



Supply Teachers

annual survey of experiences



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Introduction

Supply teachers were surveyed by the NASUWT on their experiences as supply teachers.

Over a thousand supply teachers responded to the survey.

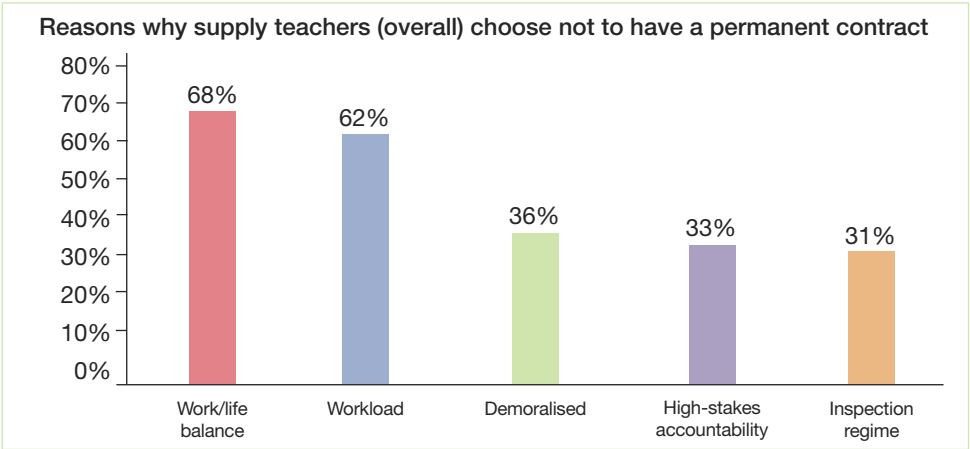
The Survey

Nature of work

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

- almost a quarter (24%) stated that they have not been able to find permanent work;
- over half of respondents (54%) stated that it was because they did not want a permanent contract; and
- over a fifth (22%) stated that they were retired and undertaking supply work to supplement their pension.

When asked why they choose not to have a permanent contract, over two thirds of supply teachers (68%) cited work/life balance, almost two thirds (62%) cited workload, over a third (36%) said they were demoralised, a third identified high-stakes accountability (33%) and just under a third (31%) identified the inspection regime.



When asked about where they obtained work, almost four fifths (77%) said they were employed through an agency or agencies, almost a third (30%) said they were employed through a school and a tenth (10%) through a local authority.

However, over a third (36%) of respondents who worked for a local authority indicated that the local authority they worked for sourced their supply teachers through an agency.

Almost three quarters (73%) said that they were signed up to an agency because this was the only way for them to obtain work in the area where they live.

Of those supply teachers working for supply agencies, 8% indicated that they had been asked to sign an exclusivity clause with one specific agency. 57% of respondents stated that they were signed up to more than one supply agency.

Availability of work

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

Over two fifths of supply teachers (42%) described the nature of their work as being whenever they can get it. Fewer than one third (31%) stated they were employed at one school on a regular basis.

I had to take on a part-time job in retail, working evenings, as supply work is never guaranteed and I do need to earn during the holidays to be able to afford food as well as paying bills. Quite frustrating for an NQT who has been job hunting since qualifying two years ago.

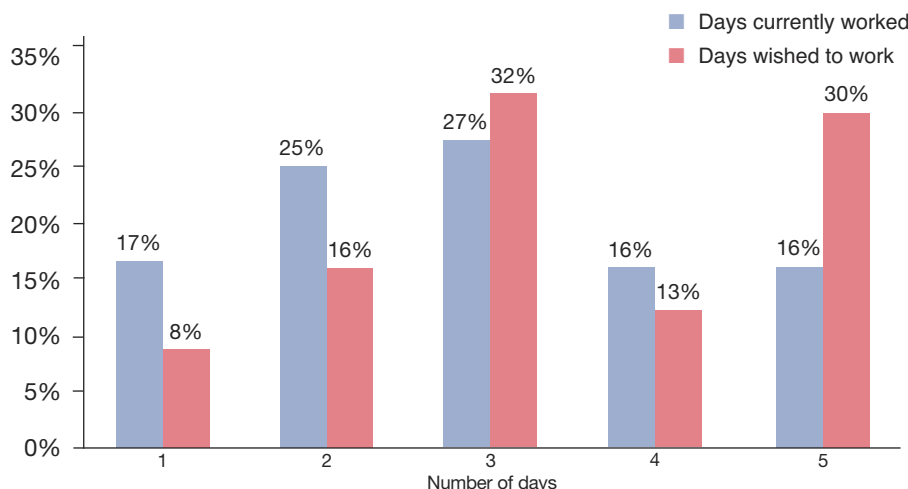
Almost three fifths of supply teachers (58%) reported that they experienced some problems obtaining work. Over two fifths of supply teachers (43%) stated that there had been a decline in the work available since 2014-15.

