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Holding it all together?:
The Management of Supply Cover in the Teaching Profession

Report of a study commissioned by the Scottish Executive Education Department

by

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January 2004

University of Paisley

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Contents

Acknowledgements page ii

Executive summary page iii

Chapter 1 Introduction page 1

Chapter 2 The dynamics of the supply market page 9

Chapter 3 Supply teachers page 25

Chapter 4 Recruitment of supply teachers page 39

Chapter 5 Deployment of supply teachers page 46

Chapter 6 Support, professional development and quality issues page 63

Chapter 7 The effects of different recruitment, deployment and support systems page 81

Chapter 8 Recommendations page 95

References page 100

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The Scottish Executive is making this research report available on-line in order to provide access to its contents for those interested in the subject. The Executive commissioned the research but has not provided editorial input to the report. The views expressed in the report are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect those of the Scottish Executive or any other organisation(s) by which the author(s) is/are employed.

The Executive has not published this full report in hard copy, but a summary version has been published as *The Management of Supply Cover in the Teaching Profession*, which is No 12 in the Insight series (ISSN 1478-6788). This is available both in hard copy (telephone 0131-244 0634 to obtain one) and on-line.

Executive summary

There have for some years been concerns in Scotland about the availability of supply cover, the quality of supply teachers and the adequacy of support and development provided for them.

This is a report of a study which focuses on the management of supply cover in Scotland. It presents an analysis of qualitative and quantitative data collected from education authorities, schools and supply teachers.

The research was commissioned by SEED in October 2002 to inform the development of guidelines for the management of supply cover. The objectives were to:

- develop an understanding of the supply market and why teachers are attracted to the work;
- document the methods used by education authorities and by schools to recruit supply staff;
- document methods used by education authorities and schools to manage the deployment of supply staff including systems to support supply teachers when working in school;
- identify the effect of these different recruitment and deployment methods on education authorities, schools and teachers by examining, for example, the impact on the ability to provide cover when needed and supply teachers' job satisfaction;
- make recommendations for good practice in the management of supply cover at the EA and school level.

The research was designed to collect quantitative and qualitative data from education authorities, schools and supply teachers. For each group, methods used included a survey and interviews. In addition, focus group discussions were held with panels of supply teachers, and interviews were conducted with representatives from the GTCS, teacher unions and HMI. Relevant documents were also collected from both education authorities and schools.

The analysis of the data indicates that there is huge diversity around the country in the ways in which supply cover is managed and that while systems usually enable education provision to be maintained, there are nevertheless serious difficulties in a number of education authorities. In particular the report concludes that the significance of supply cover and its management is underestimated and that there is a need for greater professionalisation of the systems and for the raising of the status of supply teachers.

The report concludes with six recommendations, which are further developed in the main report:

1. A national framework for the recruitment, deployment and employment of temporary staff should be established.
2. A national code of practice concerning the employment of supply teachers should be developed. This should set out minimum standards required of schools and authorities, and should be subject to local development and implementation.

3. Consideration should be given to the establishment of a national database of supply teachers.
4. Education authorities should consider their provision of permanent supply teachers.
5. Education authorities and schools should consider ways of reducing the demand for supply teachers.
6. Consideration should be given to the ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the impact of supply cover on provision in schools.

Chapter 1: Introduction: context and research design

1.1 Introduction

This report focuses on the management of supply cover in Scotland. It presents an analysis of qualitative and quantitative data collected from education authorities, schools and supply teachers.

There have for some years been concerns in Scotland about the availability of supply cover, the quality of supply teachers, and the adequacy of support and development provided for them. This chapter sets out the research and policy context, and outlines the research design and the structure of this report.

1.2 Context

Despite the fact that most countries face similar issues in managing supply cover, research on this topic is limited. We first describe the wider research context drawing on literature from across the UK, and then focus on the research and policy context in Scotland.

Supply teachers are a notable omission from the majority of the literature on teachers' careers and work. Nias (1989) described them as a group who see themselves as peripheral, but perceive advantages in their position in that they gain wide experience, they can work flexibly and they have the power to turn down work that they do not want to do. The disadvantages include lack of security and feeling undervalued, deskilled and excluded. Robertson (2000) identified temporary teachers as the most marginal group, who she described as having 'a peripheral and excluded relationship to schools and to better conditions of work' (p. 197). Acker (1999) drew attention to the high proportion of women among supply teachers, commenting that they were often women returning to teaching after career breaks for child-care. In Scotland MacDonald and Munn (1992) found that while some women saw this as an attractive option, over a third did not want supply posts, either because the work was not secure, or because they saw it as 'personally and professionally unfulfilling' (p. 2). A number of career paths of supply teachers were identified by Hutchings (2002) in a study of UK-trained supply teachers working through private agencies in England. These included recently qualified teachers who had not yet found a permanent post; those returning from a career break; teachers leaving permanent jobs in mid-career and moving to careers outside teaching; 'career' supply teachers who did not intend to seek permanent work or work outside teaching; and early retirees, who were often seeking a role in which the workload, responsibilities and stress were less (see also Troman and Woods, 2001).

The management of supply cover has also attracted limited attention. The English context changed dramatically in the early 1990s as private supply agencies gradually grew and took over the main role in managing supply cover; their role has been the focus of some research studies (e.g. Morrison, 1999; Hutchings, 2000; Grimshaw *et al.* 2002). The number of supply or temporary teachers used in England has risen enormously; however, there is a 'dearth of data and research on the subject' (Barlin and Hallgarten, 2002, p. 65), added to by the plethora of terms used to describe this group: temporary, occasional, floating, emergency cover, etc. Barlin and Hallgarten's

analysis concludes with a consideration of alternative ways of managing cover, such as use of internal staff or teaching assistants to supervise classes.

Even less is known about the impact of the use of supply teachers on schools and on pupils. Menter *et al.* (1999) drew attention to the increasing reliance on supply teachers that had been created by the high vacancy rates in England in the late 1990s. They argue that the use of supply teachers resulted in additional work for the permanent teachers in terms of long-term school development and planning, and that this created stress. Concern about the impact of temporary teachers on schools and pupils is the starting point for the Ofsted report *Schools' Use of Temporary Teachers* (2002), which focuses on the negative impact on pupils' attainment. The report attributes this in part to the weak procedures for induction of temporary teachers in some schools, and the supply teachers' lack of information about the pupils they were teaching. It identifies features of good practice including careful induction, mentoring by a clearly identified senior teacher, constructive feedback, provision of information about the abilities and prior attainment of pupils, and access to professional development opportunities.

There have been growing concerns in Scotland about a number of different issues around the management of supply cover and the careers of supply teachers. These have come from two different directions: a focus on the teachers themselves, and a focus on the staffing of schools.

The 1996 Teachers on Probation study, conducted by Draper, Fraser and Taylor, found that a high proportion of those in their probationary period worked as supply teachers for all or part of the time. Of the sample of 193 probationers, 28% had started their careers as short-term supply teachers, 36% as long-term supply teachers, and only 36% on permanent contracts. By the time they completed probation two-thirds had permanent contracts, but a small minority (6%) were still on short term supply. Following this, Draper and colleagues further investigated the experiences of a sample who had worked in more than six schools during their probationary period, reported in *Probationers on Supply* (Draper *et al.* 1997). This report identifies a number of serious concerns about probationers engaging in supply teaching, including emotional costs, limited access to professional development, lack of continuity, financial issues, and not feeling part of the school practically, socially or professionally. This research focused on those who completed their probation successfully; and it is reasonable to assume that the same issues may have impacted more seriously on those who have not completed their probation. This pattern of beginning teachers working on temporary contracts is one found (and causing concern) elsewhere (see for example, Tromans, 2002, writing about Australia).

Another study focusing on the experience of the supply teacher was originally carried out as an MEd thesis, and subsequently accounts were published as a research paper by the University of Aberdeen (Spratt, 2000a) and as a SCRE Spotlight (Spratt, 2001). The concern here was with supply teachers in secondary schools, and a detailed account is offered of how two schools selected, deployed and supported supply teachers, and how the teachers experienced this (Spratt, 1999, 2000a, 2001). Issues highlighted included the variability of provision of induction and support; the limited monitoring and evaluation of supply teachers' work; the way in which schools are selective about which teachers to employ, but do not formally communicate their concerns to the teachers who they do not invite to return; and the lack of professional development opportunities available to supply teachers.

More recently concerns have centred on the apparent shortage of supply teachers, and concerns about their quality. In 2000 the Scottish Executive funded an investigation of the management of supply teachers by Scottish education authorities (Spratt, 2000b). This had two aims: to investigate how local authorities ensured that school demand for relief staffing is met; and to examine the mechanisms for quality assurance of supply staff. This report described the variation in the extent to which education authorities were directly involved in managing supply cover, and the advantages and disadvantages of the various systems in place. It identified a widespread problem with the availability of supply staff. One aspect of this is that because supply teachers were selective about where they worked, some schools found it much easier to fill vacancies than others. Potential solutions to this included the employment of permanent supply teachers by some authorities; increasing school staffing levels to allow greater use of internal cover; recruiting more supply teachers; and possibly using private supply agencies to locate suitable teachers. Quality assurance mechanisms for daily-paid staff were found to be limited: authorities did not all interview such teachers, and professional development opportunities were very limited (often existing only for probationers and those returning to teaching after career breaks) (Spratt, 2000b).

The Independent Committee of Inquiry into Professional Conditions of Service for Teachers (the McCrone inquiry) reported in May 2000. This report identified the difficulties that schools had in securing appropriate supply cover to deal with planned or unplanned absences among the permanent teaching staff. A significant number of authorities reported problems in obtaining supply teachers. The Committee commented that its recommendations on the organisation of CPD should tend to reduce the demand for cover, and its suggestions for 'winding down' among teachers approaching retirement should increase the pool of experienced staff available. In addition it recommended that the Scottish Executive and local authorities review the way supply cover is provided and managed, and how this might be improved, for example, by employing permanent peripatetic teachers.

Concerns about the difficulties of maintaining an adequate pool of supply teachers in a range of subjects continued, and a number of gaps were identified in the information available: in particular, there was no reliable information from which answers to specific questions on the shortage of supply teachers could be drawn. As a result, demand for supply teachers is not taken into account in the Department's annual teacher workforce planning statistical projections model, but a percentage element is added at the final stage of the annual exercise. Consequently SEED, in co-operation with the ADES Personnel network, issued a short focused questionnaire on supply teachers to all Scottish education authorities in May 2001 (Scottish Executive, 2001b). The main focus was on the level of difficulty each authority experienced in each term in the primary and secondary sectors. Additional questions were about local authority databases; permanent pools of supply teachers and the way they are used to manage supply.

In August 2001 a Supply Teacher Working Group was established by the Scottish Executive Education Department to take forward the commitment in the agreement *A Teaching Profession for the 21st Century* (Scottish Executive, 2001b) on the issue of supply teachers: 'The Executive, COSLA, the teaching unions and the GTC to review issues associated with the availability of supply cover' (p. 22). Membership of the Working Group included representatives from the unions and from ADES. The remit of the group was to consider the analysis of the above survey; to examine the process

involved in the management of supply teachers; to consider the treatment of supply cover in other European countries; and to consider examples of good practice, with a view to producing good practice guidance to education authorities. At subsequent meetings the group considered a range of inputs including a report on the effectiveness of the employment by South Lanarkshire of a permanent pool of supply teachers, and a summary of examples of European supply cover practices.

Two of the teacher unions involved in the Working Group carried out surveys of their members on certain issues around supply. The larger of these, an EIS survey of school temporary contract members, achieved responses from over 2000 teachers working on temporary contracts, and was reported in a press release in late December 2001 (EIS, 2001).

The current research was commissioned by SEED in October 2002 to inform the development of guidelines for the management of supply cover. The objectives were to:

- develop an understanding of the supply market and why teachers are attracted to the work;
- document the methods used by EAs and by schools to recruit supply staff;
- document methods used by EAs and schools to manage the deployment of supply staff including systems to support supply teachers when working in school;
- identify the effect of these different recruitment and deployment methods on EAs, schools and teachers by examining, for example, the impact on the ability to provide cover when needed and supply teachers' job satisfaction;
- make recommendations for good practice in the management of supply cover at the EA and school level.

A Research Advisory Group was established; the membership included many of those who had been on the Supply Teacher Working Group.

1.3 Research design

The research was designed to collect quantitative and qualitative data from education authorities, schools and supply teachers. For each group, methods used included a survey and interviews. In addition, focus group discussions were held with panels of supply teachers, and interviews were conducted with representatives from the GTCS, teacher unions and HMI. Relevant documents were also collected from both education authorities and schools.

Education authorities

Survey: A questionnaire was devised and sent to all Scottish education authorities. This drew on the detailed report by Spratt (2000b) of her findings from her similar survey, and aimed to identify developments and track the progress of the innovations she described. The Research Advisory Group gave valuable feedback on drafts of the questionnaire.

The questionnaire included questions about education authority policy and guidelines; the role of the authority in managing supply cover; use of outside agencies; numbers and characteristics of daily-paid and permanent supply teachers; recruitment and deployment of supply teachers; demand for cover; support, professional development and quality systems; and evaluation of current practice.

The questionnaire was despatched in December 2002. Responses were received from all 32 authorities; this was particularly pleasing at a time when those staff responsible for supply cover were in many cases under considerable pressure because there were not sufficient supply teachers available to fill the demands. However, it should be noted that a minority left some questions or sections blank. This was partly because in many cases no single individual in the authority could answer the diverse range of questions asked. Some authorities had obviously passed the questionnaire to different departments to add comments, but for others this proved too difficult. The questionnaire included many questions that required a written comment, and many (but not all) authorities offered detailed comments throughout, which were particularly helpful in designing subsequent parts of the research. Many also attached a range of documentation relating to supply teachers.

Interviews: After discussion with the Advisory Group, six authorities were identified for more detailed qualitative study. These were selected to include geographically diverse authorities, and to illustrate different approaches to the deployment of supply cover. In each case study authority, in-depth interviews were carried out with key personnel, and where relevant, further documents and statistics were collected. The interviewees were chosen to represent both policy issues and the practicalities of managing supply cover. Interviews were also conducted in three further authorities; these had specific foci: on-line booking systems, use of permanent supply teachers, and the use of observation in recruitment. In total, 17 interviews were conducted in education authorities, involving a total of 22 education authority staff.

Schools

Survey: The questionnaire sent to schools included questions about the use of supply cover in the last 12 months; arrangements for the deployment of supply cover; the use of internal cover; support arrangements for supply teachers; an evaluation of all these arrangements; the quality of supply teachers; and the effect on pupils. In addition details such as size of school, percentage of pupils on free school meals, location etc. were collected.

The questionnaire was sent to 1055 schools. The sample comprised one in five primary schools (452), all secondary schools (387), one in three nursery schools (70); and all special schools (but not special units) (146). This distribution pattern was agreed with the Advisory Group with the intention of ensuring that each type of school was well-represented in the sample. The whole population of secondary and special schools was included because it has been evident that they have particular problems in relation to shortage of specialists in some subjects among supply teachers. Responses were received from 431 schools, an average response rate of 41%. Of these, 5.1% were from nurseries, 41.5% from primary schools, 41% from secondary schools and 12.3% from special schools.

