee’s approach	12
Survey.....	12
Information from Teachers and Supply Teachers.....	13
The National Contract for Supply Teachers	13
New Welsh Government Guidance.....	13
4. Overall conclusions – Committee Evidence	15
Alternative models for supply teaching	16
Committee view	17
5. Overall conclusions – Guidance on Effective Management of School Workforce Attendance	18
Committee consultation on the Guidance.....	19
Committee view	20
6. The use of supply teachers	21
Planned and unplanned absences	21
Sickness absence	22
Impact of the new Guidance	24
Committee view	25
Newly Qualified Teachers	26
Impact of the new Guidance	29
Committee view	29
7. Local authorities and Regional Consortia oversight of Supply Cover	31
The National Framework Agreement and guidance for local authorities and consortia.....	32
Impact of the new Guidance	33

Committee view	34
8. Pupil outcomes and behaviour.....	36
Impact of the new Guidance	38
Committee view	39
9. Continuing Professional Development (CPD).....	41
New Technologies for CPD and the on-line passport.....	43
CPD for Newly Qualified Teachers	44
CPD in School Development Plans.....	46
CPD and the Role of the EWC	47
Mandatory CPD for all teachers	47
Impact of the new Guidance	48
Committee view	48
10. Performance Management.....	51
Impact of the new Guidance	52
Committee view	52
11. Supply agencies and quality assurance.....	54
Employment issues.....	55
Impact of the new Guidance	55
Committee view	56
12. Welsh Medium.....	57
Impact of the new Guidance	59
Committee view	59
Annex 1 – Witnesses.....	60
Annex 2 – List of written evidence.....	62
Annex 3 – Summary of the Consultation on Effective Management of School Workforce Attendance Guidance.....	64

1. Chair's Foreword

1. Supply teaching is an essential part of the education system. While teacher absence is inevitable, it must be a common goal to help ensure that where cover teaching is required it can be delivered effectively, and is of the highest standard, in order to provide pupils with continued quality learning.
2. The many challenges and difficulties in meeting the high expectations for supply teaching have been explored in three recent reports produced by the Wales Audit Office, Estyn and the Assembly's Public Accounts Committee. While the Committee very much welcomed the Reports, and the work undertaken, concerns were still being raised by stakeholders, parents and pupils. The Committee therefore wanted to explore this further, building on work already undertaken, and engaging with those most directly affected by the issues being raised, including pupils, teachers and supply teachers themselves.
3. The Committee was particularly keen to learn about whether the use of supply teachers affected pupils, and if it did, what impact it has. The Committee undertook surveys for young people and for parents and carers, which attracted almost 1,500 responses. We are extremely grateful to those who took the time to respond, as this provided a clear picture of how supply teaching is viewed by those on the receiving end.
4. The views expressed in the survey responses, and from teachers and supply teachers, enhanced the inquiry and provided the Committee with a balance against which to consider the wider evidence from stakeholders. It was clear that many of the views received expressed personal experience. While this helped the Committee gain an understanding of how individuals are affected, the Committee was keen to ensure that the inquiry remained focussed on the systems and practices in place for the delivery of supply teaching. The Committee did not attempt to gauge the quality of teaching and the report reflects that.
5. During the course of this inquiry, many issues were raised, some linked, others isolated. The clear view presented in evidence was that many of these issues could be ameliorated if there were closer arrangements between the employers of supply teachers and those with responsibility for providing school education. A view that was shared widely across those giving evidence.

6. Our overarching recommendation calls on the Welsh Government to look at a range of options for the employment of supply teachers, including cluster arrangements operated by local authorities or through a national body. The Committee believes this is vital step forward, but recognises that this is likely to be a longer term goal, with the current contract for supply teachers due to run until August 2018.

7. The Welsh Government's new guidance on Effective Management of School Workforce Attendance, which was published in July, may help towards resolving some of the issues identified in this inquiry. It is important to note that evidence quoted in this report was received prior to the guidance being published. The Committee was, however, keen to ensure that the new Guidance was considered fully as part of the inquiry and took additional evidence on it. This report therefore includes reference to the Guidance, together with the views of stakeholders, and how the Guidance impacts on the Committee's earlier findings.

2. The Committee's Key Conclusions and Recommendations

Recommendation 1: The Welsh Government should start work to design a new model for the employment of supply teachers. In making this recommendation the Committee acknowledges that the current contract runs until August 2018, but calls on the Welsh Government to start work now to ensure that the new system is in place in readiness. *Page 17*

Conclusion 1: The Committee agrees with the Welsh Government's proposal to request a further thematic review by Estyn, at which time the effectiveness of the Guidance can be assessed. *Page 20*

Recommendation 2: In advance of any further thematic review by Estyn, the Welsh Government should continue to work with stakeholders to ensure that the Guidance is as robust and effective as it can be. *Page 20*

Recommendation 3: The Committee recommends that the Welsh Government should commit to reporting back to any future responsible Committee on the outcome and impact of the guidance following Estyn's review in 2016/17. *Page 20*

Conclusion 2: The Committee notes that the intention of the new guidance is to provide for more consistent and comparable data. This should help gain an understanding of the reasons for teacher absence, which can then help in reducing sickness absence and the need for supply cover. *Page 26*

Recommendation 4: While the Committee acknowledges the introduction of the new Guidance, the Welsh Government must take additional steps to help simplify the system for supply cover. *Page 26*

Recommendation 5: The Welsh Government should undertake research immediately to establish (a) whether there is an increased use of supply teachers in disadvantaged areas, and (b) the cause of any increase. *Page 26*

Recommendation 6: The Welsh Government should work with schools to ensure that they develop targets for monitoring absence, as set out in the new Guidance, that are based on both the data they have collected and on data from comparable schools. *Page 26*

Recommendation 7: The Welsh Government should consider urgently the implications for NQTs who are used as supply teachers, to enable them to be able to fully demonstrate their attainment of professional teacher standards.

Page 30

Recommendation 8: The Welsh Government must ensure that clear direction is provided to local authorities and consortia on their role in relation to the use of supply teachers. This is particularly relevant to the quality of teaching and the impact this has on standards in schools. The Welsh Government may wish to revise the Guidance on Effective Management of School Workforce Attendance to help achieve this.

Page 35

Recommendation 9: The Welsh Government should commission research into the effects of supply teaching on pupil outcomes, with particular reference to disadvantaged areas, and the link to pupil behaviour.

Page 40

Recommendation 10: The Welsh Government should ensure that the Guidance on Effective Management of Absence includes a greater role for local authorities or regional consortia oversight in a school's use of supply teachers in relation to the quality of teaching and impact on standards.

Page 40

Recommendation 11: The Welsh Government must provide clarity on how the New Deal and School Development Plans can be used to positively support the CPD needs of supply teachers, particularly those on shorter-term contracts.

Page 50

Recommendation 12: The Welsh Government should promote the importance of face-to-face CPD alongside online learning within its CPD strategies. This should be done across the board, but with specific focus on CPD for supply teachers.

Page 50

Recommendation 13: The Welsh Government should explore the potential for mandatory CPD, including the potential to establish annual CPD requirements to maintain registration, as has been piloted by the GTC for Scotland.

Page 50

Recommendation 14: The Minister must set out clearly his vision for the Education Workforce Council in developing CPD, with particular reference to supply teachers.

Page 50

Recommendation 15: The Welsh Government should work directly with supply agencies to look at the potential to refresh essential elements of training, including the potential for increasing the provision of CPD during school holidays.

Page 50

Recommendation 16: The Welsh Government should ensure that Estyn, as part of its review of the new Guidance, should consider whether (or not) the statement in the guidance relating to "a school's provision for supporting professional development..." has had the unintended consequence of schools employing a series of short term staff where a longer term option may have been more appropriate.

Page 50

Recommendation 17: The Welsh Government should work with supply agencies to help ensure that performance management is provided for all supply teachers, not just those who are underperforming.

Page 53

Recommendation 18: The Welsh Government must work with stakeholders to build a more robust system for providing feedback on the performance of supply teachers. The Minister should consider whether the new Guidance could be adapted to include a greater role for local authorities or regional consortia in supporting performance management of short-term supply teachers.

Page 53

Recommendation 19: The Welsh Government should consult with agencies and supply teachers to consider whether the establishment of a Wales-specific accreditation or kite mark for supply teachers would improve quality assurance, and should work to establish such a kite mark if appropriate.

Page 56

Recommendation 20: The Welsh Government should ensure that the new Guidance includes a clearer explanation on the rules for using umbrella companies (the Swedish derogation) to ensure this does not have a negative impact on the quality or provision of supply teachers or on the CPD responsibilities of an agency.

Page 56

Recommendation 21: As part of its request to Estyn to undertake a further thematic review of cover arrangements in 2016/17, the Welsh Government should include the issue of supply teaching through the Welsh medium.

Page 59

Recommendation 22: As part of the recommended research into the effect of supply teaching on pupil outcomes (see recommendation 9), there should be specific reference to the outcomes for pupils in Welsh Medium settings.

Page 59

3. Introduction

8. In September 2013, the Wales Audit Office and Estyn, working in collaboration, published reports relating to the issue of supply teaching in Wales.

- *Covering Teacher Absence* produced by the Wales Audit Office (WAO) looked at the efficiency and value for money of human resource arrangements to reduce and cover teacher absence at school and local authority level;
- *The impact of teacher absence* produced by Estyn focussed on the impact of teacher absence on learners and on classroom provision and on how schools manage the impact of teacher absence.

9. The National Assembly for Wales' Public Accounts Committee also undertook a short inquiry on covering teachers' absence and published its [report](#) in May 2014, making 14 recommendations.

The Committee's Inquiry

10. In December 2014, the Children, Young People and Education Committee (the Committee) agreed to undertake an Inquiry into Supply Teaching (the inquiry). The Committee's clear goal was to build on work that had already been undertaken, taking account of the recent reviews, and to focus on specific areas where concerns were still being raised.

11. The terms of reference for the Committee therefore agreed to undertake an inquiry into supply teachers in Wales, with particular reference to:

- the prevalence in the use of supply teachers on both a planned and unplanned basis;
- the circumstances in which supply teachers are used (including who uses them; the circumstances when are they used; the types of learning activities which take place under the supervision of supply teachers; whether they are qualified to teach relevant subjects);
- the impact on the outcomes for pupils as a result of the use of supply teachers (including any impact on pupil behaviour);
- the Continuous Professional Development of supply teachers and the potential impact of the National Professional Learning Model;
- performance management for supply teachers;

- whether local authorities and regional consortia have sufficient oversight of the use of supply teachers;
- local and regional variation in the use of supply teachers;
- supply agencies and quality assurance;
- any specific issues relating to Welsh medium education.

The Committee's approach

12. During its inquiry, the Committee heard oral evidence from:

- NUT Cymru;
- UCAC;
- WLGA and Local Education Authorities;
- NASUWT;
- Professor Ken Jones and Peter Thomas, University of Wales Trinity Saint David;
- Education Workforce Council (then GTCW);
- New Directions;
- Teaching Personnel;
- ATL Cymru;
- Minister for Education and Skills.