Schools prefer to use teaching assistants to cover the lessons rather than employing a teacher.

When asked how many days they work a week, over a sixth of supply teachers (17%) said they worked one day a week, a quarter two days a week, and over a quarter three days a week (27%). Only 16% of supply teachers work four days a week and 16% work five days a week.

However, almost a third of supply teachers (30%) stated that they wished to work five days a week, compared to only 8% who wished to work one day a week.

Number of days supply teachers currently work compared to days that they wish to work



Supply teachers were asked about whether their work is primarily on a daily or longer-term basis. Almost three fifths (57%) stated that they work primarily on a daily basis.

For those working on a longer-term basis, almost a quarter (24%) stated that they worked on a weekly basis, over one in ten (13%) on a monthly basis, half on a termly basis and just 13% on a year-long basis.

Working through an agency is not the best solution as this does not have access to proper remuneration in line with salary. Agencies do not reward loyalty or provide progression in pay if you remain with them for longer than a year. I'm trying to break into direct schools rather than agency but it is difficult.

Pensions

Well over two thirds (68%) stated that they are members of the Teachers' Pension Scheme (TPS). A third of supply teachers (33%) working for agencies said they were not members of the TPS.

I am very concerned that I am unable to contribute to the Teachers' Pension Scheme as a supply teacher which seriously undermines my future retirement.

My main grievances working for an agency are that I don't get paid to scale and I can't pay into my teachers' pension. I have been a supply teacher for years and strongly believe I should be entitled to the same pay and working conditions as a permanent teacher.

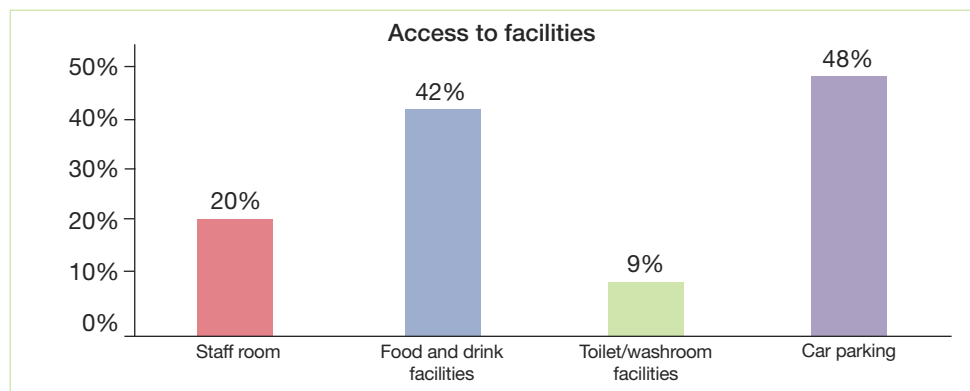
When working through an agency, I am not able to pay into my teachers' pension. This is very worrying, as I have been teaching for 20 years, but only half of that has been contributing to my pension.

Welcome to work and access to facilities

Supply teachers were asked a range of questions about the extent to which they feel welcome within the schools where they teach and whether they have access to key facilities within schools.

Over three fifths of supply teachers (63%) stated that they are made to feel welcome in a new school and just over a quarter (27%) that they are always made to feel welcome when entering a new school. One in ten respondents (10%) said that they are rarely made to feel welcome.

A fifth of supply teachers (20%) stated that they do not always have access to staff rooms where they were available, over two fifths (42%) stated that they do not always have access to food and drink facilities and 9% said that they do not always have access to toilet/washroom facilities. Just under half (48%) reported that they do not always have access to car parking.