Interviews were conducted with appropriate members of school management in 20 schools: eight primary, eight secondary, two nursery and two special schools. They were normally conducted with headteachers in primary schools, nurseries and special schools, and depute heads in secondary schools. The majority of the schools selected were in the case study authorities. We aimed to carry out interviews in schools in all sectors, and in a range of geographical locations. The vast majority of these interviews were carried out face-to-face; this enabled school managers to show us, where relevant, the various forms and systems they had devised to manage cover within the school. The interview schedule was designed to address issues that had

emerged from school, education authority and teacher surveys, and from on-going qualitative research. Where relevant, we collected examples of documents such as school handbooks for supply teachers.

Supply teachers

Survey: The questionnaire asked about the teacher's current work (number of schools, recruitment and arrangements for deployment, number of days worked each week, and issues around turning down work); their career to date and aspirations for the future; their views on supply teaching; the support received and recent professional development activities; and demographic details.

Our original intention had been to despatch the questionnaire to supply teachers via the education authorities. However, after discussion with the Advisory Group, we decided to distribute it via schools. Each school receiving the school questionnaire was also sent copies of the teacher questionnaire (with reply paid envelopes) to hand out to supply teachers working in that school. Where possible headteachers were asked to distribute the questionnaires to supply teachers with different characteristics: those working long-term and those doing odd days, permanent and daily-paid, and so on. Four teacher questionnaires were sent to each secondary school and two to each primary, nursery and special school in the school sample above. In addition, at the suggestion of the Advisory Group, 50 questionnaires were sent out through education authorities, who were asked to send them to teachers on their daily-paid supply lists who appeared not to have been working in the last year. It was felt important to try to investigate the views of supply teachers who are not working (possibly because they do not get offered work) as well as those who are working. In the event, all those in this group who returned questionnaires were found to be active supply teachers, but working in different authorities from those that had despatched the questionnaires.

This meant that a total of 2497 questionnaires were despatched to supply teachers via schools and a further 50 through education authorities. We assumed that a considerable proportion of these would never reach supply teachers, because some headteachers would not respond themselves. We predicted a school response rate of about 35% and therefore envisaged that only 35% would pass questionnaires on to teachers; of those teachers receiving questionnaires we expected a response rate of about 35%, based on previous postal surveys we have carried out. Thus we were aiming for an achieved sample size of 300. In the event 699 teacher questionnaires were returned. However, it is impossible to say what percentage of those actually receiving questionnaires responded.

As there is no centrally held data about the characteristics of supply teachers, it is not possible to tell the extent to which our sample could be considered to be representative of the population. We had hoped that the education authorities might hold data that would enable some comparisons; however, it became apparent that even data such as age and experience is not routinely collected. However, 21 authorities did make some estimate of the teaching experience of those on their daily paid list, and this can be compared with the responses of those teacher who returned questionnaires (Table 1.1 overleaf). From this it would appear that our sample is slightly, but not seriously, skewed towards the more experienced teachers.

Table 1.1: Length of teaching experience of daily-paid supply teachers: responses from EAs and from supply teachers (EAs: N=21; teachers: N=670)

teaching experience	EA average responses %	teacher responses %
0 to 2 years	16	13
3 to 5 years	18	14
6 to 20 years	38	43
over 21 years	28	30

The proportions of supply teachers who work in different school sectors in the sample can also be compared with figures supplied by education authorities. However, this is made more complex because it appears from the questionnaire that secondary supply teachers are more likely than primary to register on the supply lists of multiple authorities. If this is taken into account[1], it appears that about 57% of supply teachers work mainly in the primary sector. Among the respondents to the teacher questionnaire, 32% worked mainly in primary and 59% in secondary schools; with the remaining 10% working in special schools. This suggests that secondary supply teachers are considerably over-represented in the sample. This is important in making sense of subsequent findings.

A further source for comparison is the survey carried out by EIS among their members in 2001. They achieved 2128 responses from temporary teachers, with a return rate of 35%. The composition of their sample was rather different from ours, including, for example, a higher proportion of women (86% compared with 73% in our sample). This may reflect the over-representation of secondary teachers in our sample. Clearly the different methods of distribution of the two surveys resulted in different achieved samples, but without national figures it is impossible to tell which represents the whole population more reliably. We note comparisons with the EIS survey where appropriate through this report.

Supply teacher panels: Our aim was to establish two panels of ten supply teachers (one from central belt authorities and one from the borders and south-west Scotland). Each panel was to meet for three full days over the course of the research, to hold a focus group style discussion. As a result of difficulties in securing attendance from teachers from one authority during the day, three smaller panels were in fact used; two met for full days as originally planned and one met for twilight sessions. At the panel meetings, we were able to explore a range of issues including recruitment, contractual and pay issues, deployment, professional development and support in considerable depth. We were also able to discuss issues emerging from other aspects of the data with the panels. Between meetings panel members were asked to keep records of particular aspects of their experience to feed into subsequent discussions. Panel members included supply teachers of all ages and career stages, and engaged in a wide variety of work. These panels made a significant contribution in enhancing the reliability and validity of our findings.

[1] The figures supplied by EAs indicate a total of 7274 primary teachers and 8418 secondary (with a further 1622 in 2 EAs that did not distinguish between primary and secondary). However, in our supply teacher sample secondary teachers were on average registered with more local authorities (primary, 1.23 authorities on average; secondary 1.89 authorities). If this multiple registration is taken into account it can be estimated that around 57% of supply teachers work in the primary sector.

Interviews: In addition, we carried out individual interviews with twenty supply teachers who had responded to the questionnaire. These were conducted by telephone. The sample was selected entirely from those engaged mainly in short-term cover, since it had become apparent that the deployment and support of this group is causing particular concern. The teachers were selected largely from the case study authorities. We selected a balance of those who were aiming to get a permanent job and those who were happy as supply teachers. Within this we aimed to cover the full age range, including some retired teachers.

1.4 Structure of the report

The report is structured in terms of the research objectives set out at the end of Section 1.2. Chapter 2 discusses the dynamics of the supply market, including definitions of supply teachers; contractual and pay issues; and the various factors that impact on both supply of and demand for supply teachers over time and in different locations. It also discusses the current policy context for the research.

Chapter 3 focuses on the supply teachers themselves; their age, gender and ethnicity; the types of work they do; careers and motivations, and the skills and strategies needed by a successful supply teacher.

Chapter 4 focuses on recruitment and Chapter 5 on deployment of supply teachers. A key theme is a tension between the education authority role of ensuring that all schools are adequately staffed, the daily-paid supply teachers' preference to choose where they work, and the schools' desire to choose which teachers they want to employ. There is also a tension between schools' desire to control their own staffing, and their concern about the amount of time that can be used in locating supply teachers.

Chapter 6 outlines the support and professional development available for supply teachers. It notes that there are differences in the accounts given by schools and by the supply teachers themselves. Many teachers feel that they are not given adequate support, and many would welcome greater opportunities for professional development.

Chapter 7 turns to the effects of the various systems described on pupils, on schools, on the supply teachers themselves, and on education authorities, and leads into Chapter 8 where we discuss recommendations for good practice.

Chapter 2: The Dynamics of the Supply Market

2.1 Introduction

It became clear very early in this study that the field of supply cover in schools is a very complex one, fraught with legal issues and dogged by confusing uses of language. In this chapter we seek to clarify some of this complexity and to offer definitions that we have used in later parts of the report. We also set out various dimensions of the context in which supply cover is being organised. The context is an economic one, a market in which demand from schools and/or education authorities is or is not met by the availability of supply teachers. This market has geographical variations, both regional and local, and also reflects the professional distinctions within the schools system, relating for example to different age phases, and subject and other specialisms.

But the market is also affected significantly by the policy and legal framework within which it operates. During the period of this study there have been major changes taking place, some relating to policy developments following the national agreement *A Teaching Profession for the 21st Century* (Scottish Executive, 2001b), others relating to legal action taken by a temporary teacher supported by her trade union, and consequential steps taken by a number of education authorities.

The satisfactory functioning of schools is dependent (among other things) on there being sufficient appropriately trained staff to teach pupils. The systems of supply cover exist in order that schools can be flexible and responsive to the absence or unavailability of teachers from their normal duties. Although sickness cover remains an important element in this, there has been increased demand from other sources over recent years, including the expansion of professional development courses and a range of professional support activities which require teachers to be away from their classes.

Hence there are many senses in which the supply market may be described as dynamic. The total demand for supply teachers varies over time and place. The supply of available staff varies according to the overall supply of teachers, the number who are seeking employment at any time and the availability of other kinds of work, whether within or outwith education. The greatest difficulties occur when there is a mismatch between the demand and the supply. It is crucial that the evidence that we have gathered about the management of supply cover during 2002-2003 is considered against an understanding of these dynamics.

2.2 Definitions to be used in report

What is a supply teacher? This apparently simple question does not have a consistent answer. In our study we have come across the term 'supply teacher' being used to describe anything from a teacher covering for half a day for someone who is sick through to a teacher who has been employed continuously full-time in the same school for several years. If there is anything that is consistent in the use of the term, it is that there is something temporary about the nature of the teacher's employment. Thus even in the apparently oxymoronic term 'permanent supply teacher', the individual may have permanent employment with an education authority, but the location of that employment may be subject to change. Most other supply teachers are employed on a 'daily-paid' basis. Confusingly, some of these who have been in the same post for a

long period of time describe themselves as permanent supply teachers, even though there is no legal permanence to their position. Posts are filled in different ways according to their nature. (Recruitment is discussed in detail in Chapter 4.)

The composition of our supply teacher panels illustrated some of this diversity. Of the total of 20 teachers in the three groups one was a permanent primary supply teacher who worked first in one authority and then in another, completing her probation in this role. Over two years she had worked in 40 different schools although currently she had a long term placement. Two others were working in secondary schools and had completed their probation in these schools and were into their second year in the same school. One of these was covering the secondment of a staff member, the other an unfilled vacancy. Another secondary supply teacher, on the other hand, had taught in 17 different schools over the last two years but had rarely taught his own subject. All of those mentioned so far were desirous of full-time permanent posts. Other teachers in the panels held fractional appointments of 0.6 or 0.8 (i.e. three days or four days per week) for fixed-term periods and some of these sought to top this up with further work through daily 'stand-by' supply work. Yet others were doing only occasional work, as it was offered to them. These latter groups included many who were very happy undertaking supply work – for a variety of reasons that was their preference.

So, the variety of arrangements is enormous and in subsequent chapters we describe in more detail both the characteristics of the supply teachers themselves (Chapter 3) and the manner in which they are recruited and deployed in schools (Chapters 4 and 5).

In this report the terminology that we use either:

- relies on categories defined in the questionnaires used in our surveys, or
- follow the usages of the authorities, the schools and the teachers themselves.

The former applies to much of the quantitative data. However, in questionnaire responses and interviews it became clear that some terms we had assumed would have a shared meaning were in fact being used and understood in different senses by different respondents.

Our own definitions of the terms used to describe supply teachers are as follows:

> *Supply teacher*: anyone who is working in a school on a temporary basis – either a daily-paid teacher (with or without a temporary contract) or a teacher on a permanent contract whose role involves working across different schools filling temporary needs.

It should be noted that in the course of the research we found that this term is used in different senses. The 'real' supply teacher seems to be one who is covering for a teacher who is temporarily absent – either through illness or personal circumstances, or for professional reasons (CPD, meetings, etc.). Our definition also includes those who may work in one school covering a vacancy for a considerable period, because such teachers are paid a daily rate and are therefore not easily distinguishable from the 'real' supply teacher.

Supply teachers can be categorised by type of employment and by the type of work they do. We refer to type of employment rather than contractual arrangements because a number of daily-paid teachers pointed out that they had no contracts. Payment arrangements can be divided into daily-paid and annual salary.

> *Daily-paid* supply teacher: all supply teachers paid on a daily basis, working in one or more schools. Many of these work part-time or occasionally.

Permanent supply teacher: a teacher on a permanent contract paid an annual salary, whose role involves working across different schools filling temporary needs.

Supply teachers may also be grouped by the length of placement in a school. In this report we refer to those who do short-term work, those who do long-term work, and those who combine spells of both types.

Short-term supply teacher: a teacher who works in a school only for a 'short' placement. The teacher questionnaire defined this as a period of less than 12 weeks: however, responses from education authorities showed that different authorities use different periods, from four weeks to a term. Our usage in this report follows the usage of the respondent; we will try to make it clear what was meant in each case.

Long-term supply teacher: someone working in a school on a temporary basis for a longer period. In our questionnaire to teachers we defined long-term as over 12 weeks.

The length of time spent in a school has been used as a definition in preference to the form of contractual arrangement because it was found that the contractual arrangements varied enormously. Some teachers were found to be working on long-term placements (of a year, in some cases) without receiving temporary contracts, while in one authority a temporary contract was issued for every placement, even of half a day.

As agreed in the settlement *A Teaching Profession for the 21st Century* (Scottish Executive, 2001b), the Scottish Negotiating Committee for Teachers (SNCT) has been discussing the use of temporary teachers. It is aiming to develop a National Code of Practice, with the aim of replacing Clause 8.5 of the Scheme of Salaries and Conditions of Service ('The Yellow Book'). This is likely to provide a better definition of different forms of temporary work and to clarify the pay and conditions under which supply teachers are working.

2.3 Supply and demand

Supply

The supply of supply teachers is inevitably closely linked to the overall supply of teachers. In Scotland, the Scottish Executive annually offers advice to the Scottish Higher Education Funding Council on setting intakes to initial teacher education (ITE) at the seven universities that are ITE providers. The decisions by SHEFC about intake numbers are based on an assessment of national need, relating to the school pupil population and the likely rate of attrition from the existing workforce. Some prioritisation of secondary subjects is made and providers are required to fill minimum percentage quotas of their allocation of secondary places with particular subjects.

The seven providers are located in Ayr, Glasgow (2), Stirling, Edinburgh, Dundee and Aberdeen. Students are attracted from across the country and indeed from other parts of the UK, although most mature students only apply to a local provider. Most of those graduating as teachers, with provisional registration, prefer to stay either in their training location or to return to their home area. The locational pattern of ITE and preferred first employment does not have a direct match with the pattern of need across the country and hence certain parts of the country have experienced particular

difficulty in meeting the staffing needs of their schools. Parts of the Highlands and Islands and the Southwest of Scotland have met these kinds of difficulties, although there are current discussions and plans to address some of these through innovative new programmes.

While there is not necessarily a direct correlation between patterns of first employment and availability of supply teachers, there is nevertheless a relationship between the two. Those areas which are relatively over-provided for in ITE are also areas where a considerable number of young teachers are working on a supply basis. However, this does not necessarily mean such areas have no difficulty securing supply cover, especially for unexpected absences. Those areas without local ITE provision may also be areas where supply cover is difficult to secure.

On the supply side, key factors that are subject to change include:

- demography of the existing workforce;
- supply of new entrants to the profession;
- wider national or regional economic circumstances.