13. The schedule of oral evidence sessions is attached at Annex 1. The Committee also issued a consultation and invited key stakeholders to submit written evidence to inform the Committee's work. A list of the consultation responses is attached at Annex 2.

14. In addition, the Committee was extremely keen to hear the views of those most directly affected. This included pupils, their parents/carers, teachers (including Head teachers) and supply teachers themselves.

Survey

15. Two surveys were created with the aim of targeting children and young people of school age, and parents and carers of children of school age. Participants were asked a range of questions about whether the use of supply teachers affects pupils, and if it does what impact it has. Participants were also asked their thoughts on lessons that may be covered by a supply

teacher, what sorts of things are learned during those lessons and how they are different from lessons with their usual teacher.

16. In total, 1486 responses were received, this included 929 responses from children and young people, and 557 responses from parent and carers. The results of the survey are published alongside this report.

Information from Teachers and Supply Teachers

17. As part of the written consultation, a total of 14 responses were received from teachers/Head teachers. 12 responses were received from supply teachers.

18. The Committee also held two private evidence sessions, one with a panel of three Head/Deputy Head teachers and a second with three supply teachers, to explore further the evidence that had been received.

The National Contract for Supply Teachers

19. Members heard that the National Procurement Service has put in place a three-year contract for supply staff which was awarded to New Directions. The contract came into effect on 1 August 2015, and runs for three years (with an option to extend for a further twelve months).

20. All 22 Local Authorities have signed up to use the Framework Agreements that the National Procurement Service has put in place. As such it is clear that Local Authorities will expect schools within their areas to use the framework to meet their supply teacher requirement - this would mean going through New Directions. It is important to note, however, that schools are not bound by the framework and are free to use any method of supply to cover their lessons.

21. Throughout this inquiry, the Committee was conscious that the National contract might limit some of the action that could be taken, particularly in the short term. The Committee's recommendations reflect this.

New Welsh Government Guidance

22. In his written evidence to the Committee¹, the Minister for Education and Skills referred to new guidance on managing teacher attendance that was being developed. The Minister had confirmed that since the publication of the reports by Estyn, WAO and PAC, the Welsh Government had "taken a

¹ [CYPE\(4\) 15-15 - Paper 1](#)

number of proactive steps to address their various recommendations, including the development of the Effective Management of School Workforce Attendance Guidance (the Guidance)".

23. During his attendance at Committee the Minister committed to sharing the Guidance in draft with the Committee prior to its publication.² The Minister did this by letter to the Committee on 23 June.³ At that time, the Committee had finished taking evidence as part of its inquiry, however the Committee felt it was vital that the Guidance was fully considered as part of the inquiry.

24. The Committee therefore committed to seeking the views of stakeholders on the Guidance and that those views would be fed in as part of the Committee's inquiry.

² Oral evidence, 20 May 2015, [Record of Proceedings](#)

³ [CYPE\(4\) 19-15 - Paper to Note](#)

4. Overall conclusions – Committee Evidence

25. The main issues identified in evidence provided to the Committee related to the following key areas:

- the use of supply teachers as a consequence of teacher illness and associated issues of absence management for permanent teachers;
- support for Newly Qualified Teachers who are working as supply staff;
- the potential effect on pupil outcomes as a result of the use of supply teachers;
- CPD and performance management;
- the role of local authorities and regional consortia in oversight of supply teachers;
- supply agencies and quality assurance;
- a shortage of adequately trained Welsh-medium supply teachers.

26. These areas are explored in greater detail throughout the report, and the Committee has made specific recommendations / conclusions in each of these areas that should be considered in the short to medium term.

27. However, the evidence also suggests that many of the issues identified could be ameliorated if there were closer arrangements between the employers of supply teachers and those with responsibility for providing school education, for example cluster arrangements operated by local authorities or a national body. Such arrangements could potentially support NQTs; provide support for CPD and performance management; provide quality assurance and help with the Welsh medium shortage.

28. Although he did not state a view on moving towards a national or regional model, the Minister suggested that he had considered alternative models for supply teaching, and that longer term changes had been considered. In his oral evidence, the Minister said:

“...there are things that perhaps will need to be looked at in this period of three or four years in terms of agencies. We’ve sort of gone along with an England-and-Wales model for the moment and we have signed on the dotted line. It will be my responsibility to try and make sure that that system works to its very best in that extended period.”⁴

⁴ Oral evidence, 20 May 2015, [Record of Proceedings](#)

And:

“I do have a preferred model in my head, and a lot of people wouldn’t be very surprised what it looked like, but I’m very keen that we have a consensual approach towards getting there. And, actually, we will learn a lot through this transformation over the next three years that will enable us to have a system, whether it contains the supply agencies are not, at the end of that, when we get to renew those contracts or not. We will have learned a lot in the meanwhile about exactly what kind of system we will need.”

Alternative models for supply teaching

29. UWTSD suggested that part of the problem with what we have at present is that local authorities did not maintain their pools. When UWTSD originally did research 10 to 15 years ago, they found that local authorities did not have readily available information on who they had in their supply pools. They suggest that this has led to a drift in responsibility from local authorities.

30. UWTSD went on to say that they would probably propose a regional workforce model which was co-ordinated and led by Welsh Government.

31. The Education Workforce Council suggested an alternative model for supply teachers where a local authority, regional consortia or national body would employ NQTs for a cluster of schools to act as supply teachers. They said:

“we do think that there could be real wins by local authorities employing supply teachers to cover a cluster of schools, because it would aid the pupil continuity in terms of learning, the CPD opportunities could then come onstream, and these newly qualified teachers could have more substantive posts. It works in other industries, but it does seem to be something that could work here in Wales.”⁵

32. Many respondents suggested that local authorities should maintain their own list or pool of supply teachers. However, while agreeing, the NUT state that local authorities may lack the capacity and will to maintain supply lists.

⁵ Oral evidence, 6 May 2015, [Record of Proceedings](#)

33. The Committee considered models elsewhere, and received a Research Brief on the model in place in Northern Ireland and Scotland.

Committee view

34. The Committee is concerned that the current model for supply teaching does not appear to be working effectively. The Committee believes that consideration should be given to reforming the way in which supply teachers are employed, including the possible use of cluster arrangements or employment through a national body as just two examples. In doing so, the Welsh Government should give careful consideration to national models elsewhere, such as Northern Ireland.

35. The Committee acknowledges that the existing contract will need to be honoured and as such any new system could not become live until at least August 2018. However, the Welsh Government should start work now to design a new model for the employment of supply teaching, to ensure that the new system is in place in readiness for the end of the current contract.

Recommendation 1: The Welsh Government should start work to design a new model for the employment of supply teachers. In making this recommendation the Committee acknowledges that the current contract runs until August 2018, but calls on the Welsh Government to start work now to ensure that the new system is in place in readiness.

5. Overall conclusions – Guidance on Effective Management of School Workforce Attendance

36. As outlined earlier in this report, in both written and oral evidence to the Committee, the Minister for Education and Skills referred the Effective Management of School Workforce Attendance guidance (the Guidance) that was being developed by Welsh Government.

37. The Minister had confirmed that since the publication of the reports by Estyn, WAO and PAC, the Welsh Government had taken a number of proactive steps to address their various recommendations, including the development of the Guidance, which in his oral evidence⁶ the Minister stated would be a “transformative parcel of guidance”.

38. In his written evidence to the Committee the Minister confirmed that the guidance was being drafted in conjunction with local authorities and with engagement with key stakeholders from the sector.⁷ The Minister stated that the Guidance would provide “a framework to improve the cover of lessons to minimise disruption to children’s learning; ensure value for money for education; and to assist in reducing teacher absence”.

39. On 23 June, the Minister wrote to the Committee, providing a copy of the Guidance in draft, seeking the Committee’s views. The Minister had earlier said that he “would appreciate very much the committee’s input and view into what that guidance really needs to emphasise...”.⁸

40. The Committee responded to the Minister on 2 July 2015. The Committee was concerned that the draft Guidance did not go far enough in some important areas, including:

- the absence of meaningful, consistent comparative sickness absence data; and
- local authority oversight of the use of supply teachers.

41. Given the potential importance of the Guidance, the Committee agreed to consider the guidance more formally as part of the ongoing inquiry, seeking the views of stakeholders. The Committee urged the Minister to delay publication of the guidance until the issues identified have been clarified.

⁶ Oral evidence, 20 May 2015, [Record of Proceedings](#)

⁷ [CYPE\(4\) 15-15 - Paper 1](#)

⁸ Oral evidence, 20 May 2015, [Record of Proceedings](#)

42. The Minister responded to the Committee's concerns on 9 July 2015, expanding on the detail in the guidance.⁹ The Minister confirmed that it remained his intention to publish the Guidance prior to the end of the summer term. This is so that all key stakeholders can use the guidance to inform their policies and practices for the beginning of the academic year.

43. The Minister also reassured the Committee that in developing the Guidance, he had engaged with a wide range of stakeholders, who had provided both oral and written feedback. Additionally, Welsh Government officials had held meetings with practitioners, local authorities, union representatives and the Wales Audit Office to inform the guidance.

44. The Minister, in his written evidence, also stated that:

“The Welsh Government will be making a request to Estyn for a further thematic review to be undertaken, in 2016/17, on cover arrangements and to assess the effectiveness of the guidance. This will provide the opportunity for the new guidance to be fully developed and embedded for a whole academic year before the study takes place.”¹⁰

Committee consultation on the Guidance

45. The draft Guidance stated that its purpose was to “provide guidance on how absence can be effectively managed to ensure that priority is given to maintaining the continuity of learning”. The Committee consulted key stakeholders to establish views on whether the guidance achieved this stated purpose.

46. There were six responses to the Committee's consultation on the published guidance. These were from: Estyn; the National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers (NASUWT); New Directions; the Education Workforce Council (EWC); and two responses from supply teachers.

47. In general most of those who responded were happy with the guidance. There were some common themes in most of the responses, in particular relating to the Swedish derogation and continuing professional development.¹¹ These issues are explored further, and separately within the

⁹ [Letter from Minister for Education and Skills, 9 July 2015](#)

¹⁰ [CYPE\(4\) 15-15 – Paper 1](#)

¹¹ The Swedish Derogation relates to the rights to equal pay of an agency worker when employed on a permanent basis by an umbrella company.

relevant sections of this report. A summary of the responses is included at Annex 3.

Committee view

48. In general, and taking into consideration the views of stakeholders, the Committee acknowledges that the Guidance goes some way to addressing some of the issues identified in the Estyn, WAO and PAC reports. However, the Committee believes that it is too soon to tell if the Guidance will achieve its stated purpose and have a positive impact on the effective management of teacher absence.

49. Where the guidance has the potential to address issues identified in the Committee's inquiry, this has been highlighted within relevant sections of this report, and reflected in the Committee's conclusions and recommendations.

50. The Committee agrees with the Welsh Government's proposal to request a further thematic review by Estyn on cover arrangements, at which time the effectiveness of the Guidance can be assessed. However, the Committee also believes that the Welsh Government should work with stakeholders on an ongoing basis, to ensure that the Guidance is as robust and effective as it can be.

51. The Committee also believes that the Welsh Government should commit to reporting back to any future Responsible Committee on the outcome and impact of the guidance following Estyn's review in 2016/17.