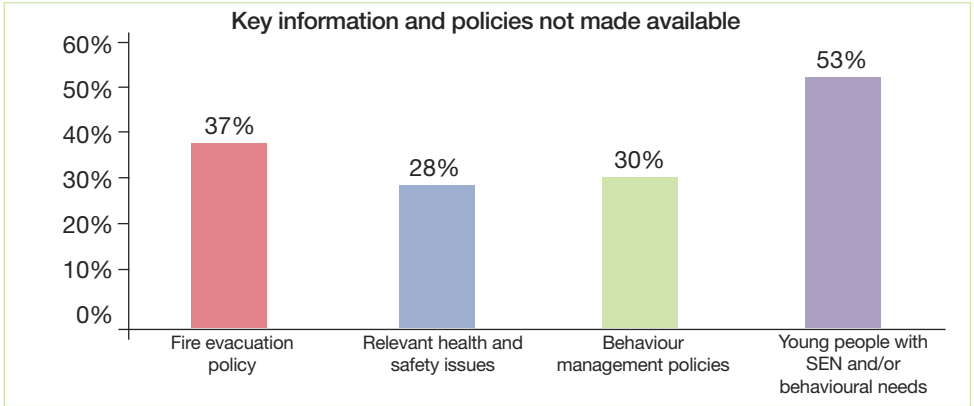
Sometimes I've walked into schools and the reception from staff, they are quite rude. I've been told I cannot park in some schools.

Only one in ten supply teachers (10%) reported that they were always given the appropriate information and policies, including health and safety information, when entering a school and 5% stated that they have never been given this information.

Sometimes I feel very vulnerable as I'm not aware of procedures, systems and practices in particular schools.

When questioned about their awareness of key information and policies used within schools, well over a third of supply teachers (37%) reported that they are not given clear information on a school's fire evacuation policy, over a quarter (28%) stated that they are not given clear information regarding relevant health and safety issues, 30% are not given clear information of behaviour management policies, including who to contact, and over half of respondents (53%) stated that they are not given clear information of the young people in school with special educational needs (SEN) and/or behavioural needs.

Expectation to teach immediately can sometimes be problematic as not had the time to look at content of teaching materials, or if they are not there or if the IT equipment is not available, set up or working.



Supply teacher deployment

For supply teachers on daily placements, over four fifths (85%) stated that they are expected to mark and assess work, over three quarters (77%) reported that they undertake break duties and over two fifths (41%) said that they are expected to plan and prepare lessons. 5% of supply teachers said that they are expected to write reports.

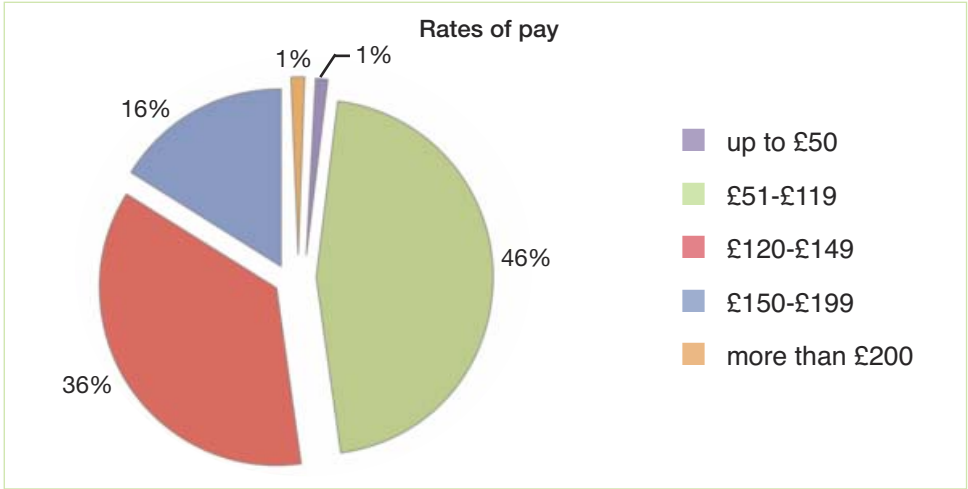
When working on longer-term placements, almost all supply teachers (96%) stated that they are expected to mark and assess work, nine out of ten (90%) said that they plan and prepare lessons, almost three quarters (74%) undertake break duties and three fifths (60%) are expected to write reports.