Each of these factors may vary by the particular skills and qualifications of teachers, for example relating to age phase, subject specialism, special education expertise, denominational affiliation. Some factors are more predictable than others. For example the overall age profile of the teaching workforce is known, but the decision about when to retire may be influenced by changes in pension schemes. Or the number of new secondary teachers over the next few years may have been planned, but the precise numbers training to teach English and their likely location may not be determined.

Supply teachers in Scotland have come from three main pools of teachers: those at the start of their careers (who would generally prefer a permanent position); those returning after a career break; and those teaching who wish to reduce their work and responsibility, generally for child-care or as a move towards retirement. However, the first of these pools has been altered as a result of the agreement *A Teaching Profession for the 21st Century* (Scottish Executive, 2001b). Whereas in the past, a significant number of new teachers emerging from training went into supply posts as a first stage in a career ladder, all are now guaranteed an induction post for a year. There is widespread agreement that this is a very important development. Indeed the idea that someone emerging from college will be well-placed to cope with the demands of supply teaching – different classes, ages, schools, even authorities - and at the same time develop effectively in the first stage of their career, is somewhat bizarre.

The year during which this study was undertaken was the first in which newly qualified teachers were allocated induction posts. The conditions for this year, designed to lead from provisional to full registration with the GTCS, include 0.3 non-contact time for professional development, and induction support from a mentor who was to be given a 0.1 allowance for this purpose. Thus the scheme in itself has created additional demand for supply cover. But at the same time, in the year in which this research took place, it almost completely removed from the pool of available supply teachers one key source – those very same newly qualified teachers. There is considerable interest in what the net effect of all this will be as the new school year starts. It is not yet clear how many of those who have successfully completed[2] their induction year will achieve permanent posts and what proportion will

[2] Only 30 of 2100 have not successfully completed their induction in 2002-2003.

enter the supply market. Some authorities told us that all those completing the induction year would be added to the supply list without further selection processes.

With this reduction in the supply, education authorities need to explore other ways to increase the supply pool. It may be possible to increase the numbers by making supply teaching attractive enough to encourage more teachers who are currently inactive to return. Similarly, it may be possible to retain as supply teachers some who would otherwise have retired fully. Chapter 4 shows that a few education authorities are making active efforts to tap into both these sources. Another possible source of supply, not generally tapped into in Scotland, is the young overseas-trained teacher who wishes to travel. There is increasingly a global market in which young people travel around the world teaching. England has long used supply teachers from Australia, New Zealand, Canada and South Africa. Such teachers are usually recruited by private agencies, discussed later in this chapter.

Demand

Demand for supply teachers is created by teachers being absent from their normal duties; this may be for a range of reasons. We asked authorities, schools and supply teachers themselves about the most common reasons for their employment. The balance between the major reasons cited by authorities in their questionnaire returns is indicated in Table 2.1. It should be noted that eleven authorities did not make estimates: in six cases they specified that this was because the data was not available. In particular, some authorities where deployment is managed by the schools did not have this information.

Table 2.1: Education authority estimates of the proportion of different types of demand for cover (N = 21)

	mean %	range %
long-term cover for sickness /maternity leave	23	6-80
long-term cover for vacancies	15	10-30
day to day cover for sickness	47	30-76
short-term cover to enable staff to engage in professional development activities	16	10-35

The responses from authorities were difficult to collate because of different interpretations of the categories offered – and this also partly accounts for the very wide range of responses – however, we can confidently say that the greatest call for supply cover relates to short-term sickness (about half of all deployment), with long-term sickness and maternity cover being the second major demand. Nevertheless a significant minority of supply cover relates to staff vacancies and professional development. Authorities also indicated a number of other reasons for using supply cover, including hospital appointments, jury service, funerals and bereavements.

Members of the supply panels cited a similar range of reasons for their employment, also mentioning secondments, in-school development work and non-contact time for probationers and mentors. A number were employed in order to protect the school from fluctuations in their pupil numbers which would lead to a changed staffing establishment and budget for the school.

In a general sense the existence of a supply teacher workforce reflects the need for schools and education authorities to be able to be flexible and responsive to changing circumstances. Factors which may change on the demand side include:

- school rolls and preferred class sizes;
- school and education authority budgets;
- absence of established teaching staff from school;
- arrangements for the release of teachers from their teaching responsibilities (e.g. non-contact time for probationers; mentoring of probationers; 'management' time for teaching heads; reduction of agreed class contact time).

Although some factors are of a more predictable nature than others, it is true to say that the supply workforce exists at least in part in order to enable the education service to respond to unpredictability in need. Authority responses indicated that on average 40% of the employment of supply teachers was 'pre-booked' and 60% was arranged at short notice.

As indicated above, the introduction of an induction year in the agreement *A Teaching Profession for the 21st Century* (Scottish Executive, 2001b) has increased demand for supply teachers because those undergoing the induction year have 0.3 non-contact time for professional development, and have a mentor who is given a 0.1 allowance for this purpose. Another aspect of the agreement that will create an increased demand for teachers, and therefore may impact on the supply market, is the commitment to reduce all teachers' class contact time to 22.5 hours per week. By 2006 primary teachers' maximum contact time will have been reduced to this level from 25 hours and secondary teachers from 23.5.

The relationship between supply and demand

The vast majority of our respondents reported that there is currently a shortage of supply teachers. This has been increasing over several years, and has been exacerbated by the introduction of the induction year. This was attributed to both decreased supply and increased demand. One authority respondent noted on the questionnaire:

> *Over the last few years the numbers available for work have diminished. Shortages are no longer just at peak times, e.g. winter months, end of financial year. Demand has generally increased and is not proportionate to supply. New initiatives and funding opportunities have increased requirements.*

Several education authorities reported that there were times when it was not possible to find enough supply teachers to meet the demand. The winter months were described as the most difficult, and sickness epidemics or *'too many courses arranged on one day'* could exacerbate the situation.

We asked the authorities how easy it is to provide cover for different types of need. Out of the 32 authorities, five gave no response. In most cases this was because the deployment of supply teachers is managed by schools, so the authority did not know how difficult or easy it was proving to be. A further two simply wrote that it was 'all difficult'. Those that responded indicated that short-term sickness was the most difficult to cover, as indicated in Table 2.2 (overleaf). However, despite the many comments about shortages, it is noticeable that few authorities ticked the category 'always difficult'.

We also asked schools to say how often a suitably qualified supply teacher is available on the day requested (Table 2.3 overleaf). Over 40% of schools reported that a suitably qualified teacher is 'rarely' available when requested. The proportion was still higher in secondary and special schools, and in some (generally urban) authorities.

Table 2.2: Education authorities responses to 'How easy is it to provide cover for different types of need?' (N=25)

		easy	generally possible	often difficult	always difficult	mean*
Type of cover: short-term sickness	%	4	34	56	6	2.64
pre-booked short-term for CPD	%	4	68	22	6	2.14
long-term	%	12	34	36	18	2.44

* Means calculated using easy = 1, generally possible = 2, often difficult = 3, always difficult = 4. A mean of 2.5 would indicate neither easy nor difficult.

Table 2.3: Schools' response to 'A suitably qualified teacher is available on the day requested' by school type

		often	sometimes	rarely	*N*
nursery	%	25	42	33	*12*
primary	%	38	43	20	*160*
secondary	%	8	32	60	*168*
special	%	11	26	64	*47*
all	%	21	36	43	*387*

Note: Shading indicates the most frequent response in each school sector.

School managers' comments written on questionnaires included:

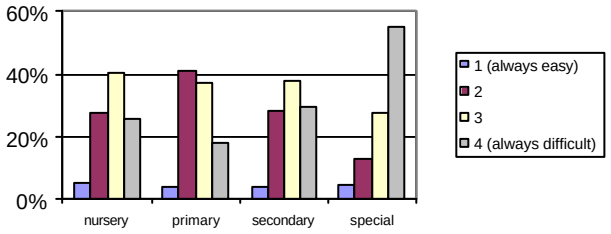
> *There are none!!!*
>
> *There is a huge shortage.*
>
> *It is becoming increasingly difficult to obtain enough supply teachers to meet the ever increasing number of staff who are absent through sickness/stress!!*

Many elaborated in terms of the effects on the school and on the managers themselves:

> *I am operating 2.5 FTE below because I cannot get supply – this puts great pressure on staff!*
>
> [This] *is the most frustrating & time wasting part of my job. I can spend over an hour from 7.45 am in the morning, making more than 30 phone calls and get no one!*

Overall, 21% of schools responded that a teacher is 'often' available, but this was higher for primary schools (38%) and lower for secondary and special schools. The authority responses also indicated that special schools have most difficulty and primary schools least difficulty in securing supply teachers when they need them (Figure 2.1).

Figure 2.1: Education authority survey: 'How easy is it to meet the demands for cover in each school sector?' Percentage of authorities giving rankings on a 4 point scale (N = 21)



It is not clear from the school response (Table 2.3) whether the difficulty for secondary and special schools is in finding any supply teacher or in finding a 'suitably qualified' one. In comments written on the questionnaire, secondary management were fairly evenly divided on this point. Some shared the view that *'there is just no-one there available to cover at all!'*; there is a *'grave shortage of supply staff'*. Others indicated that for short-term cover they rarely achieve subject specialists:

> *In most subjects, it is becoming very rare to get a supply teacher who is a subject specialist.*

Some had given up trying:

> *I prefer a teacher with proven class management skills to a teacher with subject qualification.*
>
> *Local, non-subject supply staff are most frequently used for short term absences.*

Several commented that it depended on the subject required. Overall, two-thirds of secondary schools indicated that supply teachers are 'rarely' qualified to teach the subject required, and more than half 'always' expect supply teachers to teach subjects other than the ones they are qualified to teach. When schools were asked which three subjects are most difficult to cover, mathematics and English came out most strongly, as shown in Table 2.4.

Table 2.4: School survey: Secondary subjects that are most difficult to cover - percentage of those responding that listed each subject (N=140)

	schools ranking 1st %	schools ranking 2nd %	schools ranking 3rd %	total schools mentioning subject %
Mathematics	19	16	9	44
English	11	10	14	36
Modern Languages	15	11	6	32
Music/Drama/Art	6	13	9	28
PE	12	6	9	27
Science	7	9	11	26
ICT	9	10	6	24
Technical	8	8	4	20
Social sciences	1	2	9	12
Home Economics	6	4	1	11
Commerce	4	2	1	6
RE	3	2	1	6
Learning support	0	1	1	2

A very similar ranking emerged from the education authorities' responses. Compared with the last published review of subject needs for supply cover (Scottish Executive, 2001a), it is notable that the difficulty of covering English has grown considerably. Analysis of the subjects mentioned by different authorities indicates that there is no relationship between the absence of local provision of ITE within a subject and the experience of shortage of supply teachers within that subject in the surrounding area.

Provision of appropriately trained and experienced supply teachers for the special school sector is also difficult. Seventeen authorities indicated that they keep a list of those supply teachers who had expressed an interest in working in special schools. However, 75% of the respondents from special schools indicated that their supply teachers rarely or never have specialist training. Several special school headteachers

commented on the survey that sometimes teaching assistants effectively act as supply teachers if a supply teacher is not available. One headteacher also said that the school sometimes attempts to give *'quick training'* to supply teachers who do not have SEN training.

Some special schools commented on overall shortage: *'No supply teachers available at all'; 'In the past 2½ years the local authority have only once come up with a supply teacher*.' However, many noted that teachers are unwilling to work in this sector:

> *Supply teachers available but refuse to work with pupils who have the most complex needs.*
>
> *If contact via EA, teachers may be available but not willing to work in special school.*

One noted that being a special school and delivering secondary subjects made it particularly difficult to find appropriate supply teachers.

Nursery managers' comments indicated that they rarely achieve short-term supply cover ('*If short term, no one will be sent or maybe a nursery nurse'*), and several noted using internal cover (including nursery nurses). For long-term absences too, specialist nursery staff were rarely available. Overall only 40% of nursery schools claimed that they 'usually' had supply teachers experienced with that age range.

While primary managers usually reported greater success than other sectors (Table 2.3), they indicated that success was variable, depending on the time of year (*'currently cover is unavailable and has been for weeks'*) and the type of booking: (*'We can usually get a supply teacher for a planned absence if we book them early enough'*). Even when cover is achieved one headteacher noted: *'Sometimes to get a week's cover you could need a patchwork of 3 or 4 people as some are on short term contracts of 2 or 3 days a week already.'* There is also a difficulty in achieving a match in terms of experience and qualifications: either teachers *'do not wish to teach a specific stage'* or *'may be primary qualified, but experience may not match needs of class.'* Overall, primary supply teachers are normally perceived by schools to have primary qualifications (98% of schools responding) and experience (95%).

Responses from schools suggest that the problems are worse in urban and inner city areas than in rural areas (Table 2.5). However, responses from education authorities gave the opposite picture (Figure 2.2 overleaf); they claimed that it is less easy to meet demands in rural areas, and the authorities that cover rural and remote areas were more likely to report serious difficulties:

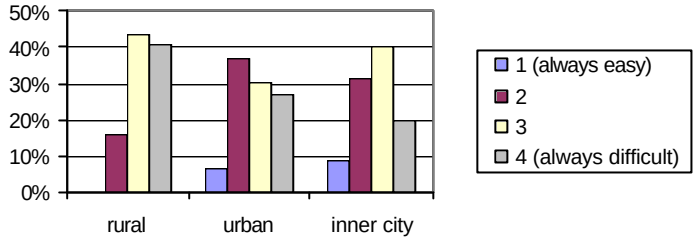
> *There is a dearth of qualified and competent teachers.*
>
> *The supply situation in rural areas is very difficult indeed.*

Table 2.5: Schools' response to 'A suitably qualified teacher is available on the day requested' by location (N = 385)

		often	sometimes	rarely	*N*
remote	%	36	28	26	*25*
rural	%	34	35	32	*98*
suburban	%	17	46	36	*80*
urban	%	14	32	53	*117*
inner city	%	11	41	48	*44*

Note: Shading indicates the most frequent response in each school sector

Figure 2.2: Education authority survey: 'How easy is it to meet the demands for cover in different geographical locations? Percentage of authorities giving rankings on a 4 point scale (N = 21)



In rural and remote areas there can be an overall shortage, such that not one supply teacher is available. One headteacher from an island authority noted: *'In January, I rang all 39 on list and none could give cover.'* When the list is short, the likelihood of having appropriate subject specialists available is also slim. Some small village schools rely very heavily on just one or two individuals, sometimes retired former teachers at the school. But when the 'regular' supply teacher is not available, it may be very much more difficult to find a substitute than it would be in an urban area. Authority staff told us of importing teachers from a considerable distance, paying their travelling expenses and finding accommodation for them. In such circumstances some supply teachers also make heroic journeys: one spoke of travelling 23 hours to another island (with travel costs refunded, but no payment for time spent travelling).

In urban and city authorities the issues are rather different. Authorities laid less emphasis on the overall shortage of supply teachers and much more on the difficulties of managing deployment effectively in a context in which daily-paid teachers can and do register with multiple authorities. Undoubtedly the issue of multiple registration is worse in the central belt: teacher responses indicated that teachers in a large city authority were registered with a mean of 2.1 authorities, but in a large rural authority, only 1.2 authorities.