Conclusion 1: The Committee agrees with the Welsh Government's proposal to request a further thematic review by Estyn, at which time the effectiveness of the Guidance can be assessed.

Recommendation 2: In advance of any further thematic review by Estyn, the Welsh Government should continue to work with stakeholders to ensure that the Guidance is as robust and effective as it can be.

Recommendation 3: The Committee recommends that the Welsh Government should commit to reporting back to any future responsible Committee on the outcome and impact of the guidance following Estyn's review in 2016/17.

6. The use of supply teachers

Planned and unplanned absences

52. The Committee has heard evidence that there was an extensive use of supply teacher cover in schools. However, although the majority of responses agreed that there was a prevalence of the use of supply teachers, there was no consensus on whether this was mostly on a planned or unplanned basis.

53. The Register of Qualified Teachers in Wales, maintained by the Education Workforce Council (EWC), includes almost 5000 supply teachers in Wales, the vast majority of whom are active. This figure was confirmed by the ECW in its written evidence to the Committee.¹²

54. The EWC suggest that supply teachers are used “heavily” on both a planned and unplanned basis. Between March and May 2014, the EWC undertook a survey on behalf of the Welsh Government, to collect detailed information relating to the work and experiences of supply teachers in Wales.¹³ The survey was returned by 2,162 supply teachers (representing 41.4% of those registered at that time). Some of the key findings identified in the survey were that:

- the most common reasons for schools to require supply teachers was to cover for sickness absence (41%) or for permanent teachers to undertake professional development (32.9%);
- supply teachers in Wales were predominantly either (a) in the early part of their career and undertook supply work largely due to a lack of permanent or temporary long term contracts, or (b) towards the end of their teaching career or retired from a substantive teaching post;
- the average number of days worked by a supply teacher was 2.7 per week, however it was evident that those in the early part of their teaching career sought to work for as many days as possible (average 3.5 days per week);
- more supply teachers worked in the primary phase (nearly 60%).

55. It was reported by Estyn that there is a higher than average use of supply teachers in areas of deprivation where there are greater difficulties in recruiting teachers, particularly in maths and physics.

¹² Written evidence, Education Workforce Council (formerly GTCW), [ST17](#)

¹³ [GTCW Supply Teacher Survey - Summary Report](#)

56. In oral evidence, New Directions who have the national contract for the provision of supply teachers, estimated that in terms of their “day-to-day cover” 30 per cent of that would be required to cover temporary sickness absence.¹⁴

57. The Committee received evidence from University of Wales Trinity Saint David (UWTSD), who have undertaken research into the use of supply teachers in Wales. UWTSD expressed a strong view that the arrangements for supply cover were very complex. In oral evidence they said:

“It’s very complex. It’s complex in terms of each local authority, it’s complex regionally and it’s complex locally, from school to school. What our evidence is showing is that complexity is causing issues in terms of how we manage the coherence of this.”¹⁵

58. The evidence from UWTSD also suggested that there was a reduction in the use of planned absence, such as CPD, but this was linked to the fact that the release of teachers from the classroom itself had reduced. However, that did not mean that the number of supply teachers required for planned absence for other things, particularly sickness absence, wasn’t increasing.

59. UWTSD also stated that changes to teacher employment arrangements resulting from reduced school budgets had an impact on the use of supply teachers and the nature of work they are required to undertake (often being required to cover classes outside their trained areas of expertise).

Sickness absence

60. There was wide ranging agreement that in order to manage sickness absence appropriately and effectively, there needed to be an understanding of the underlying reasons behind the causes of and reasons for absence – whether planned or unplanned.

61. Evidence received from teaching unions suggested that, in increasing numbers, the reasons for sickness absence could be stress and increased pressure on teachers. The NASUWT also said that there was likely to be a greater use of supply teachers in areas of disadvantage “because ... teachers working in the schools in areas of disadvantage are under greater stresses and strains”. They suggested that this could be down to pupil behaviour in many of those schools.

¹⁴ Oral evidence, 6 May 2015, [Record of Proceedings](#)

¹⁵ Oral evidence, 26 March 2015, [Record of Proceedings](#)

62. The majority of those providing evidence stated that robust management policies within schools may help reduce absence. There was mixed evidence about the use of return to work interviews following periods of sickness absence. There was some suggestion that return to work interviews were not being undertaken, while others questioned the robustness of such interviews.

63. NASUWT said that return to work interviews should be done in a supportive way, and that they agreed with the fact that we need to look at what had caused the illness. However, they did not believe enough was being done on that, particularly in terms of stress-related illness. In their view, schools may fight shy of wanting to know about what's caused the stress for the teacher, because, sometimes, that stress is caused by the way in which that teacher is managed.

64. It was however clear from the majority of witnesses, and respondents to the Committee's consultation, that data in this area was limited, and as such it was difficult to paint an accurate picture of the reasons for absence.

65. In his written evidence, the Minister stated that the Welsh Government has a commitment to publish teacher absence data annually at a local authority level to help enable any potential trends to be identified.¹⁶ The data will be available to form part of the people management monitoring, reviewing and challenge processes with local authorities and regional consortia.

66. When asked about the issue of data collection in relation to teacher absence, the Minister in his oral evidence said that this was a very complex situation and that the picture was not clear to anyone.¹⁷ This included variations in data collection between the 22 local authorities. The Minister went on to say that it was his intention to try and simplify data collection as much as possible to get clarity.

67. The Minister outlined steps that had been taken to improve data collection, which included asking regional consortia to develop performance data templates which include data on sickness absence; and he reiterated

¹⁶ [CYPE\(4\) 15-15 – Paper 1](#)

¹⁷ Oral evidence, 20 May 2015, [Record of Proceedings](#)

the commitment to move to annual reporting of sickness absence data at a local authority level. The Minister said:

“what I’m attempting to put in place is, first of all, better collection of better data, but then immediate and regularised use of those data to keep on interrogating the question of how we can improve the situation for the professional and, of course, for the young person.”¹⁸

68. The Minister added:

“...as I mentioned, there is that variation across the 22 local authorities. That has to stop. If we’re going to better understand and work with the trade unions and work with local authorities to try and further drive down the absence levels, we have to understand exactly what the absence levels consist of.

“It is worth saying that the number of sick days taken by teachers in Wales is coming down year on year.

“...we need to improve the reporting, and those performance data templates for headteachers that I was talking about should break open that problem around the categorisation of absence.”

69. The Minister referred to the new Guidance on Absence Management that the Welsh Government was developing, that the Minister hoped would be a transformative parcel of guidance, which will make absolutely clear, exactly what is being demanded of whom in terms of reporting of data and interrogation of that data.

Impact of the new Guidance

70. The new Guidance sets out the roles of stakeholders in data collection in a number of key areas, including:

- governing bodies should be given benchmarking data and accurate data, gathered at a local level;
- the headteacher should work with the local authority HR provider to analyse sickness absence data to make informed decisions, paying particular attention to trends;
- the local authority to collate and disseminate individual and benchmarked data;

¹⁸ Oral evidence, 20 May 2015, [Record of Proceedings](#)

- regional consortia are developing a performance data template for headteachers to use to report to governors on absence issues.

71. The new guidance also states that schools should consider the development of targets based on the data that they have collected along with data from comparable schools.

72. Estyn commented that the guidance reiterates the importance of monitoring and analysing absence data, but the guidance may lead schools to believe that there is a requirement for them to have a target in relation to workforce absence within their School Development Plan. While this may be an important target for some schools, it would be inappropriate for schools where staff attendance is good and absence management is successful.

73. In relation to absence management policies and procedures, Estyn said that the guidance clarifies the requirements and provides a firmer foundation upon which school leaders can build.

Committee view

74. The Committee is concerned at the lack of meaningful, consistent, comparative data with regard to teacher absence. The Committee notes that the intention of the new guidance is to provide for more consistent and comparable data. This should help gain an understanding of the reasons for teacher absence, which can then help in reducing sickness absence and the need for supply cover.

75. However, as already highlighted, the Committee believes that it is too soon to tell if the Guidance will achieve its stated purpose and have a positive impact on the effective management of teacher absence.

76. The Committee is also concerned that the evidence received overwhelmingly pointed to a system for supply cover, including data collection, which is overly complex. While the Committee acknowledges the introduction of the new Guidance, the Welsh Government must take additional steps to help simplify the system.

77. The increased use of supply teachers in disadvantaged areas was a major concern to the Committee. While there was evidence presented that suggested a link to stress related sickness absence, there was no clear data to support this. The Committee notes the new Guidance will help in the collection of meaningful data, however believes that the Welsh Government should undertake research immediately to establish (a) whether there is an

increased use of supply teachers in disadvantaged areas, and (b) what the cause of any increase is.

78. The committee agreed with the aims of the new Guidance in relation to the increased use of benchmarking data, including the collection of benchmarking data at a local level, and the importance of schools to benchmark themselves against each other and reduce absence and the need for cover.

79. The new guidance also states that schools should consider the development of targets for monitoring absence that are based on the data that they have collected along with data from comparable schools, and the Committee believes that the Welsh Government should take this further and work with schools to ensure this happens.

Conclusion 2: The Committee notes that the intention of the new guidance is to provide for more consistent and comparable data. This should help gain an understanding of the reasons for teacher absence, which can then help in reducing sickness absence and the need for supply cover.

Recommendation 4: While the Committee acknowledges the introduction of the new Guidance, the Welsh Government must take additional steps to help simplify the system for supply cover.

Recommendation 5: The Welsh Government should undertake research immediately to establish (a) whether there is an increased use of supply teachers in disadvantaged areas, and (b) the cause of any increase.

Recommendation 6: The Welsh Government should work with schools to ensure that they develop targets for monitoring absence, as set out in the new Guidance, that are based on both the data they have collected and on data from comparable schools.

Newly Qualified Teachers

80. The Committee heard a number of concerns relating to Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) who are working as supply teachers. These concerns centred on the difficulty in working towards the attainment of practicing teacher standards, and the provision of appropriate CPD. The issues relating to CPD are covered later in the report.

81. It was estimated that NQTs make up around 30 per cent of supply teachers, which equates to approximately 1,500 NQTs. The Education Workforce Council (EWC) said that over 80 per cent of those NQTs working towards Practising Teacher Standards are on fixed-term or supply contracts.

82. There was a clear view from a number of stakeholders that work as a supply teacher made it difficult for NQTs to meet the Practising Teacher Standards. The Education Workforce Council in their oral evidence confirmed that the induction arrangements for the practising teacher standards changed in September 2012, and that was the first opportunity where a supply teacher could work towards those standards.¹⁹

83. The EWC went on to confirm that since that date 2,120 people had started the induction and had completed it. Of those, only 3.8 per cent had done that through a supply teacher route only. The EWC said:

“The bottom line, and the challenge for those people, is to undertake work that actually counts towards those practising teacher standards, because very often the work they’re being called into schools to do is of a cover, supervisory nature.”²⁰

84. The Committee heard that there were situations, where as a supply teacher, you could not undertake particular work, or demonstrate that you had met your professional standards. A clear example of this was that as a supply teacher, you cannot go on a school trip, but NQTs need to go on a school trip to demonstrate that particular standard.