Almost two thirds (63%) of supply teachers on longer-term placements reported that they are expected to attend meetings out-of-school times, attend parents' meetings (57%), be observed teaching (57%) and participate in educational visits (51%). Almost a quarter (24%) of supply teachers on longer-term placements are expected to undertake lunchtime supervision.

Rates of pay

Supply teachers were asked a range of questions about their level of pay. Almost two thirds of supply teachers (65%) stated that they are currently not paid on the national pay rates at a level that is commensurate with their experience.

In regards to rates of pay, almost half of supply teachers (46%) stated that they are paid between £51 and £119 per day, under a fifth (16%) are paid between £150 and £199 per day and only 1% report that they are paid over £200 per day. 1% said they are paid less than £50 per day.



Based on the 2015/16 annual salary values and the daily rates that apply to supply teachers, the majority of supply teachers in the survey reported being paid a daily rate at or around that paid for a Level 4 unqualified teacher (£112.74). 14% of these stated that they were paid less than the daily rate for a Level 3 unqualified teacher (£103.02).

After 36 years of teaching, if I did supply work on every school day, I would only earn the same amount as a part-time inexperienced teacher. Supply teachers are not paid enough for the irregular and difficult teaching positions, and are not given full respect as qualified teachers.

70% of supply teachers indicated that their rate of pay had remained stable over the course of the last 12 months, whereas over one in ten (14%) reported that their pay had decreased during the same period. Only 8% said that their rate of pay had increased.

I am upset that I'm paid £50 a day less via an agency compared to direct [employed by a school].

Almost a fifth of supply teachers (18%) reported that they have had to claim Jobseeker's Allowance since becoming a supply teacher and over one in ten (14%) reported that they have had to claim other state benefits.

It doesn't matter how hard you work, you cannot make a living. Some of my friends who are cleaners earn more than me.

Over two thirds of supply teachers (67%) said that they have been offered roles that do not utilise their skills and knowledge as a teacher, and, where they have been offered these roles, almost three quarters (72%) reported that these were offered at a lower rate of pay.

Since September I have only been offered four days' work plus one day's work in a school I work in regularly, but on Teaching Assistant rate as they were not prepared to pay the going supply rate.

Compliance with legislation

Almost half of supply teachers (48%) reported that they were not made aware that after 12 weeks of working in the same workplace they were entitled to the same pay and conditions as permanent members of staff.

8% of supply teachers said that they have been asked to waive their right to qualify for the same pay and conditions after the 12-week qualifying period.

I have been told that my agency employs an IT system that clocks supply teachers so that they can't be subject to equal pay after 12 weeks.

Many agencies disregard the Agency Workers' Regulations. At 12 weeks they get a new teacher.

I have been told not to ask for full pay after 12 weeks as the school would finish my contract and start another supply teacher.

Three fifths of supply teachers (60%) reported that they have been asked to sign a contract or agreement with an umbrella/offshore company.

Nearly all agencies expect their supply teachers to be paid by a THIRD PARTY, i.e. an unknown umbrella company; thus the teacher has to pay the agency AND the umbrella company from their wages for the privilege of working for them and if they disagree, they aren't allowed to sign with that agency.

I was also forced to join an umbrella company by an agency and many do not offer PAYE.

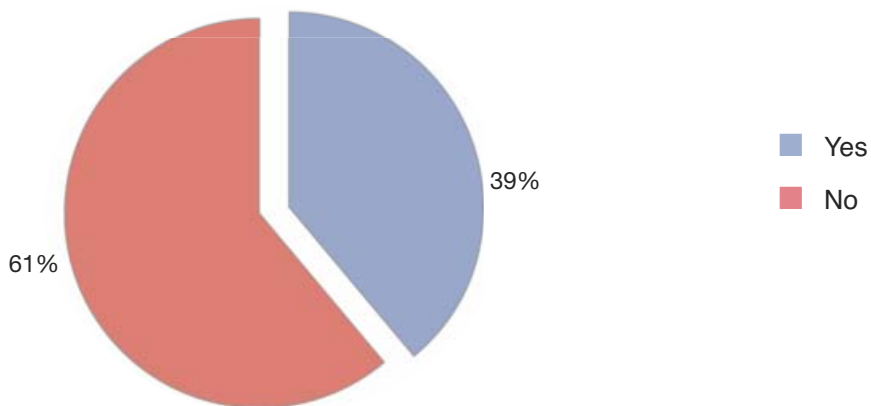
Training and behaviour management support

Supply teachers were asked about access to training and support on their work placements and through supply agencies.