One might speculate, then, that the issues of most concern in rural areas relate to supply (shortage in specific locations, and possibly overall shortage), whereas in the urban areas, shortage is also an issue, but the greater concern relates to specific barriers that hinder the development of an effective deployment system.

Whatever the area or type of school, the shortages were perceived to be exacerbated by supply teachers who are *'picky'* and will not take the work they are offered. This includes work in *'schools seen as tough'*; in the upper classes in primary schools (*'no-one wants to teach P7'*); in special schools or units; and where too much travel is involved. They also refuse to work on particular days. This was linked by some respondents to overall shortage:

> *There is a huge shortage, therefore supply staff have a variety of choices. They often choose not to come to inner city schools, if a 'better' school is available.*

This is further discussed in Chapter 5. One consequence of this is that the notion of permanent supply teachers who have to go where they are sent is perceived as attractive, and a potential solution to shortage and deployment issues.

Similarly, shortages may be exacerbated by inefficiencies in deployment. In a few cases we heard of a school unable to get a supply teacher on a day when a teacher

nearby wanted work but had been offered none. The systems for matching the two do not always seem to work effectively. This will be further explored in Chapter 5.

2.4 Deployment and employment issues

When are supply teachers deployed?

Although there is a national agreement that a supply teacher can be used from the third day of absence (or sooner if the absence was planned), the majority of authorities (20 out of 29 responding to this question) have developed their own approach. In most areas the budget for supply cover is partially or wholly devolved to schools, and this means that they can use supply teachers as they wish, provided they have the funds.

A typical arrangement is that central resources are used to finance the provision of cover for trade union duties, jury service, maternity leave, and participating in the work of the authority (e.g. on appointment panels). Some staff development is also funded centrally. Schools have a devolved budget to cover short-term sickness. If sickness absence exceeds a certain period, then the authority funds it. This period varies both between authorities, and between types of school. Thus in one authority, secondary schools are responsible for the first 15 days, and primary for five days. In another authority the period is ten days in all schools. In several authorities, the period of absence a school has to cover from its budget depends on the FTE teaching complement of the school. Even where the budget is not devolved, some authorities have local agreements that primary schools with teaching heads can ask for immediate cover.

Indeed about two-thirds of primary schools and three-quarters of nurseries in the survey indicated that they seek to employ supply cover on the first day of absence, as did half the special schools. The majority of the secondary schools seek cover on the third or fourth day, or even later. In most secondary schools there is a system of internal cover, known colloquially as 'please takes', where staff members are requested to take classes during their non-contact periods. Systems of this sort are designed to ensure that classes are taught before a supply teacher is sought. However, it was clear from the schools' own responses that there is much variation on this, with some of them employing supply cover before the three days has expired and others making ongoing use of 'please takes' thereby avoiding the need to employ a supply teacher and making savings on their budget.

The education authorities play a key role in most parts of the country in managing the system. Each authority maintains a list of daily-paid supply teachers. However, the detailed arrangements for the deployment of supply staff again vary greatly, with some authorities taking full responsibility; others devolving it to schools (and retaining only the maintenance of a register of supply teachers and the payment arrangement themselves); and others where there is a mixture of these two basic alternatives (see Chapter 5).

Supply teacher employment agencies

Although there is a wide variety of arrangements, there is very little use of private supply teacher agencies in Scotland. In England, the majority of the management of supply cover is now done in arrangement between schools and private agencies; most local education authorities play very little part in the systems. This stark difference may reflect a number of factors including: the overall teacher supply situation in the

two countries; the greater extent of financial devolution to schools which exists in England; stronger ideological opposition to private sector involvement in Scotland; a belief that it would be more expensive to employ supply teachers through agencies; and concern about the authority's ability to monitor quality.

Employment agencies have certainly explored developing their activities north of the border – twenty authorities said they had been approached - but only three indicated that they had any arrangement with an agency, and a further three acknowledged that they occasionally used an agency to fill long-term posts. All of these authorities were well outside the central belt and faced difficulties associated with their rural nature. In addition, eight schools, including some in authorities other then the six above, reported that they sometimes use an agency. Fourteen authorities claimed that they would not consider using agencies in the future; the majority of the remainder said that they did not know. One suggested that an agency might be used for special schools, and possibly secondary schools, but felt that primary schools were adequately catered for by current arrangements.

Contracts of employment

The use of formal contracts in the employment of supply teachers is another aspect which varies widely around the country. One member of our supply panels who had been continuously employed for three years had never been offered a contract to sign. Another was given one after two years, but with no explanation of why it had been offered at that point. It was not entirely clear that a signed contract was advantageous for the teacher in any case, because it could lead to the loss of the right to claim benefits during summer holidays or in between jobs and in any case the employer reserved the right to termination before the due date.

The authorities varied in the duration of employment that would trigger the issuing of a fixed term contract. One issued them for three weeks or more. One authority issued contracts for every single placement – even for just half a day. At the other extreme, one only issued contracts for 13 weeks or more.

One local authority recently prepared a paper for its local joint negotiating committee for teaching staff, on the topic of temporary employment of teachers. The aim was to develop proposals to bring about consistent good practice. It helpfully defines six different categories of contracts as follows:

- casual supply
- fixed-term contracts
- temporary contracts
- permanent part-time contracts
- job-sharing
- probationer's one year training contract.

This authority was proposing that temporary or fixed term contracts:

> … should, as far as possible, be restricted to specific situations:
> i. to provide cover for a teacher on maternity leave
> ii. long-term absence to attend in-service training
> iii. in the case of long-term illness
> iv. secondment to another post for a fixed period
> v. to cover for a seconded teacher
> vi. to undertake a clearly defined job of fixed duration
> vii. where there is a clear and explicit recognition that the roll of a school will fall substantially in the immediate future

viii. externally funded posts for a specific project of limited duration.

There was an assumption in the document from which this is taken, that the need for 'casual supply' will continue and will operate outside the above categories.

The rights of temporary teachers to permanent employment were highlighted during the period of the study by the publicity given to the case brought by Mrs Anna McGuiness and her union, the NASUWT, in Glasgow. She had been employed as a teacher of classics at the same school continuously for years. The 'Yellow Book' which sets out the nationally agreed conditions of employment for teachers states in clause 8.5 that:

> A teacher who is employed on the temporary staff may at any time apply for a transfer to the permanent staff and the application shall normally not be refused if a teacher has given satisfactory full-time continuous service for a period of one year.

In the Court of Session, the judge ruled that Glasgow City Council had no good reason to reject Mrs McGuiness's application for transfer to permanent employment. Glasgow has been considering whether to appeal against this ruling. However, in the meantime and following this judgement, many other local authorities have been urgently reviewing their employment practices relating to temporary teaching staff. The teacher unions have been urging their members on temporary contracts to seek permanent status from their employers.

Paradoxically this has created even more anxiety for some of the supply teachers who are on shorter-term arrangements, leading to them seeing even more difficulty in moving up the unofficial career ladder. The fact that many temporary teachers were apparently to be offered permanent contracts would mean an even longer wait for opportunities to arise for which they would be eligible. Members of our supply panels also talked of the dangers of moving between authorities, when a posting came to an end. There was a view that authorities would reward the loyalty of supply teachers who only worked for them by prioritising them when opportunities for longer term contracts or even permanent status came up.

There was also a view that some employers would cynically ensure that there was a break of continuous service, usually at the end of the school year, in order to avoid the implications of employing someone for a whole year, that is, of being required to offer them a permanent contract. Indeed one authority openly talked about 'resting' staff for this reason, and that is a term on their staff database. On the other hand, some authorities said that they took great trouble to ensure that those with 'employment rights' were able to maintain continuous service, even to the extent of offering them placements in schools that did not currently need their services. One authority wrote recently to all 244 of their teachers who have had at least one year continuous service on a temporary basis. Ninety-seven percent of them responded that they would wish to have a permanent contract and the authority has been going through a process of evaluating their claims. The great majority are now employed on a permanent basis by the authority.

Several panel members were reluctant to apply for permanent status because they believed it would mean that the authority would have the right to deploy them to any school – that is they would be employed as permanent supply teachers. This might mean an unacceptably long journey or being placed at a school which they did not want to work in. Their reasons could range from the reputation of the school, through feeling uncomfortable with an aspect of the school's organisation to a personality clash with a colleague in the school. One panel member working happily in a Roman

Catholic school was not planning to seek permanent status because she was not a Catholic herself and therefore believed herself to be ineligible for a permanent contract at that school, and thus expected to be sent elsewhere if made permanent.

Twenty authorities employed a pool of permanent supply teachers at the time of our survey, the majority of these only in the primary sector (see Chapter 3). The lead here has been set by South Lanarkshire which employs a total of 224 out of the national total reported from our survey of 469. Several other authorities have expanded their pool or are planning to expand at present. One of these was Glasgow, but their plans were put on hold in the wake of the court case discussed above.

Payment and conditions

In addition to the contractual uncertainties experienced by supply teachers, many felt they were disadvantaged in terms of their conditions of work. For example, members of our panels were uncertain whether they were entitled to take leave for moving house or for compassionate reasons. Even if they were allowed to take the time off, they expected not to be paid, as established teachers would be. Some felt they were very much the subject of the headteacher's discretion in these matters.

Some supply teachers, particularly in rural or island authorities, are asked to work in schools at considerable distance from their homes, and overall, 7% of our sample had received travelling expenses. One rural authority offered an allowance of 17.5p per mile for journeys over 20 miles. However, there was no consistent practice across the country.

The arrangements for payment of supply teachers were another matter where practice varied. A temporary full-time teacher receives 1/195th of the annual salary for each day worked (there being 195 days in the school year). Some authorities paid all their short-term supply teachers an hourly rate of 1/1365th of the annual salary (1365 being 39 weeks x 35 hours). One authority stated in a letter to supply teachers on its list that

> … under new McCrone regulations the salary receivable by a temporary part-time teacher shall accrue on an hourly basis and will be calculated on class contact time plus 40% for primary staff, 50% for secondary , 55% for special.

This presumably represents the difference between the expected class-contact hours and the 35 hours working week; however, such arrangements caused some confusion to teachers on our supply panels. In some cases it was apparently possible for a secondary teacher who taught continuously through the day without any non-contact periods to earn more than the 1/195th for a day's work.

A further issue of concern to teachers was the practice of employing secondary supply teachers to cover only a part of the day. Normally teachers are employed for days or half days; however, some were employed in secondary schools simply to take one or two lessons. One authority stated in its guidance to schools that:

> It would be acceptable to ask a supply teacher to undertake work for 2 hours 50 minutes in a morning even where the full morning session is 3 hours 35 minutes long – payment would then be for the 2.84 decimal hours worked.

In such circumstances a teacher might reasonably expect half a day's pay, as they would not be able to obtain work for the other period. However, the same authority stated that 'the minimum time for a single continuous working period shall be two hours', and that a teacher should not be called on to work two or more separate such periods in any school in a single working day (i.e. periods at the beginning of the

morning and the end of the afternoon). Teachers on the supply panels expressed unhappiness at such arrangements, as working for a spell in the middle of the day in one school generally made it impossible to get other work, and reduced their overall pay considerably.

Some primary teachers found that if they arrived at a school during the morning, say at 10 o'clock, having been phoned just before 9 o'clock, they would lose an hour's equivalent of their pay. If a supply booking is cancelled at the last minute because the individual is not needed after all or because bad weather has closed the school, there was no redress for the supply teacher, although they might well have lost the opportunity for alternative employment on that day.

It is clear that these problems particularly affect those who are doing day by day supply teaching on a short-term basis, rather than the full range of temporary teachers. However the effect on those teachers can be to cause considerable irritation and in a few cases, real disenchantment and even bitterness. These effects are less apparent on older supply teachers who are doing such work by choice and most apparent among younger supply staff (see Chapter 7).

2.5 Summary

Supply teachers in Scotland currently come from three main pools of teachers: those at the start of their careers (who would generally prefer a permanent position); those returning after a career break, generally for child-care; and those teachers who wish to reduce their work and responsibility, as a move towards retirement. The first of these pools has been reduced by the introduction of a year's induction placement for those completing initial teacher education courses.

Demand for supply teachers is created by teachers being absent from their normal duties; this may be for a range of reasons. The authority responses indicated that just under half the demand is for short-term cover for sickness, a quarter for long-term sickness or maternity leave, and the remainder is split between long-term cover for vacancies and short-term cover for professional development activities. On average, authorities reported that 40% of the employment of supply teachers was 'pre-booked' and 60% was arranged at short notice.

Respondents reported that there is currently a shortage of supply teachers. This has been increasing over several years, and has been exacerbated by the introduction of the induction year: over 40% of schools reported that suitably qualified teachers were 'rarely' available when requested, while only 21% of schools reported that such teachers were 'often' available. Secondary and special schools reported greater difficulty than primary schools in obtaining supply teachers. Schools in urban and inner-city areas reported the greatest difficulty, though the education authorities considered that the shortages were more severe in rural and remote areas. The difficulties in obtaining supply cover were increased by the tendency of supply teachers to be very selective about which schools they worked in; and by problems in creating effective deployment systems.

To respond to the demand for supply cover, authorities employ supply teachers in two main ways. Most are registered on an education authority list and are paid a daily rate of 1/195 of the annual salary for the days they work (which may be full-time or very infrequently). This arrangement is used even when teachers are undertaking long-term placements covering vacancies or secondments. In some cases temporary or

fixed-term contracts are issued. The duration of employment that would trigger the issuing of a contract varies across education authorities.

In addition, at the time of our survey 20 authorities employed a total of around 500 supply teachers on permanent contracts. Almost half of these were employed in one authority, South Lanarkshire. However, since that time other authorities have expanded their permanent supply pools, partly in response to the contractual concerns identified above.

Emerging issues

Strategies that could increase supply include:

- making supply teaching attractive enough to encourage more teachers who are currently inactive to return;
- offering older teachers opportunities to leave full-time employment and take up part-time permanent supply work, thus retaining as supply teachers some who would otherwise have retired fully;
- aiming to attract young overseas-trained teachers who wish to travel.

Strategies to reduce demand include:

- increasing the scope for schools to organise cover internally;
- reducing the volume of professional development activities and meetings in school time;
- trying to reduce teacher absence by tackling stress, or even providing flu injections.

It may not be feasible for a small authority to fulfil demands for specialists (in secondary subjects or special needs), and strategies adopted need to accept this.

The outcomes of the current negotiations within the SNCT relating to the contractual and payment arrangements for supply teachers should have a significant impact on the management of supply cover.

Chapter 3: Supply teachers

3.1 Introduction

This chapter draws on quantitative data from the questionnaires to education authorities and supply teachers, supplemented by qualitative data from the same groups. Chapter 1 (pp. 6-7) explained that, since there is no national data on this group, it is difficult to tell how far our sample of supply teachers is representative. Comparisons with the data supplied by education authorities and with the EIS survey (2001) suggest that the sample over-represents secondary teachers and men, and may slightly over-represent more experienced teachers.

This chapter is divided into four sections: numbers of supply teachers in different categories; their personal characteristics (age, gender, experience, ethnicity etc.); their motivations and career patterns; and the skills and strategies needed to be a successful supply teacher.