85. ATL in their oral evidence estimated that because of the particular issues they faced, over 20 per cent of NQTs were leaving the teaching profession. ATL highlighted another potential issue for NQTs, in that to go through their NQT year and meet the requirements, each of the teaching sessions they do has to be a minimum half-day session. However, many NQTs are actually given only ad hoc lessons to cover, which does not count as time towards their NQT year.

86. In their written response, the NASUWT provided figures from a survey undertaken in March and April 2014 on the experiences of supply teachers across Wales and England. In that survey, 82% of NQTs stated that they have not received the appropriate level of induction support to which they are

¹⁹ Oral evidence, 6 May 2015, [Record of Proceedings](#)

²⁰ Ibid

entitled and of those qualifying in the last two years, 70% said they did not receive the appropriate levels of support.

87. The EWC suggested that local authorities or schools in a cluster arrangement could employ NQTs to act as supply teachers. In oral evidence the EWC said:

“...there would seem to be an opportunity to appoint NQTs on a more permanent basis to cover a cluster of schools. You see it in other industries: you see it in banking, you see it with doctors and you see it with pharmacists, for example. They could be appointed, maybe on a two-year contract or a three-year contract, specifically to cover a bunch of schools. What you see there is that you get continuity in the pupil learning. You can also then start to look at arrangements in terms of CPD for those people and other opportunities in terms of reasonable rates of pay as well.”²¹

88. The Minister has provided both written and oral evidence to the Committee relating to the provision of CPD to NQTs and how this can be improved / delivered more effectively. This is covered in the relevant section of this report specifically covering the issue of CPD. Unfortunately, the Minister did not provide specific or direct evidence relating to the issues identified by stakeholders around the use of NQTs as supply cover, and the difficulties this can cause in meeting the professional teacher standards.

89. When asked about the potential loss of over 20 per cent of NQTs, because of the lack of support, the Minister said that the NQT supply workforce was one that needs tailor-made support and provision. He went on to say:

“As Furlong is developed, we will begin to see the rise of—. I’m still not clear what we should call these schools, but the idea of the training school, which will then act as a hub for professional development within a cluster of schools, and all of this being co-ordinated by the consortia, of course. So, there should be a much more ‘handleable’ system in terms of making sure that, for an NQT who’s in the supply system at the moment, it doesn’t mean that they’re in the doldrums, but that they have a switched-on schools

²¹ Oral evidence, 6 May 2015, [Record of Proceedings](#)

network, which is very aware of its duties to CPD, and for that group of professionals as much as any other.”²²

90. In his oral evidence, the Minister also said that supply teachers, particularly NQTs, need to be seen as much a part of the workforce as any other teacher. He added:

“...they are 100 per cent part of the professional teaching workforce in Wales, and the workforce council, I think, will be critical in terms of making sure that they have a level playing field in terms of provision, access, opportunity and expectation”.²³

Impact of the new Guidance

91. The Guidance on Effective Management of School Workforce Attendance does not make any specific provisions in relation to Newly Qualified Teachers. The Guidance does, however, state that where the length of absence can be anticipated, such as maternity leave or secondment, a fixed term contract will normally be the most appropriate option to cover the absent member of staff. The guidance states that:

“Teachers employed on fixed term contracts of a term or longer will be subject to the Teacher Appraisal Regulations (Wales) 2011 and therefore, the head teacher will ensure appropriate performance management is undertaken, giving assurance that cover is of a high quality. Newly qualified teachers employed in this way will also have the opportunity to complete substantial parts of their induction period in the same school.”

Committee view

92. The Committee is extremely concerned to hear evidence that the lack of support for Newly Qualified Teachers was resulting in such a high percentage leaving the profession. The issues relating to CPD are covered later in this report, however, it is clear that there are issues relating to the nature of their employment that need to be urgently addressed.

93. The Committee believes that there must be adequate/improved access to support for supply teachers who are Newly Qualified Teachers in order for them to be able to fully demonstrate their attainment of professional teacher standards.

²² Oral evidence, 20 May 2015, [Record of Proceedings](#)

²³ Ibid

94. The suggestion from the EWC that local authorities or schools could employ NQTs to act as supply teachers in a cluster arrangement is in line with the Committee's overarching recommendation about the future system for supply teaching. The Committee recognises that the National Framework Agreement will run until 2018, but would urge the Welsh Government to consider the implications for NQTs urgently, and assess if any changes can be made to the way in which they are used as supply teachers, in order to help them demonstrate their attainment of professional teacher standards.

Recommendation 7: The Welsh Government should consider urgently the implications for NQTs who are used as supply teachers, to enable them to be able to fully demonstrate their attainment of professional teacher standards.

7. Local authorities and Regional Consortia oversight of Supply Cover

95. The Committee received a wide range of evidence relating to the role that local authorities and regional consortia could or should play in the oversight of the use of supply teachers. Although some views varied, there was general agreement that current arrangements were ineffective.

96. A number of supply teachers and teaching unions suggested that there was little or no oversight by local authorities or regional consortia into the use of supply teachers. Estyn stated that local authorities' role varied, but is generally insufficient and current arrangements are ineffective.

97. In their written response, UWTSD said that local authorities and consortia did not have sufficient oversight of the use of supply teachers.²⁴ They stated that there has been a lack of understanding of the role and there has been no obligation and very little policy to ensure that local authorities or consortia play a part in this.

98. The NASUWT stated that, as they have no employer function, there should be no role for regional consortia. However, they did suggest that as the overarching employer of school staff, local authorities should have a role. The NUT state that in many areas, local authorities have "washed their hands" of the situation, delegating responsibility to schools.

99. ASCL stated that the primary and critical relationship should be between school leader and service provider. The two local authorities who responded stated that oversight of supply staff rests with individual schools and that it is not the business of local authorities.

100. The Catholic Education Service said that it is difficult to envisage how local authority staff can develop further oversight except to require more substantive reports on staff absence. Similarly, Estyn recommended that local authorities provide schools with comparative data on teacher absence rates and seek feedback and record the quality of supply staff.

101. Teaching Personnel state that the focus of local authorities and consortia should be aimed at ensuring that schools are properly assessing the quality of the service used, the ability of supply staff and the level of support provided.

²⁴ Written evidence, University of Wales Trinity Saint David, [ST18](#)

102. New Directions stated that local authorities have insight into supply teachers which is covered by the All Wales agreement. The consortia have no involvement but they could take a lead by offering free courses in the school holidays.

The National Framework Agreement and guidance for local authorities and consortia

103. All 22 Local Authorities have signed up to use the Framework Agreements that the National Procurement Service has put in place. As such, those local authorities would expect their schools to use the framework to meet their supply teacher requirement. In relation to the All Wales Framework Agreement, the Minister's official said:

“The local authorities have a role in relation in this. Obviously, the schools manage the direct employment, but local authorities also have a responsibility in relation to employment and it is the local authorities that have signed up to this procurement by the national procurement service. So, it's a responsibility on them to be advising their schools as to how they best cover absence, and how they get the best quality teachers and make sure that that's sustainable.”²⁵

104. In his written evidence, the Minister stated that the National Model for Regional Working – Revitalising People Management in Schools sets out the requirement for regional consortia business plans to detail how local authority HR support will be provided to schools.²⁶ It sets out the requirement for schools and governing bodies to take part in training and development programmes to assist them in meeting their people management responsibilities.

105. The Minister also referred to the Effective Management of School Workforce Attendance guidance, which he stated would set out the role and responsibilities of local authorities and consortia in relation to the effective cover of lessons, supply teachers and supply agencies. In oral evidence, the Minister's officials said:

“it is the responsibility of the local authorities to give HR advice in relation to the management of absence, and then it is for the school to implement. It will be something that we'll spell out in relation to the absence guidance that's coming out. We know that where absence management is dealt with effectively, it can help and it can

²⁵ Oral evidence, 20 May 2015, [Record of Proceedings](#)

²⁶ [National Model for Regional Working – Revitalising People Management in Schools](#)

reduce it and, in certain areas, there is effective management at the moment. But this guidance will try to create that parity across the piece, so that people understand what the general rules are in relation to absence and how they manage it..."²⁷

Impact of the new Guidance

106. The new guidance sets out roles and responsibilities for both local authorities and regional consortia, and how these fit into the overarching system. In relation to supply teachers, the new Guidance suggests that local authority HR should contribute to:

- Evaluating the arrangements for managing supply cover budgets, e.g. the local authority's mutual fund or the purchase of private absence insurance, to ensure value for money for the school, and schools across the local authority;
- Ensuring that there is a collaborative approach between procurement and education colleagues in negotiating and monitoring the individual user agreements between the local authority and the preferred supplier under the terms of the Framework Agreement;
- Reviewing the contract framework arrangements with other supply agencies to ensure value for money and explore opportunities to achieve savings and/or an improved service to schools.

107. The guidance also suggests that regional consortia are expected to utilise data on a range of issues, including the school's workforce absence information to inform school improvement initiatives. But also to consider the impact of strategies for school improvement on the amount of supply cover used by schools and the consequent risk this poses to the quality of teaching and learning.

108. The new guidance states that supply agencies should meet local authorities regularly to discuss the contract and provide measurable data such as individual school usage, spend, reason for cover and satisfaction rates.

²⁷ Oral evidence, 20 May 2015, [Record of Proceedings](#)

109. In their response to the Committee's consultation on the guidance, Estyn state that "there is significant emphasis on the expectation for schools and local authorities to monitor expenditure, frequency and amount of absence and the quality and cost of supply staff contracts, there is little focus on monitoring the quality of teaching and learning during staff absence and its impact on pupil standards".

Committee view

110. It was clear from the evidence received that there was general agreement amongst stakeholders that local authorities and consortia had little or no oversight of the use of supply teachers. The Committee was particularly concerned by the statement from Estyn that the role of local authorities was generally insufficient and current arrangements are ineffective.

111. The Committee agrees that there has been a lack of understanding of the role of both local authorities and regional consortia, which has been magnified by a lack of policy to ensure that local authorities or consortia play a part in this.

112. When considering the draft Guidance on Effective Management of Workforce Attendance, the Committee hoped in particular that the proposed guidance might provide clarity and direction in relation to local authority oversight – a view that was fed back to the Minister prior to the Guidance being published.

113. While the Committee notes the new Guidance attempts to set out the role and responsibilities of local authorities and consortia in relation to the use of supply teachers, the Committee remains of the view that the Guidance does not suggest a clear role:

- for local authorities in monitoring schools' implementation of their attendance management policies; or
- for local authorities or consortia in the oversight of schools' use of supply teachers.

114. The Committee believes that to help ensure the most efficient and effective use of supply teachers, there must be clear direction on role of local authorities and consortia. While this is relevant across all aspects of supply teaching, it is particularly important in relation to the quality of teaching and the impact this has on standards in schools.

Recommendation 8: The Welsh Government must ensure that clear direction is provided to local authorities and consortia on their role in relation to the use of supply teachers. This is particularly relevant to the quality of teaching and the impact this has on standards in schools. The Welsh Government may wish to revise the Guidance on Effective Management of School Workforce Attendance to help achieve this.