Over three fifths of supply teachers (61%) reported that they have not had access to continuing professional development (CPD) opportunities.

Of the minority of supply teachers who did receive CPD, over half (51%) reported that they obtained it through supply agencies and over a third (36%) from schools where they work. Almost one in ten (9%) reported that they had to pay for it themselves. Over three quarters of supply teachers (77%) said that they are not paid when they undertake CPD.

Do you have access to continuing professional development (CPD) opportunities?

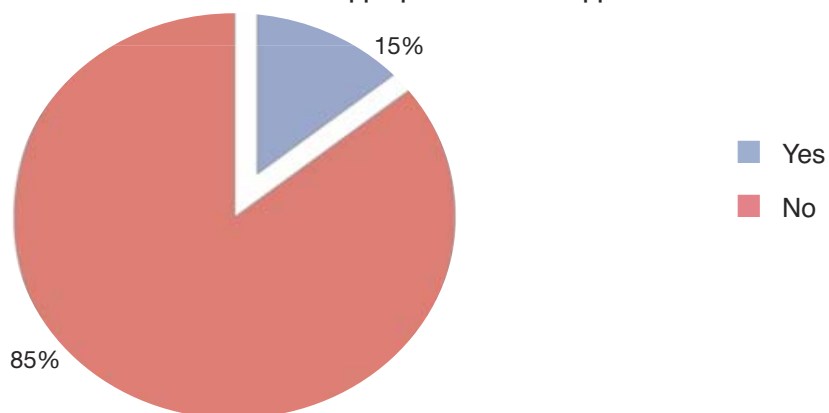


I've had no CPD opportunities, no mentoring and no sick pay. I do not intend to stay in the profession beyond next year.

My course is £40, but is a long way from where I live. I have to decide whether to pay for a hotel too.

Over four fifths of newly qualified supply teachers (85%) stated that they have not received the appropriate level of induction support to which they are entitled, and of those qualified in the last two years, over four fifths (82%) said they did not receive appropriate levels of support.

If you are a newly qualified teacher completing your induction/probation, do you receive the appropriate level of support?



Almost two thirds of supply teachers (64%) said that they are not provided with a regular contact/mentor by the employer for which they work and two thirds (66%) said that they did not have a line manager identified for them from within the schools in which they teach.

Behaviour support

Supply teachers were asked about how they were able to access behaviour support mechanisms and processes available to them within schools.

Over three quarters of supply teachers (76%) said that they were not able to access pupil behaviour support whilst working within schools.

Over two thirds (69%) felt that their requests for support in managing pupil behaviour are not taken seriously.

Half of supply teachers reported that they believed they are used to cover lessons of more difficult pupils.

I find that the biggest problem I encounter in schools on a daily basis is the attitude of pupils to supply teachers. Very often I experience a total lack of respect as a teacher from pupils; this consequently leads to continual disruption of the lesson, rude and insolent attitudes from the pupils, answering back, refusal to comply with instructions and on occasions foul language. This list of pupils' behaviour is not exhaustive! This makes me feel totally demoralised, distressed and, at the end of the school day, mentally exhausted. I am in a position where I do not want to stay in the teaching profession for much longer.

Key changes in the experiences of supply teachers

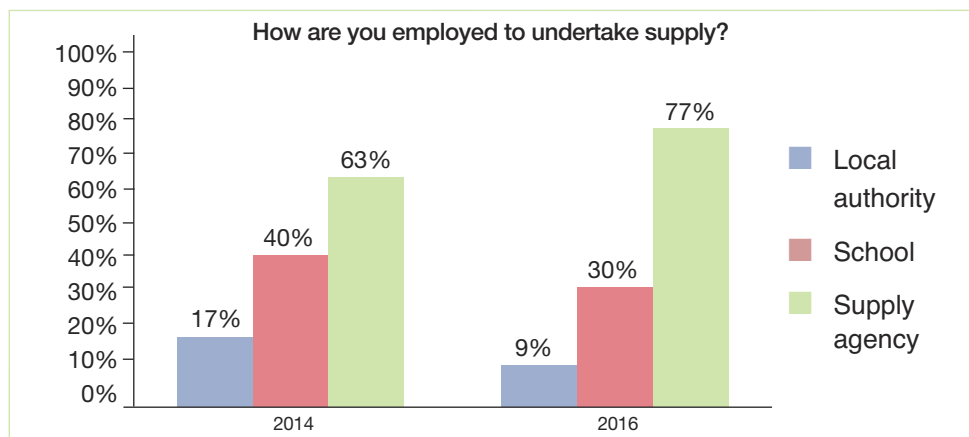
The 2016 survey reveals that serious concerns about the pay and conditions of service of supply teachers remain and in many areas of their work have worsened.