3.2 Numbers of supply teachers in each category

Daily-paid supply teachers

There are no reliable figures for the total number of people working as supply teachers on a daily-paid basis. Each education authority indicated how many daily-paid teachers were registered on their list. However, adding these figures together (total, 17,362) would over-estimate the total pool, because many individuals are registered with more than one authority. We asked the supply teachers who responded to our questionnaire how many authorities they were registered with; the mean response was 1.6 authorities. This would suggest that the total number of individuals registered as supply teachers is around 11,000. In 1998, 5289 supply teachers were recorded in the schools census; however, no definition of the category is given, and it seems reasonable to believe that schools would have included short-term supply teachers, but possibly not those on long-term placements. The largest teaching union, the EIS, have over 6000 temporary teachers in their membership.

As Chapter 2 stated, the education authorities supplied figures for numbers of daily-paid teachers ranging from 56 to over 2800, with an average of 523 per authority (241 primary, 282 secondary). However, there is no consistent relationship between the number of daily-paid supply teachers and the number of full-time equivalent teachers in the authority (as recorded in the School Census). The ratio varies from 12.8 daily-paid teachers to every 100 FTE teachers, to 89.1 daily-paid to every 100 FTEs. There are a number of reasons for this.

First, as indicated above, several authorities pointed out that many of the teachers on their lists were also registered with neighbouring authorities. This happened more where authorities were urban and geographically small. In such locations, some teachers were registered with five or more different authorities. Several authorities, particularly those in the central belt, expressed considerable frustration that they were wasting time attempting to contact teachers who were often working for neighbouring authorities.

Secondly, many daily-paid teachers are not available for work every day, and it may be that some authorities have particularly large numbers who are prepared to work

only part-time as daily-paid supply teachers. Many supply teachers are available fewer than five days a week - some because they have regular part-time or job-share commitments in one school, and so are only available for supply on their 'free' days; others because they are engaged in child-care. Many of those who are approaching retirement or are actually retired prefer to work part-time. The teacher questionnaire asked how many days respondents were available for supply work each week. While 70% responded that they were available 5 days a week, subsequent responses showed that many of these wanted to work on fewer days, but that they did not mind *which* days. Only 40% stated that they actually *did* teach 5 days a week; the average number of days worked per week among the sample was 3.5 (Table 3.1).

Table 3.1: Supply teachers' responses to 'How many days do you actually teach in an average week?'

no. of days	count	%
0	3	1
1	49	10
2	87	17
3	95	19
4	66	13
5	196	39
N	*499*	*100*

Some teachers would have liked to teach more often, but over 60% indicated that there were fewer than ten days in the year when they wanted to work and were not offered any (Table 3.2).

Table 3.2: Supply teachers' responses to 'In the last year (2002), please give your best estimate of the number of days when you have not been offered work when you would have liked to be working.'

no. of days	count	%
less than 10	295	59
10-19	57	11
20-29	47	9
30-39	34	7
40-49	12	2
more than 50	54	11
N	*499*	*100*

A third reason why some authorities have higher numbers of daily-paid supply teachers is that there appears to be considerable variation in the extent to which authorities use daily-paid teachers to fill vacancies; figures given ranged from 10% to 30% of total demand. This is presumably a strategy to keep staffing flexible and be able to respond to falling rolls. One ex-headteacher of a large secondary school commented that he was *'always keen to have that degree of flexibility around'*, and talked about the difficulty of *'having too many people tied up in permanent contracts'*. However, teachers in such situations often have employment rights, and may therefore seek permanent contracts (see Chapter 2, p. 21).

Permanent supply teachers

According to figures supplied by the education authorities, there were 469 permanent supply teachers employed at the start of 2003 (i.e. around 4.3% of the total number of individuals engaged in supply teaching). In our sample the proportion on permanent contracts was only 2%. However, it was notable that the term 'permanent supply teacher' appeared to be unfamiliar to some of the respondents. Some who indicated that they were doing long-term supply on a daily rate also indicated that they were permanent supply teachers, suggesting that they took the term permanent to mean long-term, rather than on a permanent contract.

The number of education authorities with primary permanent supply teachers (20), and the total number of primary permanent supply teachers (326, of whom 104 are in S. Lanarkshire), broadly match the figures reported in the Supply Teachers Working Group report (Scottish Executive, 2001a). However, there has been a considerable increase in numbers of secondary permanent supply teachers. They are now found in seven authorities, but the bulk of the increase is in South Lanarkshire which has increased its numbers from 8 to 120 secondary permanent teachers, thus giving that authority a total of 224 permanent supply teachers. In other authorities numbers remain low, as shown on Table 3.3.

Table 3.3: Numbers of EAs with different numbers of permanent supply teachers (N = 31)

no. of permanent supply teachers	primary (EAs)	secondary (EAs)	all permanent supply teachers (EAs)
0	11	24	11
1-10	12	6	11
11-20	5	0	5
21-30	1	0	1
30-100	1	0	2
over 100	1	1	1

Note: One further EA indicated that permanent supply teachers were employed but did not indicate numbers.

Comments written on the questionnaires and interviews with staff in education authorities showed that changes were already under way that would dramatically increase the number of permanent supply staff. These changes had been brought about in some education authorities by concerns about employment law and the employment rights of supply teachers with continuous service, and in other education authorities from concerns about what was described as a shortage of supply staff.

Short-term and long-term supply teachers

Table 3.4 shows that half the supply teachers in our sample defined their main work in the last year as short-term supply teaching, and the other half as long-term or a mixture of the two. It is worth noting that the proportions here match the mean proportions given by education authorities in response to a question about demand[3].

[3] If those ticking 'a mixture' are ignored (because the mixture may be assumed to be in the same proportions as that shown by those who ticked a single category), then 65% do short-term supply, 20% cover maternity leave or long-term sickness and 15% cover vacancies. The mean EA responses in relation to type of demand were 63% short-term, 23% maternity and long-term sickness, and 15% covering vacancies (see Table 2.1, p. 13).

Table 3.4: Teacher responses to 'In the past 12 months (2002), what sort of supply work have you *mainly* done?' (N = 665)

	count	%
short term, covering sickness, or professional development activities	335	50
long term, covering maternity or long term sickness	101	15
long term, covering a permanent post	78	12
mixture of above	151	23

Note: Long-term was defined in this question as placements of more than 12 weeks.

Over a quarter of respondents defined their main work in the last year as long-term supply teaching, working in a school for periods of over 12 weeks. Of these, a majority were covering for maternity leave or long-term sickness. Just under half claimed that they were filling vacancies rather than substituting for a specific individual. As indicated above, this group were concentrated in particular authorities which possibly used this as a strategy to achieve flexible staffing. However, the numbers of teachers responding in each authority were too small for this to be reliable data. Of those providing long-term cover, two-thirds had worked in only one school in the last year. Less than a quarter of the teachers in the sample stated that in the last year they had combined different types of work.

Half the supply teachers in our sample identified their work as short-term cover. Of these, 43% had worked only in one school in the last year (Table 3.5). This group includes both some who had retired and only worked in their former school, and a number who have part-time or job-share work in a school and are willing to undertake short-term supply in the same school on the days when they are not fulfilling their part-time / job-share role. The remaining 53% of the short-term teachers have worked in more than one school, though as Table 3.5 shows, half of these have worked only in 2 to 4 schools. The stereotype of the supply teacher spending short periods of time in a great many schools is not generally the reality in Scotland.

Table 3.5: Number of different schools worked in during last 12 months by type of supply (teacher survey)

no. of schools	short term %	long term %	mixture %
0-1	43	62	36
2-4	29	27	34
5-9	18	11	23
10+	11	0	7
N	*298*	*169*	*140*

3.3 Personal characteristics

Gender, age and ethnicity

Overall, 73% of the sample of supply teachers were women; this is very close to the percentage of women teachers nationally (74% according to the School Census, Scottish Executive, September 2002) This figure is lower than the 86% women found in the EIS sample (EIS, 2001), and may reflect the over-representation of secondary teachers in our sample. There are considerable differences in gender distribution by school sector reflecting those in the teaching population as a whole. In the sample 95% of the *primary* teachers were women (93% nationally, School Census 2002), but

only 58% of the *secondary* teachers (56% nationally). Out of 65 special school teachers in the sample, 86% were women (82% nationally).

The education authorities interviewed did not generally have data available on the ages of their supply teachers. Figure 3.1 shows the proportion in the questionnaire sample in each age group. It was noted in Chapter 1 (pp. 6-7) that the sample may include slightly more with substantial teaching experience than the total population of supply teachers, as indicated in education authority figures, suggesting that the sample may include a higher proportion of older teachers than the population as a whole.

Figure 3.1 Ages of supply teachers in survey sample by gender (N = 690)

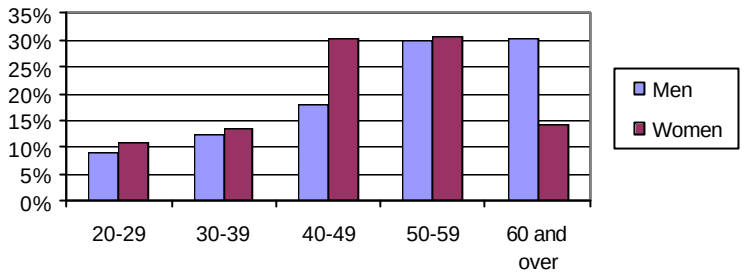


Figure 3.1 shows that the men in the sample were on average older than the women, and in particular that there were significantly more men among the over 60 age group, and significantly more women in their forties, when many women prioritise childcare.

The age distributions for primary and secondary supply teachers in the sample were similar; minor differences are accounted for by the higher proportion of men teaching in secondary schools. Those teaching in special schools were generally rather older, possibly reflecting the fact that teachers enter and/or train for special school teaching after gaining their initial teaching qualification. However, it must be remembered that the total number of special school teachers in the sample was low (63), and may be unrepresentative.

Overall 94.3% of the sample declared themselves to be of white UK origin, 3.5% White Other, 1.3% Asian, 0.3% Black and 0.6% 'Other'. Those from minority ethnic group backgrounds were found almost entirely in the secondary and special sectors. The Black and Asian teachers were all located in suburban or urban areas, while the White Other teachers were also found in remote and rural areas. These teachers were found right across the age ranges. Unlike in England, there is no indication of an influx of young overseas-trained teachers.

Teaching experience

Table 3.6 (overleaf) shows that supply teachers in the sample had substantial teaching experience. This generally reflects the age profile.

One in six of the sample were mature entrants to the profession (over 30 years old on entry). This is somewhat lower than the proportion of those over age 30 entering permanent posts and full-time temporary contracts of more than 3 months in 2000-2001 (37%) (Scottish Executive statistics).

Table 3.6: Length of teaching experience of daily-paid supply teachers: responses from supply teachers

Teaching experience	teachers Number	%
0 to 2 years	82	13
3 to 5 years	87	14
6 to 20 years	262	43
over 21 years	181	30
N	*612*	*100*

Many of the teachers in the sample had taken substantial career breaks, either to care for dependants, or to work in other occupations (e.g. set up their own business, work as librarian, nurse, etc.). Supply teaching is a way back into teaching after a break, and this was the case for a quarter of the sample, whose occupation immediately before they took up supply teaching was having a career break. But it also seems likely that supply teaching may appeal more to those with varied and fragmented careers. Around half the respondents to the teacher questionnaire had worked outside teaching (other than in student jobs), and a quarter had worked in other occupations for over five years.

Of the whole sample, 13% came to supply teaching from employment outside teaching and 4% from unemployment (Table 3.7). Altogether almost 40% had been in teaching jobs immediately before supply teaching. These were mainly the older supply teachers, either retired from teaching or moving towards retirement.

Table 3.7: What were you doing immediately before you started supply teaching?

	count	%
permanent teaching post in one school	223	34
career break – caring for dependants	137	21
initial teacher education	110	17
other employment	83	13
temporary/fixed term teaching post in one school*	32	5
Unemployed	26	4
other career break	26	4
career break – travelling	10	1
career break – studying	8	1
Other	5	1
N	*660*	*100*

* This category is actually included in the definition of supply teaching used in this report. However, when the questionnaire was devised, we were not aware that all those on temporary contacts are daily paid.

While the majority of supply teachers had substantial teaching experience, around 17% of the sample (110 respondents) came straight from initial teacher education. Thus their only teaching experience had been gained as students or supply teachers. In the future this will not happen because those leaving initial teacher education are guaranteed a one-year induction placement (see Chapter 2, p.12).

3.4 Motivations and career patterns

The previous section has shown that supply teachers vary enormously in terms of age and experience, and from this it is evident that their reasons for doing supply teaching

will be equally varied. Table 3.8 sets out their responses on this topic, and shows a clear age-related pattern.

Table 3.8: Reasons for doing supply teaching by age (teacher survey) (N = 699)

	20-29 %	30-39 %	40-49 %	50-59 %	60+ %	all %
I am doing supply teaching because I cannot obtain a *full-time* teaching post in my area	74	52	39	13	0	31
I am doing supply teaching in order to gain wider experience	21	29	22	9	2	16
I am doing supply teaching because I cannot obtain a *part-time* teaching post in my area	18	33	32	15	2	21
I prefer supply work because I am trying to develop another career	3	7	10	5	1	6
Supply teaching fits better with my childcare and family commitments	1	35	45	33	16	32
I prefer supply teaching because the workload is less	4	16	26	41	26	29
I am supply teaching to supplement my pension	0	0	6	31	86	29
I prefer supply teaching for another reason	11	12	13	20	13	16

Notes: Percentages add up to more than 100 because people ticked multiple reasons.
Shading indicates age groups selecting a response at a higher level than the sample as a whole, shown in the final column.

The youngest teachers were the most likely to be trying to get permanent full-time jobs, and those in their thirties and forties, permanent part-time jobs. Altogether 42% of the sample claimed they were unable to get permanent jobs. This figure is lower than the 55% wanting permanent jobs reported in the EIS survey (2001); this may be partly because those completing initial teacher education courses in 2002 went into induction placements rather than entering supply teaching; this reduced the number of supply teachers who were recently qualified and wanted permanent jobs. Many of this younger group also indicated that supply teaching offered them experience (which could be seen as helpful in applying for a permanent job).About a third of the teachers in the survey indicated that supply teaching was currently their preference because of child-care and family commitments. The older teachers responded in terms of reducing workload, and for 29% of the sample, supplementing their pensions.

In this section, three groups with different motivations and career patterns are discussed: those at the start of their teaching careers, those combining supply teaching with other occupations (in particular child care) and those at the end of their careers. A high proportion of the teachers who responded to the questionnaire or who participated in interviews and focus groups could be fitted into one of these groups, but they do not cover the full range of career routes and motivations that were found. Supply teachers are an enormously diverse group, and in a short report it is not possible to cover the full range of those involved.