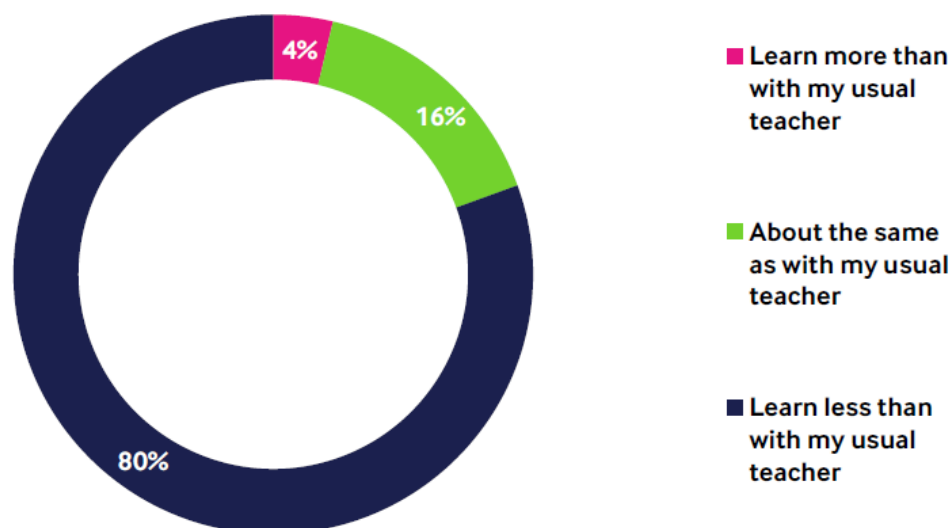
8. Pupil outcomes and behaviour

115. There has been little conclusive evidence from professionals that the use of supply teachers has a negative effect on pupil outcomes, although the Committee's survey of young people found that 80 per cent of those who responded believed that they learnt less with a supply teacher than with their usual class teacher. On this question, 159 comments were received that pupils learn less as they don't take the lesson seriously and mess around during the lesson. A further 27 responses indicated that the level of learning was dependent on the ability of the supply teacher to discipline and control the class.

Question eight: How much do you think you learn when you have a lesson covered by a supply teacher? Please explain your answer.

Total number of responses: 864

- Learn more than with my usual teacher: **3.7% (32)**
- About the same as with my usual teacher: **15.7% (136)**
- Learn less than with my usual teacher: **80.5% (696)**



Source: Committee survey on the use of Supply Teachers

116. Estyn said that there is a “difficulty of allocating a specific cause to a particular effect”. They suggested that although the progress of pupils in individual lessons wasn't as quick as it should have been, this did not necessarily have an overall effect on pupil results.

117. ATL suggested that any lack of continuity in teachers may upset pupils, whatever the quality of the supply teacher, and where teachers are being used as cover supervisors, this may have an impact on standards.

118. In their evidence, the University of Wales Trinity St David (UWTSD) say that a greater prevalence of the use of supply teachers in disadvantaged areas meant that schools had little choice over the quality of the supply teacher that they used, which then placed additional pressures on the achievements of disadvantaged pupils. However, they said that there are questions about finding valid data on supply teachers rather than relying on anecdotal evidence.

119. In his oral evidence, the Minister said that data in this area was sparse and that if there is a disproportionate level of absence within a school, then that was the issue of concern.²⁸ The Minister's official suggested that any increase in the use of supply teachers in disadvantaged areas may be linked to recruitment which may be particularly difficult in these areas.

120. The Minister also said during his oral evidence that:

“...he was content to listen to suggestions about research into whether the use of supply teachers had a disproportionate effect on pupil outcomes.”²⁹

121. The Committee received evidence to suggest that the use of supply teachers had a negative impact on pupil behaviour. In 2013 Estyn reported that often cover supervisors or supply teachers would tend to ask pupils to write on sheets of paper rather than in their normal workbooks and, in most instances, that work would not get marked or followed up, resulting in a “time-filling activity rather than real learning”.

122. Estyn's report stated that:

“As a result of this undemanding work, learners demonstrate behaviour that is more challenging. They are more likely to engage in low-level disruption and this has a further negative impact on their achievement and progress in lessons. Nearly all pupils who took part in our survey indicate that they do not behave as well in a class with a

²⁸ Oral evidence, 20 May 2015, [Record of Proceedings](#)

²⁹ Ibid

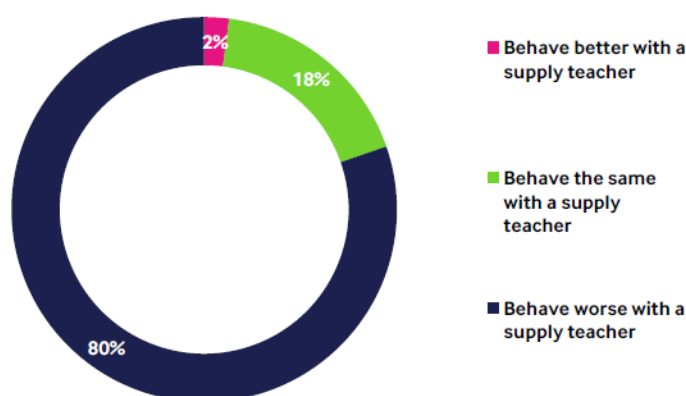
supply teacher or cover supervisor when compared with their usual teacher.”³⁰

123. The Committee’s survey of young people also found that 80 per cent of those who responded believed that pupils behaved worse when taught by a supply teacher.

Question 10: Do you think that you and the other pupils in your class behave the same when they have a supply teacher?

Total number of responses: 863

- Behave better with a supply teacher: **2.0% (18)**
- Behave the same with a supply teacher: **17.6% (152)**
- Behave worse with a supply teacher: **80.3% (693)**



Source: Committee survey on the use of Supply Teachers

Impact of the new Guidance

124. While the Guidance does not contain specific measures relating to pupil outcomes, its purpose is to help ensure that absence can be effectively managed, and to ensure that priority is given to maintaining the continuity of learning. The Guidance itself states that “effective management of staff absence is fundamental to ensuring positive learner outcomes”.

125. The Guidance therefore as a whole aims to ensure positive learner outcomes. It is however, as already outlined in this report, too soon to tell what impact the Guidance will have generally, or specifically in relation to pupil outcomes.

³⁰ [The impact of teacher absence](#), September 2013

126. However, in their response to the Committee's consultation on the guidance, Estyn state that there is little focus on monitoring the quality of teaching and learning during staff absence and its impact on pupil standards.

Committee view

127. The Committee is concerned that evidence received from Estyn, and the responses to the survey, indicate that the use of supply teachers has a negative impact on pupil behaviour, and that this has a further negative impact on their achievement and progress in lessons. However, the Committee also notes the suggestion from Estyn that although the progress of pupils in individual lessons may not be as quick as it should have been, this did not necessarily have an overall effect on pupil outcomes.

128. The Committee agrees with the suggestion from ATL Cymru that any lack of continuity in teachers may upset pupils, whatever the quality of the supply teacher. However the Committee concludes that the use of teachers as cover supervisors, could have more of a negative impact on standards and outcomes.

129. The Committee was also concerned that some evidence received during the inquiry suggested that there was a greater prevalence of the use of supply teachers in disadvantaged areas. While the Committee notes that there is a lack of data to support this suggestion, it is essential that any increased use of supply teaching should not place additional pressures on the achievements of disadvantaged pupils.

130. The lack of valid, reliable data in this area makes it very difficult to accurately assess the impact of supply teaching on pupil outcomes, or whether this impact is greater in disadvantaged areas. The Committee believes that research should be undertaken in order to gain an understanding on the effects of supply teaching on pupil outcomes, including the effect on behaviour.

131. The Committee notes that the purpose of the new Guidance is to help ensure that absence can be effectively managed, and to ensure that priority is given to maintaining the continuity of learning aims to ensure positive learner outcomes. However, the Committee is concerned that the Guidance contains little focus on monitoring the quality of teaching and learning during staff absence and its impact on pupil standards, and believes that

local authorities or regional consortia should have a greater role in this respect.

Recommendation 9: The Welsh Government should commission research into the effects of supply teaching on pupil outcomes, with particular reference to disadvantaged areas, and the link to pupil behaviour.

Recommendation 10: The Welsh Government should ensure that the Guidance on Effective Management of Absence includes a greater role for local authorities or regional consortia oversight in a school's use of supply teachers in relation to the quality of teaching and impact on standards.

9. Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

132. The provision of CPD to supply teachers has been one of the main areas of concern expressed by almost all those who gave evidence to the Committee. The main issues raised suggested that there is little access to CPD for supply teachers and that meeting the cost is a major problem. It was also evident that the CPD available to supply teachers does not necessarily reflect the Welsh Government's current priorities.

133. The Committee heard from a number of school based staff and supply teachers that there was little CPD available to them. This view was shared by teaching unions. A number of those responding stated that supply staff on longer term contracts should be more able to access CPD undertaken by their school.

134. The cost of CPD was identified as a major issue. One supply teacher suggested that supply staff cannot afford to pay for courses or to lose a day's pay to attend a course. This fact was also recognised by Estyn, who in their report state:

“Most [supply teachers] are able to arrange their own training or access courses offered by private companies, although this would mean losing a day's pay. They feel that they are missing out on opportunities offered to colleagues with permanent contracts.”³¹

135. Teaching Personnel stated that it is also necessary to consider training as the personal responsibility of supply staff and their need to be pro-active. However, one supply teacher stated that they would be happy to pay for training but there are difficulties in finding suitable courses.

136. EWC said that in their experience some agencies did provide CPD, but there were many that didn't. EWC emphasised that it was necessary to “get more out of what we currently have because it's very clear that supply teachers do not get the same opportunities, CPD-wise, that substantive teachers do”. When asked about the potential use of on-line learning, EWC went on to say:

“There are some things available at the moment, such as Hwb and Learning Wales, that I think are underutilised. So, I think there are

³¹ [The impact of teacher absence](#), September 2013

opportunities there to make these facilities that are there more readily available and known to supply teachers.”³²

137. The NUT stated that while there may be some training provided by agencies, the training did not reflect the Welsh Government’s national priorities. These views were echoed by UCAC who said that there was “no training worth mentioning” in the Foundation Phase or the Literacy and Numeracy Framework.

138. In their oral evidence, New Directions said that while they offer CPD to their supply teachers, there is no compulsion for them to attend.³³

139. Estyn state that training often only focuses on challenging behaviour and general teaching. They suggested that teachers’ knowledge of national priorities may decline over time. Teaching Personnel and the NUT also said that it was difficult to see how supply teachers would benefit from the National Model of Professional Learning.

140. There are instances where schools include supply teachers in their whole-school CPD, but this does not answer the needs of supply teachers who need a different set of skills to be able to engage pupils very quickly in order to have high-impact lessons.

141. The ASCL suggested that training should be provided for by the agencies as employers and the EWC said that at least one agency provides full CPD to its workers. However, the City of Swansea Council queried whether such training was of the standard that local authorities or the Welsh Government would want.

142. In his written evidence, the Minister stated that supply teachers form a significant and important part of the teacher workforce in Wales and, like all teachers, it is necessary to ensure they have the appropriate skills to provide high quality teaching.³⁴ The Minister went on to suggest that, as in many other professions, sharing professional practice is often the most effective means of supporting and improving practice.