The main areas of change are listed below.

Nature of work

The number of supply teachers indicating that they did supply work because they did not want a permanent contract has increased from 43% in 2014 to 54% in 2016.

There has been a continuing increase in the use of supply agencies by supply teachers, up to 77% in 2016 compared to 63% in 2014. The number of local authorities providing work has declined, down from 17% in 2014 to 9% in 2016, and schools providing work, down from 40% in 2014 to 30% in 2016.



Availability of work

Supply teachers indicated that there has been a decrease in the availability of work provided by one school on a regular basis, from 35% in 2014 to 31% in 2016. This is coupled with an increase in the number reporting that they are signed up to more than one supply agency, up from 52% in 2014 to 57% in 2016.

More supply teachers have reported some problems securing work, up from 54% in 2014 to 58% in 2016.

The number of short-term supply teachers able to work five days a week has declined by 4% from 20% in 2015 to 16% in 2016, whereas the number of long-term placements have dropped by 4% since 2014.

Welcome to work and access to facilities

Since 2014, there has been a decline (by 5%) in the number of respondents who indicated they were always made to feel welcome when they entered a school.

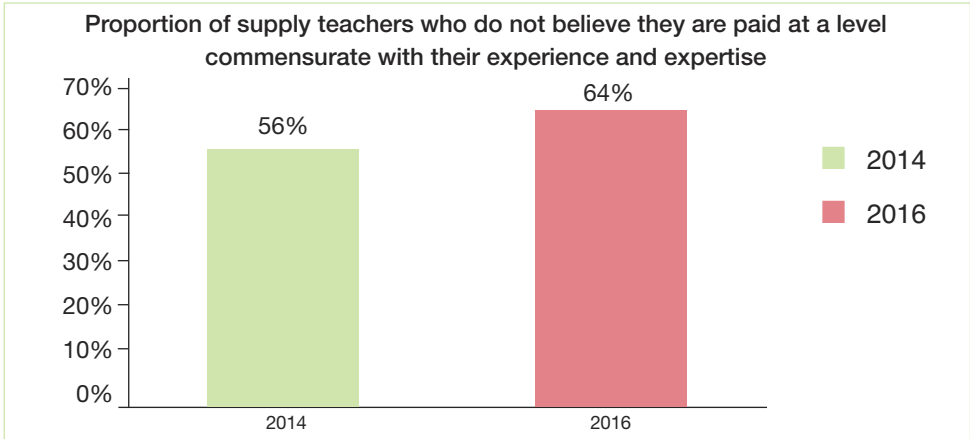
In addition to this, the number of supply teachers who stated that they did not always have access to food and drink facilities rose from 35% in 2014 to 42% in 2016. The number saying they did not always have access to car parking increased from 39% in 2014 to 48% in 2016.

Supply teacher deployment

Since 2014, the proportion of supply teachers on longer-term placements who have been asked to undertake break duties and lunchtime supervision has increased by 7% and 6% respectively to 74% and 24%.

Rates of pay

An increasing number of supply teachers have stated that they do not believe they are paid at a level commensurate with their experience and expertise, up from 56% in 2014 to 64% in 2016.