Supply teaching as career entry

A substantial proportion of the supply teachers are at the start of their teaching careers; this includes both probationers and those with full GTCS registration who have not yet obtained a permanent job, and comprised about a quarter of our sample. The sample included 97 teachers who had only provisional registration. This group varied in age: 40% were in their twenties, 28% in their thirties, 26% in their forties

and 6% in their fifties. A third of them reported that it was more than five years since they had qualified as teachers; many of these had had career breaks. In addition, some 11% (61 teachers) of those in our sample with full GTCS registration had come to supply teaching directly from teacher training, and have not yet achieved permanent teaching posts. Thus the group for whom supply teaching is a career entry route vary in age and in time since qualification.

Before September 2002, a normal career entry pattern on completion of teaching training, was to enter supply teaching. Draper *et al.* (1997) found that two-thirds of those completing probation had started as supply teachers, divided between short-term and long-term supply. They drew attention to the pattern of employment during probation, in which progress was along a career ladder:

short term supply – long-term temporary – permanent employment.

Probationers entered the profession at different places on this ladder and many moved on during their probation. This ladder could be revised to include permanent supply work:

daily-paid short term supply – daily-paid long-term supply – permanent supply – permanent post in one school.

However, this pattern has now been changed by the introduction of an induction placement, described in Chapter 2, p. 12. In previous years, then, the proportion of recently qualified teachers in the supply pool was higher than it is this year. The 1998 school census recorded that 35% of supply teachers had only provisional GTCS registration, although, as stated earlier, it is not stated what definition of supply teachers was used in this context. In our survey about 14% had provisional registration; the smaller proportion reflects the introduction of the induction year. This suggests that nationally some 1600 supply teachers have provisional registration. In interview the GTCS representative indicated that there were just under 7000 teachers with provisional registration under the old scheme on its register at the time of this research. Since they are paying the annual fee it might be assumed that they are teaching. Thus a majority of these appear to have achieved permanent jobs. However, for those that have not, the prospects are not encouraging; increasingly jobs advertised require full registration, in line with the new induction arrangements. It is particularly difficult for secondary teachers to achieve the required number of days teaching their own subject to gain full registration, because they are often asked to do general cover. In our sample, 80% of those with provisional registration were secondary teachers. Or, to look at this from a different perspective; almost one-fifth of the secondary teachers in the sample had only provisional registration, compared with only 7% of primary teachers and 6% of special school teachers. Half the supply teacher probationers stated that they had not been involved in any professional development in the last twelve months (see Chapter 6, p. 76). Many expressed concern about this, in relation to the need to gain full GTCS registration.

Some authorities had in the past depended particularly on those completing teacher education courses to form their supply pool, and for them the introduction of the induction year has had a negative impact on their ability to provide supply cover to meet demands. However, this was not universally true; many of the rural and remote authorities have never had substantial numbers of probationers in their supply pool, and for them the induction year has had no impact in relation to supply cover.

The question that arises in connection with this group is the appropriateness of supply teaching at an early stage in the teaching career. The experiences offered are probably not the most suitable for recently qualified teachers. Draper *et al.* (1997) refer to a teacher who had had 122 separate periods of employment in 52 separate schools during the probationary period, and still higher figures were quoted to us during the research. Such fragmentary experience clearly does not meet the needs of these teachers. This was acknowledged by one education authority interviewee: *'I appreciate that it is not desirable for them. But we run this for the service's sake not for them.'*

Moreover, many respondents claimed that an effective supply teacher is one with experience, and with qualities rather different from those needed by an effective classroom teacher (discussed later in this chapter). Thus the probationary supply teacher may not be meeting the needs of schools. This issue will be further discussed in the last section of this chapter. But if supply teaching is to be seen as a normal stage in the early career of a teacher (even if it is after the induction placement), there are possible implications for the design of initial teacher education courses.

Those supply teachers in the early stages of their careers were more likely to be doing long-term supply, and were more likely than other groups to be covering vacancies (Table 3.9). Thus many of them only work in one school. This is seen as a step towards a permanent job, but nevertheless has considerable disadvantages. In particular the lack of stability is a major concern for these young teachers. Since they do not have permanent contracts and are paid on a daily basis, they report that it is difficult to obtain mortgages, and it is very difficult to plan ahead. The main advantage of supply teaching identified by this group was the potential for gaining wide experience of different schools and classes. But, while this could be seen as professional development, the lack of more structured professional development was a major concern (see Chapter 6, pp. 72-7).

Table 3.9: Main type of supply work by age (teacher survey)

	20-29 %	30-39 %	40-49 %	50-59 %	60+ %	all %
short term, covering e.g. sickness, professional development	19	37	50	55	70	50
long term, covering maternity or long term sickness	22	21	18	12	8	15
long term, covering a permanent post	27	21	9	11	2	12
mixture of all	32	20	23	22	21	23
N	*69*	*89*	*175*	*200*	*126*	*665*

Note: Shading indicates that, in comparison to the overall figures, a higher proportion of the age group are engaged in that form of supply teaching.

This group emerged as the most discontented with supply teaching and the most concerned about the lack of professional development. They also expressed concerns that they may be disadvantaged in the competition for permanent posts in comparison with those who had gone through the new induction year.

Supply teaching combined with another occupation

The second main grouping is those supply teachers who combine teaching with another occupation. In contrast with the previous group, who might be described as

doing supply teaching because they *have to,* this group have generally *chosen* supply teaching because it suits their current time and lifestyle needs.

Overall, 43% of the supply teacher sample stated that they combine supply teaching with another activity. This was the case for some of the young teachers discussed above; activities such as bar work brought in extra income. But the main groups who combine supply teaching and other main activities are those aged 30-59, those living in rural or remote areas, and those doing short-term supply teaching (see Table 3.10).

Table 3.10: Percentage of supply teachers who indicated that they combine supply teaching with another regular activity (N = 655)

age group	%
20-29	23
30-39	53
40-49	47
50-59	46
60+	38

gender	%
men	40
women	44

type of supply	%
short-term	52
long-term	32
mixed	40

location	%
rural / remote	54
suburban/urban	38
inner city	35

Table 3.11 shows the various activities that supply teachers engage in, categorised by gender. The most common activity is caring for their own children, predominantly done by the women. Some, and particularly those women in their fifties and sixties, combined supply teaching with care for other dependants (in this case often elderly parents). Women were also more likely to combine supply teaching with part-time work in one school, as described above.

Table 3.11: Main activities that supply teachers do in addition to teaching (teacher survey)

	men %	women %	groups most frequently involved
child-care (own children)	13	38	*women, 30-49 age group*
other employment	29	15	*rural/remote, inner city (not suburban)*
a part-time teaching job in one school	9	20	*rural/remote, 20-29 age group*
self-employment	24	13	*50-59 age group, not inner-city)*
caring for other dependants	10	19	*Older*
studying	11	11	
other	30	13	
N	*88*	*270*	

Notes: Percentages are of those men / women who *do* combine teaching with something else, not of all respondents.
Percentages add up to more than 100% because respondents could tick more than one response.
Shading indicates the three most frequent responses in each gender group.

Supply teaching is also often combined with other forms of employment or self-employment, particularly by men. The most frequent occupations are artistic (musician, craftsperson, piano teacher etc.) and tutoring and private tuition. Others include farming, examination work, sporting activities (e.g. golf caddie, mountaineer), tourism (e.g. bed and breakfast), and various forms of business / financial activity or advisory work.

Among this group, the majority are reasonably contented with supply teaching, which provides the flexibility they need. Many women caring for families commented on the advantages of being able to leave school early and get home in time to greet their own children, not having to work in the evening, being able to take a day off when

their child was sick without feeling guilty, and so on. At this point in their lives, daily-paid supply teaching meets their needs.

For some of this group, supply teaching is seen as a step back into teaching after a career break, and their expectation is that they will eventually return to a permanent job. For others, supply teaching may be a stage in the process of moving out of teaching and developing another career. Table 3.8 (p. 31) shows that this was the case for 10% of those in their forties, but smaller percentages of other age groups. This is a rather lower proportion than appears to be the case in England, where supply teaching is an exit route for many teachers trying to move to new careers (Hutchings, 2002).

While this group appreciate that supply teaching meets their current needs, and they are generally more contented than the younger supply teachers, their concerns relate to the particular nature of short-term supply teaching; pupil behaviour and attitudes; the limited job satisfaction of not being able to follow the development of pupils; and issues relating to deployment and payment (for more detail, see Chapter 7, pp. 86-91).

Supply teaching as a move towards full retirement

A substantial group of supply teachers are those moving towards retirement, or who are already drawing their pensions. Many of those in their fifties have opted to *'downsize'* in order to have fewer responsibilities and a lesser workload; references were made to *'the huge amount of paperwork'* and becoming *'exhausted'* and *'dispirited'*. The advantages of supply teaching were described as *'no preparation, no marking, no parents' nights'; 'less pressure'; 'it provides an income without the stress and personal commitment required for full-time teachers.'* As indicated above, some of this group are also involved in caring for children or other dependants. Those who have retired welcome the opportunity to supplement their pensions, and also enjoyed *'keeping in touch with other members of staff'* and the *'staff room banter'*, as well as continuing to *'use my years of experience for the benefit of the children'*. Many commented on the pleasure of being able to focus on teaching rather than administration, and keeping in touch with developments in education. This group are the most likely to be involved only in short-term supply teaching (55% of those in their fifties and 70% of in their sixties did mainly short-term teaching in the last year). Around half the retired teachers teach only in one school (in many cases the one they previously worked in), but other older teachers teach in several different schools. The older the supply teacher, the fewer days they teach per week (Table 3.12).

Table 3.12: Mean days supply teachers say they actually teach per week, by age (N = 496)

age group	mean days teach per week
20-29	4.8
30-39	3.9
40-49	3.6
50-59	3.3
60-69	2.4

This is generally the most contented group of supply teachers. They have usually come from full-time teaching positions, and they relish the relative freedom of supply teaching, and the opportunity to decide how much or how little they wish to do. By and large, they are not concerned about the lack of professional development as they are aware that they are at the end of their careers.

Several schools reported that the older and retired teachers are particularly useful in that they are willing to come in at short notice and to cope flexibly with the work they were asked to do. Many schools use their own retired staff, who know the pupils and the routines, and promote stability. Some education authorities also recognised that they could not currently manage without the retired teachers. One interviewee reported, *'without those retired teachers we would be in a pickle'*. Another described them as *'a godsend'* and explained that because *'they are only looking to do wee bits and pieces'* they were invaluable in covering for staff development and other odd days, leaving the younger teachers to take on long-term placements; *'the older teachers have got a lot of experience to offer still.'* For these reasons some authorities and schools make specific efforts to recruit them into supply teaching (see Chapter 4, p. 40).

However a number of concerns were expressed. It was felt by some respondents that in particular the older retired teachers may be very out of touch with recent developments. But the bigger concern was about the age structure of the teaching profession. One school interviewee argued that *'ageing teacher syndrome is affecting schools … new blood is required.'* An education authority interviewee commented:

> *While we would like to use them we also understand that they receive a pension and we also understand particularly at the beginning of a session there are other people around who are looking for work and need money'*.

Some younger supply teachers also expressed concern that the use of retired teachers is keeping younger teachers out of work and thereby limiting their opportunities to gain experience. For these reasons a number of education authorities had policies that retired teachers should be used only as a last resort. One did not include them on the supply list, but kept them on a separate 'reserve' list for emergency use.

3.5 Skills and strategies needed for supply teaching

In the teacher panels and the interviews with various stakeholders we asked whether they believed that supply teaching required particular qualities, skills and strategies. It appeared that many of the interviewees had not really thought about this before, reflecting the widely held view of supply teachers as having rather low status – *'just a supply teacher'*. However, on reflection, a wider range of attributes needed by short-term supply teachers was identified.

<u>Classroom management skills</u> were seen as essential. School respondents described these, using terms such as *'able to get attention quickly'*, *'can gain respect quickly'*. Teachers made the same point: *'When you walk in you need to imprint your authority on them'*. If you are not firm in the first week *'you are a lamb to the slaughter'* or *'dead meat'*. The language used here indicated character traits as well as particular skills: school respondents used *'dominant'*, *'charisma'*, and *'a firmness and presence'*, while one education authority interviewee spoke of teachers who had *'a bit of pizzazz about them'*, and continued:

> *You can be a fairly run of the mill kind of person when everybody knows you, but as a supply teacher you've got to make your mark a wee bit … it does take a certain personality*.

<u>Interpersonal and communication skills</u> are also essential. In the teachers' view, a good supply teacher is *'confident and friendly'*; has the skills to negotiate with pupils what is expected; can explain their expectations; has:

> *a good sense of judgement as to what group can achieve*

ability to read what is going on in the class very quickly

can develop relationships quickly.

Teachers highlighted:

that ability to have fun - the children have escaped from the real teacher for the day and respond much better to humour rather than nagging.

One school emphasised being in touch with the current generation of children. Supply teachers said that knowing when to keep quiet is also important: *'ability to bite your tongue when you want to shout at somebody'*. Establishing relationships with staff is also crucial: *'fit in with groups in staff room that have already formed'*. Fitting in was often described as difficult, so a good supply teacher should not *'take offence if not spoken to'*, and has to have *'a very thick skin, a huge sense of humour. Cope with anything that is thrown at them.'*

Flexibility and adaptability were stressed by supply teachers and school managers. Teachers commented that you need to *'think on your feet, adapt quickly, not just in relation to kids in front of you but what you do if there are no resources'*. You have to be able to cope with last-minute changes (for example, going in expecting P1 and finding yourself teaching P7).

Effective preparation includes arriving at the school with some activities prepared:

a big bag with worksheets for every subject and every stage

my 'war' bag, I couldn't survive without it

I always go armed with plenty of things. Give them something of my own to do to keep them busy until I work out what has been left or what is written in forward plan.

Schools similarly emphasised that supply teachers should *'arrive prepared to teach'*.

Knowledge: supply teachers need to have an understanding of pupils at different stages and a wide knowledge of the curriculum. Teachers spoke of the need to *'know what is going on at every stage in the school'* and *'to be well up on the education system'*. Schools want teachers who have *'knowledge of current developments'* and nurseries and special schools wanted teachers with the relevant knowledge: e.g. *'be aware of the pre-5 curriculum'*.

Experience: many respondents from all groups argued that a good supply teacher is an experienced teacher. One school commented: *'poor supply teachers have a lack of control and experience.'* Another noted: *'only very skilled teachers can give effective supply cover.'* The teachers felt that many of the qualities described above relate to experience: *'thinking on feet ... comes from experience.'* In appointing permanent supply teachers one authority commented:

We have tried to appoint to these posts people who have got a reasonable level of experience because it seems to me that doing this kind of job is a more difficult job than a straightforward, in your own classroom with your own familiar surroundings and your own familiar pupils.

Another noted that they did not think that a good supply teacher *'would be somebody that was still working towards gaining their full registration'*.

Independence and ability to get on with the job were also seen as essential: teachers identified *'hard-work and professionalism'*, and the need to *'get on with the job and be part of solving the crisis they need you for'*. While it could be argued that the

characteristics and skills above describe a good teacher in any circumstances, teachers argued that you are *'tested more when you are on supply because it is more stressful'*.