143. The Minister’s written evidence also stated that “the New Deal for the Education Workforce offers all education practitioners, including supply teachers an entitlement to access professional learning opportunities.

³² Oral evidence, 6 May 2015, [Record of Proceedings](#)

³³ Ibid

³⁴ [CYPE\(4\) 15-15 – Paper 1](#)

Underpinning this is learning activities in the schools but also providing access to online materials and resources”.

144. The Minister suggested that it was for the Welsh Government, working with New Directions to see what can be done in relation to essential elements of training and whether they could have a blended learning approach. In relation to supply teachers losing a day’s pay to attend CPD, New Directions in their written evidence confirmed that, however funded, training during the school holidays would help develop supply teachers.

145. While the Minister expressed some concern about the provision of CPD, he stated that this was not something that the Government could or should direct and it should be profession led.

146. Again, although he did not consider it an area for Government Minister’s to intervene, the Minister said he could envisage a situation of cross-subsidy whereby teachers make financial contributions to the EWC to enable support for those with greater need, such as supply or returning teachers.

New Technologies for CPD and the on-line passport

147. In both written and oral evidence, the Minister has provided detail about the importance of new technologies in helping to deliver CPD, and confirmed that the Welsh Government would be relying on new technology to deliver a “good proportion” of CPD in future.

148. In a Written Statement on the New Deal for the Education Workforce, the Minister announced that the EWC would take the lead on the development of a Professional Learning Passport which will “underpin practitioners’ career pathways and will support them to record, reflect on and identify the most appropriate professional learning opportunities so that they can develop and deepen their practice at every stage of their career”.³⁵

149. The EWC explained that previously, NQTs had a paper portfolio kept by their school, so the (then) General Teaching Council for Wales linked the portfolio to the register, from September 2014. This included supply teachers. This work is expanding with an initial version of the passport in

³⁵ [Written Ministerial Statement on the New Deal for the Education Workforce \(16.03.15\)](#)

place from September 2015 and enhanced version from September 2016. The EWC said:

“over the coming years, the usage of the passport will increase, but it is a good initiative, through the new deal, and it’s a tremendous opportunity for people to record their CPD in one place and reflect on it. As I say, because of the transience of supply teachers, I think it will be probably more useful for supply teachers than any other group, actually.”³⁶

150. In oral evidence, the Minister referred to the new professional learning passport and how this could help improve continued learning. The Minister said:

“...critically, that professional learning passport, which all professionals will be expected to keep up to snuff, will be a challenge that needs to be there in the system to ensure that the professional sets off and continues on a journey of professional development, whether they’re in supply or whether they’re in another situation. I think we need to think carefully about how the workforce council, in particular, is enabled to make that happen.”³⁷

151. The Minister went on to say that supply teachers who are having difficulty accessing CPD should be able to contact a dedicated person in the EWC who will ensure that their professional passport is of good quality and developing year on year.

152. In their evidence, UWTSD said in relation to the proposed Passport:

“...what we’ve seen—again, in other countries, where they’ve started this, and, to some extent, carried it on—is that the only time it actually continues is when it’s part of a mandatory professional updating or professional review process. If there is no mandate to do it, it drifts and people won’t continue with it.”³⁸

CPD for Newly Qualified Teachers

153. The report has already highlighted some of the issues facing Newly Qualified Teachers who are working as supply teachers. Over 80 per cent of NQTs working towards Practising Teacher Standards are on fixed-term or

³⁶ Oral evidence, 6 May 2015, [Record of Proceedings](#)

³⁷ Oral evidence, 20 May 2015, [Record of Proceedings](#)

³⁸ Oral evidence, 6 May 2015, [Record of Proceedings](#)

supply contracts. It is a challenge for them to undertake work that actually counts towards those practising teacher standards.

154. Estyn's report highlighted this as a problem, stating that:

“Supply teachers who have recently joined the profession feel particularly disadvantaged because they are not always able to complete their NQT induction period. If they are employed for at least 0.4 for a whole term, they can join the recently introduced masters in education programme (MEP). Even so, their knowledge and understanding of national policies and priorities may decline over time, and make it harder for them to secure a permanent post. These newly-qualified teachers feel that they will become less competitive in the market for full-time teaching posts.”³⁹

155. One supply teacher suggested that NQTs are disadvantaged, when working as a supply teacher, as induction standards for those working as supply are the same as permanent teachers (for example regularly discussing pupil progress with parents) which is difficult for supply teachers. The NASUWT survey of supply teachers found that 82 per cent of NQTs had not received the appropriate level of induction support. Estyn stated that NQTs working as supply teachers feel disadvantaged as they are unable to finish their induction. However, the GTCW stated that supply teachers working towards Practising Teacher Standards are provided with an external mentor.

156. In relation to NQTs, the Minister said that “supply teachers, especially NQTs, need to be seen as much a part of the workforce as other teachers and the EWC will have a critical role in ensuring equality of access, opportunity and expectation”. The Minister also said:

“As Furlong is developed, we will begin to see the rise of—. I'm still not clear what we should call these schools, but the idea of the training school, which will then act as a hub for professional development within a cluster of schools, and all of this being co-ordinated by the consortia, of course. So, there should be a much more 'handleable' system in terms of making sure that, for an NQT who's in the supply system at the moment, it doesn't mean that they're in the doldrums, but that they have a switched-on schools

³⁹ [The impact of teacher absence](#), September 2013

network, which is very aware of its duties to CPD, and for that group of professionals as much as any other.”⁴⁰

CPD in School Development Plans

157. School Development Plans are required to set out the schools’ provision for addressing professional learning for staff, including those temporarily at the school. The Welsh Government guidance on School Development Plans states:

“The SDP must contain details of the school’s provision for addressing the professional development needs of all staff, including leadership development, in relation to achieving the school improvement priorities. These provisions also include staff temporarily placed at the school which will include short- and long-term supply teachers. Schools’ provision for supporting the professional development of these practitioners will naturally reflect the nature of their tenure and deployment.”⁴¹

158. In oral evidence, the Minister’s official said:

“The role of the head teacher under New Directions, in terms of the school development plan, has to be to identify the developmental need of the individual staff within his or her school. That has to be measured on a basis of what are the whole-school needs, because, in the end, the needs of the teachers have to be geared to the needs of the pupils. This would apply to supply teachers also.”⁴²

159. In considering this issue, the Committee’s view was that the School Development Plans were clearly focused upon permanent staff within a school rather than supply teachers. It would add a large resource and demand on headteachers if they are required to assess individual supply teachers coming in on a regular basis. When asked about how the Minister would ensure that a supply teacher would receive that assessment, performance management and support under the SDP, the Minister’s official said:

“...that has to be part and parcel of the same process with the school development plans, and Estyn will expect to see that in there. Now, what that may lead to is a different model of what we might not call

⁴⁰ Oral evidence, 20 May 2015, [Record of Proceedings](#)

⁴¹ [School Development Plans – Welsh Government Guidance October 2014](#)

⁴² Oral evidence, 20 May 2015, [Record of Proceedings](#)

supply teaching, eventually, further along the line. As we start rolling out curriculum changes and the new deal, we may well be looking at clusters of schools—I think somebody mentioned this morning—actually employing teachers.”⁴³

CPD and the Role of the EWC

160. The Minister made a number of references to the role of the Education Workforce Council in relation to CPD. In Oral evidence⁴⁴, the Minister confirmed that, at present the EWC does not have sufficient resources, capacity and ability or competency within the Education (Wales) Act 2014⁴⁵ to prepare the desirable programme of professional development. However, he said that he did not want to dictate how the EWC would look in three to four years’ time. The level of resource would be enhanced, but there may be a need to consider a contributory principle.

161. The Committee had received very little direct evidence from other stakeholders relating to the role of the EWC and requested further information from the Minister on his vision for the role of the EWC. In a letter to the Committee, the Minister’s response confirmed that:

“There needs to be a wider informed debate between Government, employers, practitioners, education workforce unions, and the EWC on how we support all education professionals, including supply teachers. This debate needs to take place within the context of the Welsh Government’s wider education reform programme, most notably the far-reaching curriculum changes proposed in Professor Donaldson’s report *Successful Futures*. The outcome of this debate will potentially have an impact on the roles and responsibilities, and therefore resources, of the EWC.”

Mandatory CPD for all teachers

162. A number of organisations including UWTSD, New Directions, and the ATL suggested that they would support mandatory CPD for all teachers.

163. The EWC said that there would need to be a legislative change if CPD was to be mandatory and that if this was the case, CPD would have to be quality assured and available consistently throughout the country, and not just a case of noting hours of CPD undertaken.

⁴³ Oral evidence, 20 May 2015, [Record of Proceedings](#)

⁴⁴ Ibid

⁴⁵ [Education \(Wales\) Act 2014](#)

164. UWTSD have proposed a Certificate to Practice with a requirement of CPD being mandatory for teachers not on full-time or permanent contracts so that training is available for national, local and school priorities. The EWC also pointed out that in other professions, individuals are required to meet minimum annual CPD requirements to maintain registration – this has been piloted by the GTC for Scotland.

165. In his evidence, the Minister said that he would prefer setting an expectation for teachers to undertake CPD rather than making this mandatory.⁴⁶ The Minister stated that there were ways for the Government to set goals and ambitions “that would not involve writing into law some kind of compulsion for a professional to be doing a certain thing at a certain time”.

Impact of the new Guidance

166. The new Guidance states that:

- supply teachers should be able to evidence the same professional learning as set out in the New Deal. Resources will be available to all practitioners through Learning Wales;
- supply agencies should review the needs of individuals;
- school Development Plans must contain detail on the needs of staff which includes those placed temporarily at the school including short-term and long-term teachers.

167. Estyn’s response on the new Guidance refers specifically to the statement that “*a school’s provision for supporting the professional development of these practitioners will reflect the nature of the individual’s tenure and deployment*”. Estyn is concerned that this statement could encourage schools to employ a series of short term staff where a longer term option would be more appropriate.

168. Estyn also state that there is still little guidance on how supply staff can access national training programmes.

169. The NASUWT state that the guidance is deficient in not recognising that agencies should provide high quality CPD.

Committee view

170. The difficulties associated with CPD for supply teachers was a major theme throughout the Committee’s enquiry. Although the Minister has

⁴⁶ Oral evidence, 20 May 2015, [Record of Proceedings](#)

restated his commitment that the New Deal for the Education Workforce would apply to all teachers, it is not clear from evidence how this would be delivered.

171. The issue of meeting the cost of CPD, including the potential loss of pay to supply teachers remains a great concern, and the Committee agrees with the point made by New Directions that training during the school holidays would help develop supply teachers. The Committee welcomed the Ministers commitment to working with New Directions to look at the potential to refresh essential elements of training, and believes that this should be extended to all agencies, and should include the potential for increasing the provision of CPD during school holidays.

172. The Committee welcomes the introduction of School Development Plans, and agrees that these should help deliver better training generally across the school workforce. However, it is not clear how School Development Plans will be used to consider the needs of supply teachers who are on day-to-day or shorter-term contracts, and this needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency.