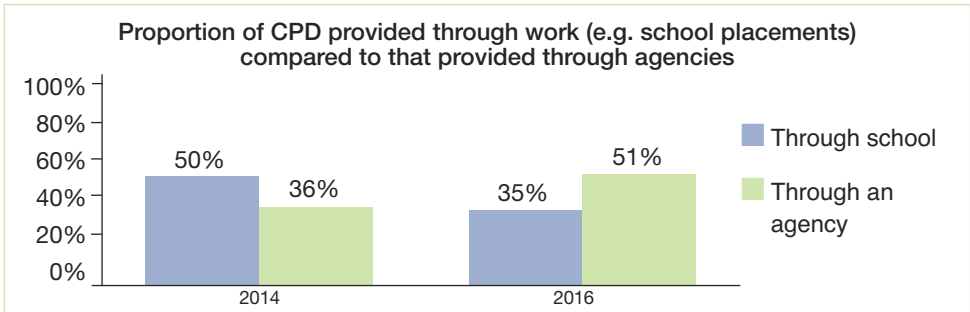


With regard to daily rates of pay, there has been an increase of 7% since 2014 in the number of supply teachers paid £100 to £149.

The majority of supply teachers still report that they are not paid at a level that is commensurate with their experience and expertise. This has increased by 8% since 2014 and by 24% since 2012. The majority of supply teachers, despite their qualified teacher status, report being paid at rates equivalent to unqualified teachers.

Training and behavioural support

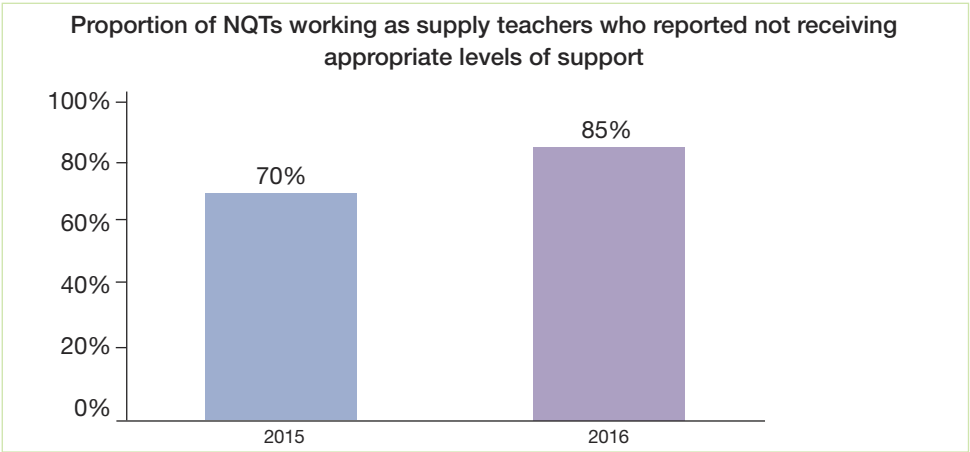
One of the biggest changes since 2014 relates to the level of training and support with which supply teachers are provided through work (e.g. school placements). This has decreased from 50% in 2014 to 35% in 2016. This contrasts with the level of CPD offered to supply teachers through agencies,



with agencies increasing their provision over the same period by 16%, but also charging supply teachers for the training.

There has been a marked increase in the number of newly qualified teachers (NQTs) working as supply teachers and who reported not receiving appropriate levels of support. This increased from 70% in 2015 to 85% in 2016.

Similar increases were seen regarding supply teachers who had qualified within the last two years, up 9% from 73% in 2015 to 82% in 2016.



There was an increase of 5% in supply teachers stating that their requests for behaviour support were not taken seriously over the period 2014-16.

The number of supply teachers reporting covering lessons with difficult students increased from 44% in 2014 to 50% in 2016.

Trends over the period 2014-2016

The 2016 Supply Teacher Survey reveals that the concerns not only remain, but that in many aspects of their work the situation has deteriorated even further.

There was an increase in supply teachers reporting that they do not want to take permanent work, despite the fact that fewer supply teachers stated difficulties finding permanent work.

An increasing number of supply teachers obtain the majority of their work by signing up to a number of agencies. This is because school and local authority involvement in the provision of supply continues to decrease.

It is still the case that the majority of supply work is carried out on a daily basis, whenever and wherever supply teachers can obtain it over a varying number

of days throughout the week. There still appears to be a disparity between the number of days that supply teachers want to work and those that are available.

Conclusion

The survey results demonstrate the continuing need for urgent action by Government, employers and agencies to address the concerns of this valuable group of workers who make an important and significant contribution to our public education system.

Supply teachers are vulnerable to exploitation and to unfair and discriminatory working practices.

The NASUWT will continue with its campaign for better regulation to support supply teachers and for their recognition in pay and conditions of service as highly skilled professionals.



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