There was, then, a wide agreement that a supply teacher should be a *'super-teacher'*. In this light, it is discomforting to recall that many supply teachers have not yet completed probation. The introduction of the induction year goes some way to address this, in that, even if those completing the induction year have to go into supply teaching, they will at least have a solid year's experience behind them.

3.6 Summary

The majority of supply teachers are daily-paid (estimated to be 11,000 nationally). At the time of our research there were around 500 permanent supply teachers, but numbers were increasing rapidly.

Daily-paid supply teachers can be categorised into groups with different motivations:

- Those in the early stages of their career (25% of the sample) enter the supply market, mainly in long-term posts, if they are unable to get permanent jobs. In our sample, over half this group had not yet achieved full GTCS registration; the impact of the guaranteed induction year has yet to be seen.
- Some teachers (43% of the sample) choose supply teaching because it offers a high degree of flexibility and allows them to combine teaching with another occupation, most commonly caring for dependants, or part-time work or self-employment.
- Teachers approaching retirement move to supply teaching to reduce their workload, while those who have already retired use supply teaching to supplement their pensions. Half the teachers in our sample were in their fifties and sixties. They were most often found in short-term supply work, and on average worked two or three days a week, often in only one or two local schools, and generally enjoyed supply work.

Education authority staff and school managers expressed concern about both the first and last of these groups. Supply teaching was seen as a job which required a high level of skill in teaching, classroom management and communication, and that was better done by experienced teachers. Thus the first group were seen as less able to do the job well. It was also considered inappropriate for their career development. While many schools welcomed older and retired teachers because they were experienced and were willing to cover odd days at short notice, there were also concerns that they may be out of touch, and that they could be taking work from younger teachers.

Emerging issues

This chapter has drawn attention to the following issues raised by respondents:

- whether supply teaching is appropriate work for recently qualified teachers;
- whether retired teachers should be supply teachers;
- the need for supply teachers to have substantial teaching experience, a range of specific skills and appropriate personal qualities.

Chapter 4: Recruitment of supply teachers

4.1 Introduction

This chapter describes current practice in the recruitment of supply teachers, identifying some strengths and limitations, and draws attention to some of the more innovative practice that was reported.

4.2 Recruitment of daily-paid supply teachers

All daily-paid teachers have to be on a local authority list in order to get paid. While in some cases the initial arrangement may be between a school and a teacher, the teacher still has to be added to the local authority list.

The act of adding a teacher to the list of those available for daily-paid work is different from that of appointing a person to a position in a particular school, or to a permanent supply teaching contract. Adding someone to the list does not involve a commitment on the part of the authority to provide work. Similarly there is no commitment on the part of the teacher to accept any work offered or to remain in a placement. For these reasons the recruitment and selection processes for daily-paid supply teachers are often very different from that for permanent staff.

How daily paid teachers are added to the list

Two-thirds of the supply teachers responding to our questionnaire stated that they had made the first approach to the authority. This proportion was even higher among the younger teachers (see Table 4.1).

Table 4.1: How supply teachers reported that they were recruited: differences by age (N = 670)

	20-29 %	30-39 %	40-49 %	50-59 %	60+ %	all %
I approached the local authority directly	79	81	70	61	44	65
through a personal contact / word of mouth	23	21	24	30	37	28
resigned from a permanent job in the same local authority and moved to supply	1	8	13	18	29	16
answered an advertisement placed by the local authority	9	4	10	4	5	7

Notes: Columns add up to more than 100% as teachers could tick all responses that applied.
Shading highlights the age groups reporting above average use of each route.
Other routes used by fewer than 1% of teachers included answering an advertisement placed by a school or a private agency, applying unsuccessfully for a post and being offered supply, and recruitment at an HE recruitment fair.

Those completing their teacher education courses before the introduction of the induction year in 2002 told us that as a normal procedure they applied to all the local authorities within a reasonable distance to ask to be added to the supply list. They reported that this practice was specifically encouraged by their colleges. Some had also sent their CVs round all the primary or secondary schools in the authority. In some cases this had resulted in offers of temporary work. Less than 1% said that they had been recruited at an HE recruitment fair – though half the authorities reported that in the past this was a strategy that they had used. However, the personal contact at

such fairs may have encouraged teachers to contact that authority when they were seeking jobs.

Just as those completing initial teacher education courses generally said that they had contacted the authority directly, those moving to a new area also reported making a direct contact, both to the authority and to individual schools.

The second main method through which people joined the supply list was through personal contact, or word of mouth (28% of teachers responding to the questionnaire). This generally occurred when the initial contact was with a school. For example, schools may identify potential supply teachers among parents of pupils joining the school. Many headteachers also said that they contact local retired teachers, including those who had retired from their own school. Some local authorities had approached retired teachers directly; one authority sent out letters to all their retirees, asking that, if they wanted to do supply work when they retire they should *'just drop us a wee note and we will put them on the supply list'*.

Only 7% of supply teachers reported that they had responded to an advertisement placed by the local authority. However, for authorities, advertising is their main strategy to increase numbers of supply teachers, and all the local authorities advertise for daily-paid supply staff. Two indicated that this is only for specific long-term vacancies, not for the general pool. The remaining responses are shown on Table 4.2.

Table 4.2: How often education authorities advertise for daily-paid supply staff (N = 30)

	no.of EAs
Rarely	4
Once or twice a year	16
Three times a year	2
four or more times a year	4
regularly (frequency not given)	4

Note: In addition 2 authorities advertise only for specific long-term vacancies.

Advertisements were placed in the *TESS* (26 authorities), *Scotsman* (3), *Herald* (1), *Catholic Gazette* (2), regional newspapers (14), education authority vacancy lists (11), websites (6), and on the radio (1). Three authorities rated all their advertising as 'very effective', whereas 13 rated it 'fairly effective' and eight 'not effective'. Five indicated that some outlets are more effective than others, in each case selecting either the *TESS* or the authority vacancy list as more effective than other outlets. One indicated that advertising on the authority website was proving particularly effective. However, when we interviewed officers in an authority that had rated its advertising as 'very effective', we were told that an advertisement might result in only a handful of teachers added to the list – but that in a time of shortage this made a considerable difference.

As well as conventional advertising, interviewees in one authority described a campaign to encourage people to return to teaching. Supply would be the most likely work offered to returners. The campaign involved posters and recruitment packs, and staff had spent time in local libraries. Interviewees argued that people who had not taught for a long time were possibly *'a wee bit apprehensive'* and the campaign was designed so that *'they could actually have someone face to face to talk to'* and provide advice tailored to their situation. While only about ten people were recruited directly as a result of this campaign, it has had ongoing effects in spreading information more

widely, and has resulted in subsequent enquiries. Similarly in another authority recent moves were to focus on more localised recruitment using tactics such as displaying posters in the library; this had been initiated because in a large rural authority the need is for supply teachers at specific locations, rather than an overall increase in numbers in the pool.

One authority told us they were reviewing the cost-effectiveness of newspaper advertising, and using the authority's vacancy bulletin in cases where they knew there were potential applicants within the authority.

Selection procedures

All the local authorities required supply teachers to complete an application form. Only 25 indicated in the questionnaire that they took up references. Just over half the authorities stated that they interview. Four stated that they observe applicants teach.

Authorities are more likely to interview those who had been out of teaching for some time, and might then discuss with them strategies for updating themselves, such as doing voluntary teaching or attending a returners' course. One authority commented that their interview was not part of the selection process but was a professional interview with advisory staff to help *'determine where we'll place them'*. The supply teachers themselves generally supported the practice of interviewing. They felt that this meant that someone on the authority would know who they were. They reported a considerable variety of practice with some authorities involving headteachers in the process. They also reported very different interview experiences within a single authority, with some interviews perceived as *'a grilling'*.

We interviewed officers in one authority that currently uses observation in the recruitment of primary daily-paid supply teachers. There is an aspiration to introduce the same system for secondary supply teachers, but it was considered easier to start with primary. The scheme is now in its third year. It was initiated by a headteacher on secondment, with the aims of raising the quality of supply teachers in the authority, and making them feel valued in that they have gone through a process of selection. Currently observation panels are made up of one headteacher and one personnel officer. The involvement of headteachers is regarded as important in that the quality of teachers in the supply pool is a key concern for them. The panel look particularly for effective classroom management skills. A recent survey in the authority asked headteachers whether the procedure is valid, and found opinion divided. Those who have been on a returners' courses are not observed, and those completing their induction year in the authority will not have to undergo observation or interview.

Teachers in one panel told us about an observation session where the applicant had been told to teach mathematics at a certain level to a specific age group, and had to teach a 45 minute lesson. While this was regarded as quite challenging, it was also felt by the group to be not unlike the position of a daily-paid supply teacher doing short-term cover.

Whatever the selection procedures, the vast majority of applicants are added to the supply list. In 19 authorities, 99% or 100% of those applying are accepted. Seven authorities accept 95-98% of applicants, three did not respond, and only three accept fewer than 95%. Respondents indicated that they felt constrained by the current shortage to accept applicants:

> *All appropriately qualified applicants would be added to the list.*

In the present climate [rejection] *is very unlikely although a poor reference would influence clearly.*

The main reason for rejection is lack of GTCS registration or not having undergone Disclosure Scotland checks. Poor references or headteacher reports might also result in rejection; some authorities also reject applicants by drawing on *'local knowledge'* or *'word of mouth from a school about poor performance'*. Lack of knowledge of the 5-14 curriculum was identified by six authorities as a concern, though one commented in interview that they are reviewing their approach to this, as they saw no reason why applicants outwith Scotland could not rapidly acquire relevant curriculum knowledge. Five authorities cited lack of recent or relevant teaching experience as a reason for rejection, though some added comments that they would suggest alternative courses of action: *'advised to attend refresher course'; 'offer work shadowing etc. to give experience and then re-interview.'*

One of the authorities that uses observation of teaching as a selection strategy stated that it accepts only 90% of those applying, and that reasons for rejection include *'poor practice'*, *'lack of recent curricular knowledge'*, and *'poor classroom management'*, all of which are identified in the course of the teaching observation. However, they commented that the prospect of being observed also causes some candidates to withdraw.

There was considerable variation between authorities in the speed of the application and selection processes. Some teachers commented that they were offered work the day after the authority received their application form, or even on the day that they rang up to enquire, before they had applied at all. Other said that they had *'heard nothing for months'*. More recently qualified teachers commented that feedback on interview performance would be particularly helpful for those who wish to get permanent jobs.

Long-term temporary placements

Long-term temporary placements that are known in advance (such as maternity cover) are in many cases specifically advertised (often in the authority vacancy bulletin) and interviews are held. Supply teachers who have applied for a succession of such posts in one particular authority find that they have filled in the same forms (including, for example, a health form) over and over again, and that they have been repeatedly interviewed by the same education officer. One spoke of being prompted in her replies by the interviewer, who knew her well. In this same authority, applicants for the supply list were not interviewed, and the teachers on the panel felt that time could be better used in interviewing everyone rather than carrying out repeat interviews with the same teachers.

Teachers were more likely to respond to advertisements for specific long-term temporary posts than to respond to general advertisements for daily-paid teachers. For those in the early stages of their teaching careers, long-term posts are perceived as a step towards a permanent job.

However, long-term posts are not necessarily all advertised. Some authorities stated that they did always advertise; others said that if they knew of a person currently not working, they would offer them the work. Some teachers find themselves in posts that have become long-term (as a result, for example, of continuing illness). Such posts are not necessarily advertised, and in some cases the teachers filling them have not even been issued with contracts.

Some authorities reported having difficulty filling their long-term placements, and have used supply agencies to *'increase the pool'*. The agency takes on the work of recruiting and selecting teachers and arranging GTCS registration. One authority that was using about a dozen agency overseas-trained teachers in long-term posts commented: *'Without them we would really have been in the mire.'* The cost is not much more than the normal daily rate, and if the teachers take up employment with the authority after they have worked there a year, there is no penalty charge. Another authority had used an agency to recruit two young Commonwealth teachers who had subsequently taken up permanent posts in the authority.

Good practice in the recruitment of daily-paid supply teachers

Respondents indicated a number of aspects of current practice that could be improved. One teacher who had also worked through supply agencies compared the amateurish approach of the education authorities to the more professional approach of the agencies. The supply panels identified the following aspects of good practice:

- applications forms easy to get;
- applications processed quickly;
- authorities being proactive in encouraging applications;
- friendly and helpful office staff;
- having an interview as part of the process;
- feedback on performance at interview;
- an induction to supply teaching event.

One authority interviewee commented that if the necessary numbers of teachers are to be attracted, either to permanent jobs or to supply teaching, it is essential to develop current practice by *'sleeking up the whole recruitment process, making sure it is as user friendly as possible'*.

4.3 Recruitment of permanent supply teachers

Twenty-one authorities stated that they have recruited permanent supply teachers, though one of these no longer employed any at the time the questionnaire was completed.

The authorities indicated that the majority of permanent supply teachers are recruited from daily-paid supply teaching. Table 4.3 shows that this was the most frequently chosen response; it was also the response from the majority of authorities that employed large numbers of permanent supply teachers. However, one of the case study authorities had in the first instance contacted permanent staff within the authority, aiming to attract teachers nearing the end of their careers who might like to have a change and *'refresh and rejuvenate their teaching career'*. This had met with some success.

Table 4.3: Education authority response to what were those recruited as permanent supply teachers doing previously?
(N = 21, i.e. all those authorities employing permanent supply teachers)

	EAs responding "many"	EAs responding "a few"
teacher training	4	3
daily-paid supply teaching	12	3
permanent teaching in one school in the EA	1	6
permanent teaching elsewhere	1	5

In the course of the research we interviewed staff in some authorities that were planning to offer, or already involved in offering, permanent contracts to large numbers of daily-paid supply teachers who have employment rights. Such initiatives are partly a response to concern about the legal situation of temporary workers, and the immediate aftermath of the Glasgow court case (discussed in Chapter 2, p. 21). From this it seems that the main way into permanent supply will continue to be from daily-paid supply. However, one authority employing a substantial number of permanent supply teachers commented that they *'tend to be the new qualified teachers who are more keen'*. Such a response contributes to concerns that those who have been supply teachers for some time may be regarded as less employable than those who have just completed their induction year.

The majority of the fourteen permanent supply teachers who responded to the teacher questionnaire had moved from daily-paid supply to permanent supply. In general this was because the authority had offered them a permanent contract after they had completed several years of daily-paid supply, including long-term placements. Two had answered advertisements for permanent supply teachers, and one had been '*made surplus'* after 30 years working in permanent posts, and had been moved (against her inclination) to permanent supply.

Comparison with recruitment of daily-paid teachers

Fourteen authorities reported that it is easier to recruit permanent than daily-paid teachers, one said that it is more difficult, and six that there was no difference. Those claiming it is easier offered the following explanations:

attraction of a permanent post

future improved access to other permanent teaching vacancies within the authority

regular monthly salary

guaranteed work

most permanent supply work is long term.

In contrast, the authority claiming it is more difficult to recruit permanent supply teachers argued that the daily-paid staff generally prefer to work part-time and flexibly and so do not want to move to permanent supply. Another authority commented that daily-paid work appeals to some people *'because of the flexibility it provides'*, but that those seeking permanent work *'wish it in one location and not as part of a pool'*. The only reason to apply to be a permanent supply teacher *is 'to gain permanent status'*.