173. Although there has been recognition of the potential use of on-line learning, particularly the introduction of the Professional Learning Passport, there has also been recognition from those giving evidence, including the Minister, of the importance of sharing professional practice and direct observation. The Committee therefore calls on the Minister to promote the importance of face-to-face CPD alongside online learning.

174. The suggestion of mandatory CPD for teachers was supported by many, but not by the Minister. The committee accepts that there may be potential difficulties in establishing a statutory approach for CPD, but believes this is something that should be explored in greater detail by the Minister, including the potential to establish annual CPD requirements to maintain registration, as has been piloted by the GTC for Scotland.

175. The Minister spoke of an enhanced role for the EWC in developing CPD. There was, however, a lack of clarity from the Minister in how this would be achieved. The Committee therefore believes that the Minister needs to set out clearly his vision for the EWC in developing CPD, with particular reference to supply teachers.

176. The Committee acknowledges and agrees with Estyn's concerns regarding the statement in the new Guidance that *"a school's provision for supporting the professional development of these practitioners will reflect*

the nature of the individual's tenure and deployment" could have potential unintended consequence resulting in schools employing a series of short term staff where a longer term option may have been more appropriate. To monitor this, the Welsh Government should ask Estyn, as part of their review of the Guidance, to consider whether (or not) the new Guidance has these unintended consequences.

Recommendation 11: The Welsh Government must provide clarity on how the New Deal and School Development Plans can be used to positively support the CPD needs of supply teachers, particularly those on shorter-term contracts.

Recommendation 12: The Welsh Government should promote the importance of face-to-face CPD alongside online learning within its CPD strategies. This should be done across the board, but with specific focus on CPD for supply teachers.

Recommendation 13: The Welsh Government should explore the potential for mandatory CPD, including the potential to establish annual CPD requirements to maintain registration, as has been piloted by the GTC for Scotland.

Recommendation 14: The Minister must set out clearly his vision for the Education Workforce Council in developing CPD, with particular reference to supply teachers.

Recommendation 15: The Welsh Government should work directly with supply agencies to look at the potential to refresh essential elements of training, including the potential for increasing the provision of CPD during school holidays.

Recommendation 16: The Welsh Government should ensure that Estyn, as part of its review of the new Guidance, should consider whether (or not) the statement in the guidance relating to "a school's provision for supporting professional development..." has had the unintended consequence of schools employing a series of short term staff where a longer term option may have been more appropriate.

10. Performance Management

177. The Committee has heard a lot of evidence that suggests that there is no real performance management for supply teachers. Many of those providing evidence recognised the difficulties in providing performance management for supply teachers, and questioned the practicality of a system for short-term staff.

178. Much of the difficulty in managing the performance of supply staff lies in the legislative process that underpins the system. Where a teacher is employed on a fixed term basis for one school term or more, the school must undertake the performance management process as set out in its School Performance Management Policy required by the School Teacher Appraisal (Wales) Regulations 2011.⁴⁷

179. However, where a teacher is employed to provide cover for a period of less than one school term the statutory requirement to undertake a performance management process does not apply.

180. For those supply teachers on shorter-term contracts, the responsibility for performance management lies with the supply agency, through feedback gathered from the head teacher. When asked where the responsibility lay, the Minister's official said:

“The responsibility is with the supply agency in relation to their performance management, and you'd expect particularly the preferred supply agency that's been chosen, but you'd expect them all, to be able to be talking to those headteachers, those teachers involved, so that they get that feedback so as they can actually build on that performance management.”⁴⁸

181. Both New Directions and Teaching Personnel in their oral evidence confirm that they seek feedback on the performance of supply teachers.⁴⁹ However, both supply agencies stated that they rely very heavily on schools to provide that feedback. New Directions stated that they are unable to speak to all their candidates due to the numbers of staff and so they concentrate on those who are underperforming.

⁴⁷ [School Teacher Appraisal \(Wales\) Regulations 2011](#)

⁴⁸ Oral evidence, 20 May 2015, [Record of Proceedings](#)

⁴⁹ Oral evidence, 6 May 2015, [Record of Proceedings](#)

182. Estyn found that most schools do not provide enough feedback to supply teachers. Schools sometimes share feedback with the agency but the quality of the feedback is variable and not robust. Feedback appeared to be more detailed where there are concerns and so feedback tends to focus on negative aspects. Estyn also outlined that there are no formal arrangements for supply agencies to share concerns about supply teachers with the Welsh Government or EWC.

183. The EWC stated that performance management practice is variable amongst agencies and local authorities. Some agencies have well developed arrangements, but agencies or authorities may just stop using a specific supply teacher rather than deal with performance issues. They suggest that the Recruitment & Employment Confederation (REC) accreditation could become compulsory for agencies in Wales (overseen by the EWC).

184. In relation to performance management of supply teachers by New Directions, the Minister's official said:

“The contract will be managed by the national procurement service. It's not managed by us. We don't own it. But, we've already met with New Directions and we will build a relationship with them to make sure that we can feed in and that we can actually complete the loop. So, when they are talking to us about various data they've done on performance management, we can find out the richer data, feed back to the schools and feed back to them, so that we can actually get underneath some of that information and try and see where we need to intervene.”⁵⁰

Impact of the new Guidance

185. The new Guidance includes information relating to performance management and how this should be approached. The guidance does, however, concentrate on the legislative provisions, and does not offer any advice on how the performance of supply teachers on shorter term contracts could or should be managed.

Committee view

186. There are clearly recognised difficulties in providing performance management for shorter term supply teachers, however the Committee is

⁵⁰ Oral evidence, 20 May 2015, [Record of Proceedings](#)

concerned that while these difficulties are recognised, little appears to have been done to try and resolve the issues.

187. The Committee welcomes the commitment from Welsh Government to build a relationship with New Directions and to use the data on performance management to establish where Ministerial intervention may be required.

188. While the Committee accepts that the Welsh Government does not have direct responsibility for performance management, the Minister should use the relationship with New Directions to help ensure that performance management is provided for all supply teachers, not just those who are underperforming. This approach should be taken by the Minister with all supply agencies, not only New Directions.

189. The Committee strongly believes that there must be a more robust system for providing feedback on all levels, whether that is from schools, agencies or from supply teachers. The Welsh Government should consider how this could be achieved, and should look whether more could be included in the Guidance, including whether there is a greater role for local authorities or regional consortia in supporting performance management of short-term supply teachers.

Recommendation 17: The Welsh Government should work with supply agencies to help ensure that performance management is provided for all supply teachers, not just those who are underperforming.

Recommendation 18: The Welsh Government must work with stakeholders to build a more robust system for providing feedback on the performance of supply teachers. The Minister should consider whether the new Guidance could be adapted to include a greater role for local authorities or regional consortia in supporting performance management of short-term supply teachers.

11. Supply agencies and quality assurance

190. The Committee heard evidence from a number of witnesses that suggested quality assurance was difficult to measure, particularly as there was no current “quality mark” or “standard” that supply agencies were required to meet.

191. In written evidence, the Minister explained that the previous Welsh Government Quality Mark ceased in 2011.⁵¹ Following a review it was found that the scheme was limited in its ability to influence the recruitment and management practices of all supply agencies.

192. The Committee heard that supply agencies in Wales can apply for the Recruitment and Employment Confederation (REC) quality mark, Audited Education, which is the new audit scheme to provide quality assurance of recruitment agencies that supply teaching and non-teaching staff to schools, academies and education providers across England and Wales. However, the EWC told the Committee that the majority of agencies did not have this accreditation.

193. In their evidence, the EWC said:

“I think that if the decision of Wales was to move to a central body coordinating supply, part of the work of that organisation would be the quality assurance side...

“...but, in terms of the current agency model, it does seem to be an issue in terms of quality assurance. As I’ve said, we’ve gone from a dozen agencies to over 40. Only about half a dozen have REC assurance, and that’s an England-based scheme. Really, I think that if we are to continue with agencies, it would be beneficial to have a Wales-based scheme.”⁵²

194. Although they are not in favour of teaching supply agencies in general, in relation to the regulation of supply agencies, the NASUWT said that they believed there was “not enough regulation in the system” and that they believed that supply agencies could be regulated through a kite mark system.⁵³

⁵¹ [CYPE\(4\) 15-15 – Paper 1](#)

⁵² Oral evidence, 6 May 2015, [Record of Proceedings](#)

⁵³ Ibid

195. Teaching Personnel supported some form of quality assurance and New Directions agreed that some form of compulsory accreditation would raise the quality of agency provision.

Employment issues

196. The Committee heard from supply teachers that there are instances where they may be working for a supply agency, but their employer may actually be another company, or an umbrella company. It was suggested that this could have an impact on the quality and provision and on the CPD and responsibilities of an agency.

197. The Minister agreed to provide further information in respect of the use of umbrella companies. In a letter to the Committee, the Minister confirmed that:

“The Department for Education (DfE) issued guidance in March 2014 addressing a number of issues which relate only to temporary agency workers who are supply teachers. This guidance provides information about teachers employed by an umbrella organisation...

“I would like to stress that my officials have discussed this issue with New Directions who have confirmed that less than 1% of the supply teachers registered with them operate through an umbrella company. This is due to historic contractual arrangements that the teachers themselves have requested to remain within.”

Impact of the new Guidance

198. The draft guidance sets out the role of the supply agency in relation to employment checks, reviewing the professional development needs of their teachers, providing supply teachers with relevant information about the schools and meeting regularly with local authorities.

199. In their consultation reply, Estyn state that the guidance has no regard for the effect of low levels of pay for teachers employed through agencies has on their willingness to go over and above the basic expectations of a day’s work. They suggest that “it might be reasonable to expect guidance to suggest improvements to the pay and conditions of staff acquired through agencies”.

200. One supply teacher expressed disappointment that guidance seems to be encouraging schools to negotiate with agencies to get the cheapest deals.

Another supply teacher also expressed frustration that the guidance does not deal with pay and conditions.

201. Estyn state that a clearer explanation of the Swedish derogation rule (that is, the use of umbrella companies) in the Guidance would be helpful. One supply teacher suggested that the guidance seems to be encouraging the use of the Swedish derogation.

Committee view

202. The Committee was concerned about the effect of having no current “quality mark” or “standard” that supply agencies were required to meet, particularly as the majority of agencies had not applied for the Recruitment and Employment Confederation (REC) quality mark. The Welsh Government should consider whether the establishment of a Welsh quality mark would improve quality assurance.

203. The Committee acknowledges that while only a low number of supply teachers may be employed through umbrella organisations, it is important that where employment in this way this does occur, it does not impact on the quality or provision of supply teachers or on the CPD responsibilities of an agency. The Committee agrees with Estyn that a clearer explanation rules on the use of umbrella companies (the Swedish derogation) should be included in the Guidance.

Recommendation 19: The Welsh Government should consult with agencies and supply teachers to consider whether the establishment of a Wales-specific accreditation or kite mark for supply teachers would improve quality assurance, and should work to establish such a kite mark if appropriate.

Recommendation 20: The Welsh Government should ensure that the new Guidance includes a clearer explanation on the rules for using umbrella companies (the Swedish derogation) to ensure this does not have a negative impact on the quality or provision of supply teachers or on the CPD responsibilities of an agency.

12. Welsh Medium

204. The Committee has heard evidence (often anecdotal) about a general shortage of Welsh medium supply teachers and also, perhaps as a consequence of this, the deployment of Welsh medium teachers whose skills may not be adequate.

205. In their evidence, UWTSD said that they had found that Welsh medium teacher training graduates were more able to find permanent posts, so were not entering the supply pool.⁵⁴

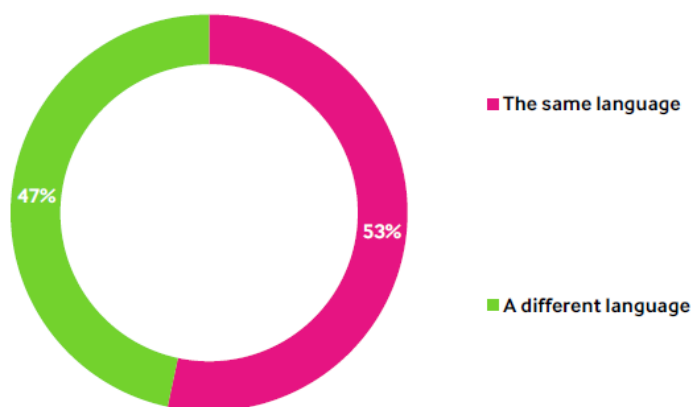
206. One of the main findings of the Estyn report suggests that “A few schools, particularly Welsh-medium schools ... have difficulty finding suitable supply teachers”.

For pupils in Welsh medium schools –

Question 11: When you have a supply teacher, do they teach you in the same language as you are used to being taught in (for that lesson)?

Total number of responses: 238

- The same language: **53.3% (127)**
- A different language: **46.6% (111)**



Source: Committee survey on the use of Supply Teachers

207. The Committee had heard evidence that supply teachers that were used as cover sometimes did not have the skills required in specific circumstances, and this included the ability to teach through the Welsh

⁵⁴ Oral evidence, 26 March 2015, [Record of Proceedings](#)

medium. When asked about the kind of information coming back to the Minister about the standard of Welsh language skills required by a particular placement that are simply not being fulfilled, the Minister said:

“the proportion of Welsh speaking supply teachers was about the same as the general teaching population. If there are issues around the way the system is working that is causing there to be a lack of clarity about exactly what we need to know here, then I’m hoping that the measures I’ve outlined will encapsulate this issue of a reasonable—well, a very good level—of Welsh language capability as something that is a strategic requirement for the workforce and for us as a country.”⁵⁵

208. He added:

“So, again, that would be looked into as part and parcel, for instance, of things like the [Estyn] thematic review [of the Managing Absence guidance].”

209. The Minister said that, to fulfil the ambitions identified by Professor Donaldson, there would need to be a huge shift in CPD (for all teachers) in relation to the Welsh language. He also said that Professor Furlong had identified:

“within the primary workforce in particular, a structural weakness in the system. We have too few subject specialists who are confident in particular subject areas in our primary schools and we have too many generalists. The delivery of a good level of Welsh language acquisition support or whatever—teaching—within a school is part and parcel of that, I think. We’ve got to set a different level of expectation around initial teacher training and we need a new system to address this through the new deal, as well.”⁵⁶

210. He also said:

“If this reform is showing us that we have a structural problem with competence in the Welsh language, not just in terms of fluency, but in terms of professional competence, then I’d be quite willing to open up discussions about how we can better address that.”⁵⁷

⁵⁵ Oral evidence, 20 May 2015, [Record of Proceedings](#)

⁵⁶ Professor John Furlong, *Teaching Tomorrow’s Teachers*, March 2015

⁵⁷ Oral evidence, 20 May 2015, [Record of Proceedings](#)

Impact of the new Guidance

211. The Guidance on Effective Management of School Workforce Attendance does not make any specific provisions in relation to the provision of Welsh medium supply teaching.

Committee view

212. The Committee was concerned to hear evidence regarding the potential lack of Welsh medium supply teachers, but acknowledges that some of the evidence received in this respect was anecdotal.

213. It is vital that an accurate picture is gained of the effect of supply teaching through the Welsh medium, to enable appropriate action to be taken if necessary. The Committee notes that the Welsh Government intends to request that Estyn undertakes a further thematic review of cover arrangements in 2016/17, and believes that Welsh medium supply issues should be considered as part of that review.

214. As highlighted earlier in this report, the Committee has recommended that the Welsh Government should undertake research on the impact of supply teaching on pupil outcomes. As part of that research, the Committee believes that there should be specific reference to the outcomes for pupils in Welsh Medium settings.

Recommendation 21: As part of its request to Estyn to undertake a further thematic review of cover arrangements in 2016/17, the Welsh Government should include the issue of supply teaching through the Welsh medium.

Recommendation 22: As part of the recommended research into the effect of supply teaching on pupil outcomes (see recommendation 9), there should be specific reference to the outcomes for pupils in Welsh Medium settings.

Annex 1 – Witnesses

215. The following witnesses provided oral evidence to the Committee on the dates noted below. Transcripts of all oral evidence sessions can be viewed in full at:

<http://www.senedd.assembly.wales/mglIssueHistoryHome.aspx?lId=1305>

12 March 2015

Name	Organisation
Meilyr Rowlands	Estyn
Catherine Evans	Estyn

18 March 2015

Name	Organisation
Owen Hathway	National Union of Teachers Cymru (NUT)
Elaine Edwards	Undeb Cenedlaethol Athrawon Cymru (UCAC)
Dr Chris Llewelyn	Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA)
Daisy Seabourne	Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA)

26 March 2015

Name	Organisation
Professor Ken Jones	University Wales Trinity Saint David
Peter Thomas	University Wales Trinity Saint David
Rex Phillips	NASUWT

6 May 2015

Name	Organisation
Hayden Llewellyn	Education Workforce Council (EWC)
Angela Jardine	Education Workforce Council (EWC)
Gary Williams	New Directions Education Limited
Derek Lefley	Teaching Personnel Ltd
Dr Philip Dixon	ATL Cymru
David Healey	ATL Cymru
Gareth Lewis	ATL Cymru

20 May 2015

Name	Organisation
Huw Lewis AM	Minister for Education and Skills
Brett Pugh	Welsh Government
Zenny Saunders	Welsh Government

Annex 2 – List of written evidence

216. The following people and organisations provided written evidence to the Committee. All written evidence can be viewed in full at:

<http://www.senedd.assembly.wales/mgConsultationDisplay.aspx?ID=163>

Organisation	Reference
School Secretary – Primary	ST 01
Head Teacher – Primary	ST 02
Head Teacher – Primary	ST 03
Supply Teacher	ST 04
Head Teacher – High School	ST 05
Supply Teacher	ST 06
Supply Teacher	ST 07
Supply Teacher	ST 08
Supply Teacher	ST 09
Deputy Headteacher – High School	ST 10
Teacher – High School & Parent	ST 11
Head Teacher – High School	ST 12
Ex Teacher – High School	ST 13
Deputy Headteacher – High School	ST 14
Science Department – High School	ST 15
Headteacher – Primary	ST 16
The General Teaching Council for Wales	ST 17
University of Wales Trinity Saint David	ST 18
Headteacher – High School	ST 19
National Union of Teachers Cymru	ST 20
Teaching Personnel	ST 21
Supply Teacher	ST 22

Organisation	Reference
Undeb Cenedlaethol Athrawon Cymru (UCAC)	ST 23
Supply Teacher	ST 24
Bridgend Federation of Head Teachers	ST 25
Catholic Education Service	ST 26
Deputy Headteacher – High School	ST 27
ATL Cymru	ST 28
Estyn	ST 29
Supply Teacher	ST 30
Welsh Local Government Association	ST 31
Sefton National Union of Teachers	ST 32
City and County of Swansea	ST 33
Torfaen County Borough Council Education Service	ST 34
NASUWT Cymru	ST 35
Supply Teacher	ST 36
Assistant Headmaster	ST 37
New Directions Education Limited	ST 38
Association of School and College Leaders, Cymru	ST 39
Valley Education Teaching Agency	ST 40
Supply Teacher	ST 41
School Governor	ST 42
School Governor	ST 43
Supply Teacher	ST 44
Supply Teacher	ST 45
Governors Wales	ST 46
Central South Consortium	ST 47

Annex 3 – Summary of the Consultation on Effective Management of School Workforce Attendance Guidance

217. Estyn provided a detailed analysis of the guidance. They said that the guidance would be useful to help schools improve their management of school workforce attendance. However, they also highlighted three specific areas where their report, the *Impact of teacher Absence* (2013), did not receive enough attention or where the guidance was not clear enough.

These were:

- limited reference to how schools support behaviour management strategies as part of CPD for supply;
- little focus on monitoring the quality of teaching and learning and the impact on pupil standards;
- little guidance on how supply staff should access to national training programmes.

218. They also suggested that:

- the guidance may lead schools to believe that there is a requirement for them to have a target in relation to workforce absence within their School Development Plan;
- it should be ensured that the statement that a school's provision for supporting the professional development of supply will reflect the nature of their deployment and tenure does not encourage schools to employ a series of short term staff where a longer term option would be more appropriate;
- the guidance provides little attention to the ways that a school can support supply teachers to not just supervise pupils or to teach subjects other than their own specialism;
- it does not emphasis strongly enough the supportive role that HR departments should play for heads and governors, especially in challenging circumstances;
- it fails to acknowledge the low levels of pay that agency teachers may receive and the impact that this may have on a supply teacher's attitude and willingness to go above and beyond their daily work. Estyn suggest that it might be reasonable for the guidance to suggest

improvements to pay and conditions of staff acquired through agencies;

- a clearer explanation of the Swedish derogation rule (which relates to umbrella companies) would be helpful.

219. The NASUWT had provided comments on the draft guidance to the Welsh Government. However, they still believed that it has shortcomings in relation to:

- school teachers pay and conditions and pension arrangements;
- appropriate employment policies of supply teacher agencies with regard to allegations of misconduct;
- the use of the Swedish derogation;
- agencies providing CPD;
- acknowledging that unplanned absences are foreseeable and that staffing structures should have been remodelled to allow for cover for absences;
- the school funding methodology does not provide a sound basis for the effective management of staff absences.

220. They are concerned that the guidance will be used by some to pressure teachers into returning to work from illness too early or not take time off when needed.

221. The Education Workforce Council said that the guidance is clear and should meet its stated aims. In general, their comments related to factual inaccuracies within the guidance, for example, where legislation is quoted that has been revoked. They also state that they see regular instances where a school will use an unqualified teacher to cover for absence, but will retain the person and ask them to “teach” in breach of legislation. The EWC reports such instances to the Welsh Government.

222. Supply Teacher 1 was disappointed with the section on managing costs and states that this encourages competition in agencies to provide the cheapest staff. She also believed that it encourages the use of the Swedish derogation which has a consequence of experienced supply teachers refusing longer - term contracts which means that pupils will only get inexperienced supply teachers.

223. Supply Teacher 2 was “deeply disappointed”. He was concerned that pay and conditions was not addressed. He suggested that the Minister’s aims were to get the job done with the smallest financial cost.

224. New Directions were content with the guidance.