Supply teachers on our panels tended to agree with this last comment. Many of them wanted permanent jobs, but generally they did want permanent supply work because of their perception that this would mean they could be sent anywhere. Permanent posts that were contractually restricted to a cluster of specified schools teachers would be more attractive. The main reason to accept a permanent supply contract would be that it was seen as step up the ladder towards permanent employment rather than that the work was seen as attractive.

Attracting teachers to permanent supply work

In 18 authorities, all permanent supply posts to date have been advertised, while in three they have not. Those not advertising explained that this was because of *'transfer of temp staff to permanent contracts'* or *'redeployment'*, which, as indicated above,

seem to be the main routes through which permanent supply teachers have been and are likely to be recruited.

Many of the authorities that have advertised have done so only one or twice in the last three years. Four authorities advertise more than once a year. In general the advertisements have been placed in the same range of outlets as those for daily-paid supply, though four authorities advertise permanent supply posts only in their internal vacancy bulletin.

Eight authorities considered their advertisements for permanent teachers more effective than their advertisements for daily-paid, and only one stated that they were less effective. The remaining nine did not identify a difference.

Teachers reported that one authority recently advertised for permanent supplies, but that some of those that applied were appointed to permanent substantive posts. There appeared to have been a system of grading at interview, with those receiving higher grades being offered substantive posts. This practice is problematic in that some who did not apply felt that they had been misled by the advertisement; if they had known what was on offer they too would have applied. The grading system also gave a clear signal that permanent supply work is regarded as less important than permanent posts in one school.

4.4 Summary

The majority of daily-paid supply staff are added to local authority lists when they approach the authority directly or local schools urge them to join the list. Only a minority of the sample had responded to advertisements. The vast majority of those who apply are added to the list, in some authorities with no further selection process. Just over half the authorities interview applicants, and four carry out teaching observations of at least some applicants.

Permanent supply teachers are generally recruited from those on the daily-paid list. During the time period of the research, many authorities were planning to offer permanent contracts to large numbers of daily-paid teachers engaged in long-term supply work. Many permanent supply teachers had previously worked as daily-paid teachers, and permanent supply was seen as a step towards a permanent post in one school. However, some supply teachers expressed concern that taking a permanent contract could involve being sent to schools they did not wish to work in.

Emerging issues

The following issues arise from this chapter:

- the wide variety of practice in relation to selection of supply teachers across education authorities;
- the tension between the need to accept the vast majority of applicants in order to meet current demands, and the need to achieve a high quality supply pool, and enhance the status of supply teaching, which would suggest a more selective approach.

Chapter 5: Deployment of supply teachers

5.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the various ways in which education authorities and schools manage cover, and specifically, the deployment of supply teachers. It reviews the perspectives of each group on how effective the various systems and strategies are. One of the difficulties here is that issues of deployment are inextricably bound up with issues of supply and demand, which have been discussed in Chapter 2. When no teacher is available it is not easy to disentangle problems related to shortage of supply teachers from those related to deployment systems.

The first section of the chapter outlines the ways in which schools use internal cover. We then turn to the various systems used in the deployment of supply teachers. The next section focuses on databases, and in particular the potential of the development of interactive booking systems. The final section considers deployment within schools.

The main focus in this chapter is on deployment for short-term cover. Long-term cover is in many cases an issue of recruitment to a specific position rather than deployment, and has been discussed in Chapter 4.

5.2 Arrangements for internal cover

Internal cover is widely used in three different ways: when a supply teacher is not available; in the early days of teachers' absence before a supply teacher is requested, and as a strategy to avoid the use of supply teachers. The questionnaire to schools asked about the extent to which schools used internal cover in these ways.

In most schools it is used when a supply teacher is not available. A high proportion of nursery (56%) and special (61%) schools regarded this as a normal scenario (compared to 34% of primary and 35% of secondary schools).

In 61% of schools it is used in the early days of an absence before a supply teacher has been requested. In secondary schools this is very extensive (a normal procedure for 89% of schools responding), and is feasible because secondary teachers have more non-class contact time that can be used to cover other classes than do their counterparts in other sectors.

Fewer schools (28%) stated that they normally use internal cover as a planned strategy to avoid the use of supply teachers. This was most common in secondary schools (40%) and special schools (33%). In some secondary schools this seemed to be a policy designed to save on the supply budget. In several cases the manager responsible described using timetables together with a list of the staff entitlement to non-contact periods to plan each day to ensure that all the 'extra' non-contact time was used to cover other classes. Internal cover was also used in this way in other sectors, though generally to a lesser extent. One primary headteacher returned the questionnaire without filling it in, noting that the school relies entirely on internal staff for short-term cover. This is achieved by using the devolved absence cover budget to enhance permanent staffing. This was considered to be much more effective in terms of pupils' experience and progress.

The questionnaire also asked about the specific arrangements for internal cover. Again there were considerable differences in the responses across school sectors (Table 5.1).

Table 5.1: Internal cover: Percentage of schools responding that each scenario occurs 'very often'

	primary %	secondary %	special %	all %
class taught by a teacher who is scheduled to have non-contact time	17	82	50	52
class taught by teacher who is not qualified to teach that subject	0	73	33	40
class taught by head or depute head who should be carrying out management roles	61	16	67	39
two classes taught together	3	2	16	4
pupils split between other classes	1	0	7	2
lessons cancelled	0	0	5	1
N	*169*	*177*	*48*	*394*

Notes: Nursery schools have been omitted due to a very low response.
Shading indicates that 50% or more of schools in the sector that responded claimed that the scenario occurred 'very often'.

As indicated above, secondary schools normally allocate lessons to teachers who would otherwise have been scheduled to have non-contact time. In the vast majority of schools (73%), the teachers are 'very often' not qualified to teach the subject they are covering. This can be compared with the response from 67% of schools that the supply teachers they use are 'rarely' qualified to teach the relevant subject (Chapter 2, p. 16). This suggests that for some schools there may be little advantage in using supply teachers. One school commented that, *'in emergency, staff will cover classes even if it means breaking their contract and going below minimum non-contact time.'* Others noted strategies used in desperation:

> *Congregating pupils in an assembly hall where senior management supervise.*
>
> *We have a contingency where senior classes are left on unsupervised study if the cover situation demands. We have consulted on year groups being sent home in emergency situations.*

In primary and special schools cover is generally provided by a senior manager (Table 5.1). Other strategies include using *'Support for Learning staff to cover classes'*, and putting together two classes *'with one teacher and a classroom assistant'*. In one-teacher schools internal cover is not possible, and if the teacher has an unplanned absence *'the school has to be closed until a supply teacher arrives.'*

Both nursery and special schools reported frequently using staff who are not qualified teachers:

> *A teacher's absence will often be covered by a nursery nurse.(nursery)*
>
> *We have no extra staff who are not part of the ratio so we often have to use students*. (nursery)
>
> *Classes are often supervised by Educational Assistants.* (special)
>
> *Very often supply teachers are unavailable* [and] *it is necessary to bring in a supply Ed. Assistant to maintain safe levels (special)*

Overall, one of the most common suggestions for improving the supply situation made

by school management was to increase funding in order to enable them to use internal cover to a greater extent. One commented that what was needed was:

> *… a better staffing ratio in schools, so that most cover is internally supplied - staff know pupils and how the school works, they know who to contact in matters of curriculum and discipline.*

5.3 Deployment of supply teachers

Two main systems are used in the deployment of short-term supply teachers: central management by the education authority (used in ten authorities); and local management by schools who are provided with a list of teachers by the authority (used in fourteen authorities). The remaining authorities use a combination of both methods. In four, arrangements are different for primary and secondary: in one sector cover is managed centrally and in the other it is managed by schools. In a further three, schools are provided with a list and can contact supply teachers, but can, if they prefer, ask the authority staff to do so. In the remaining one, the authority copes with provision of emergency cover, but schools are expected to locate supply teachers when the need is known in advance.

Even in those authorities with a school-based system for deployment of short-term cover, long-term placements that are known in advance (e.g. for maternity cover) are generally managed centrally. The ways these positions are filled have been described in Chapter 4, pp. 42-3.

There is no clear-cut relationship between the arrangements for deployment and the size or geographical type of authority. Authorities with large or very small numbers of schools are equally likely to manage the deployment of supply teachers, or to expect schools to do so. Central deployment is more often found in urban and central belt authorities but not exclusively so, while more of the remote and rural areas use school-managed deployment. Some authorities stated that they have considered changing from school to central management of deployment or vice versa, but claimed that their headteachers prefer the current arrangements, whatever they are. In comments written on the questionnaires, far more headteachers suggested moving to central deployment than to school-managed systems. However, the general trend is for schools to take greater responsibility as a consequence of the introduction of interactive booking systems, discussed in the next section.

In practice arrangements are very much less clear-cut than this outline suggests, particularly in those authorities where deployment is managed centrally. We asked the schools what they do when a supply teacher is needed. Responses shown on Table 5.2 (overleaf) have been grouped by the system for short-term deployment that the authority said it uses. The pattern of responses clearly relates to the authorities' stated arrangements. As might be expected, in those authorities where schools manage the deployment, 90% of schools stated that they would contact a supply teacher from the list, whereas only 14% of schools in authorities with central deployment did so. In the authorities with central deployment, 87% of the schools said they would contact the authority, compared with 20% of those in school-based deployment systems. Whatever the system, special schools and nurseries more often contact the authority, presumably because of their particular requirements.

Table 5.2: School procedures for obtaining a supply teacher, by deployment system in authority (N = 406)

procedures for obtaining a supply teacher	deployment system central %	school %	mixed %
Contact supply teachers on list provided by local authority	14	90	70
Contact local authority (who then contact and direct a supply teacher)	87	20	64
Contact supply teachers recruited directly by the school	62	45	72
N	*148*	*218*	*40*

Notes: Where primary and secondary deployment are managed differently, the schools in each sector have been categorised under the relevant system.

The authorities categorised as having 'mixed' deployment are those where schools have the option of contacting a teacher or the authority, and where the system used depended on the urgency of the need.

Percentages do not add up to 100% because schools could tick more than one procedure.

Shading indicates a response given by over 50% of the schools in that group.

However, contacting teachers on the list and contacting the local authority were not the only, or indeed the main, procedures used. The question distinguished between 'standard' and 'other' procedures. Taking this into account, only 39% of schools in school-managed systems use the authority list as a 'standard' procedure, and only 45% of those in centrally managed systems contacted the authority as a 'standard' procedure. Responses to the third category offered in the question, contacting teachers recruited directly by the school, offer some clues.

As the previous chapter explained, all teachers, however first contacted, have to be added to the local authority list in order to get paid; thus the wording of our question was perhaps confusing. What schools selecting this category generally seemed to mean was that they have their 'own' list of local supply teachers who regularly work for them; thus they do not have to consult the local authority list or ring the local authority; they simply ring their regular supply teacher(s). Some schools indicated this in their comments: *'my own list of contacts'; 'favours from retired colleagues'; 'previously used* [teacher] *contacted directly'*. While this procedure obviously saves time and effort, and generally results in the deployment of a teacher known to the school, it has some disadvantages for the working of the system, described below.

A few schools identified other procedures. Eight schools (five primary and three secondary) claimed that they contact private supply agencies. Some of these schools are in the authorities that stated that they do not use private agencies, suggesting that the use of agencies may be more prevalent than the authorities realise. But the very small numbers involved do not suggest a widespread use. Three schools noted that they would contact supply teachers available in the 'cluster'. This is an arrangement used in the deployment of permanent supply teachers in 4 authorities. The teachers are attached to a base school but can be deployed to do (normally) short-term cover in other schools in the cluster. This may be organised centrally, or may involve a direct contact with the organising headteacher for the cluster, or with the supply teacher. This system appears to be limited to permanent supply teachers, and as their numbers grow, it may become more widespread.

Just as the schools report using a range of procedures to obtain a supply teacher, so the teachers report a range of contact methods to get work. Again, these relate loosely, but not precisely, to the deployment system used in that authority. Table 5.3 shows

that in authorities with central deployment systems only 63% of the teachers stated that the local authority contacts them about work, while 59% are contacted by schools directly. In authorities where deployment is school-based, 92% stated that schools contact them, but 20% stated that the local authority also contacts them; these contacts, however, probably relate to long-term placements, which, as indicated above, are normally organised centrally.

Table 5.3: Supply teacher questionnaire: arrangements for deployment in school, categorised by EA deployment system (N=667)

	EA deployment system			
	central %	school %	mixed %	all %
I have to contact the local authority to find out what work is available	29	11	14	18
The local authority contacts me	63	20	38	38
Individual schools contact me directly	59	92	91	80
Other	3	3	3	3

Notes: Percentages add up to more than 100% because teachers could tick more than one procedure.
Shading indicates a response given by over 50% of the teachers in that group.

Overall 18% of all teachers claimed that they have to contact the local authority to get work. This was more prevalent in urban authorities with central deployment systems. Authority interviewees in a centrally managed system, told us:

> *We say to them 'phone as often as you like, 5, 6 times a day'. We take a note of names of who has phoned in and the supply team is in from half past seven in the morning to make sure there's supply teachers available to go in to schools.*

Teachers also contact schools directly. There are a number of reasons why teachers initiate the contact. In a system where most schools have their 'own' lists of tried and trusted, it is hard for newcomers to break in. Some education authority staff told us that they advise teachers to introduce themselves to schools. Similarly pre-2002 probationers had been advised to do this by their teacher education institutions. Likewise the GTCS website advises probationers that they should *'contact the school individually and tell them that you are available for work, and be persistent and proactive in trying to secure work.'*

Teachers also initiate contacts because they have found that this is the most effective (or only) way to get work. In one authority with central deployment the teachers' descriptions of the system were that they routinely phoned the council, not vice versa. One teacher described finding that a local school had been ringing in to the authority for several days asking for cover, while the teacher was sitting at home wanting work. In another authority with central deployment a teacher explained that *'the onus is on supply teachers to let the council know when they are looking for work.'* But this was not the case in all authorities; another interviewee had never had to contact the council. In school-managed systems teachers may contact the schools to let them know their availability. Schools referred to supply teachers checking for work every couple of weeks, and a teacher said that when a long-term placement ends she phones round the schools *'to let them know I am available again'*.

The deployment of supply teachers to schools is not, then, a simple picture of two management systems, school-based and central. It is much more chaotic and confusing than that. Whatever the system, in reality most schools appear to establish

and draw on teachers from their 'own' lists. The next section focuses on this practice, before returning to the 'official' systems that come into play when the schools' own contacts fail.

Schools' own lists

Those schools that try to develop their own lists of supply teachers do so because they see this as better in terms of pupil learning and discipline, and as reducing the need for the school to induct unfamiliar supply teachers. In the questionnaire, school respondents were asked to identify from a list the three factors that they consider to be the most important to maximise effectiveness of supply teachers. The most frequently chosen factor (selected by 79% of respondents) was 'supply teacher having worked in the school previously'. Many respondents expanded on this in their comments:

> *The effectiveness of supply staff depends upon the individual and the amount of time employed in the school.* (secondary)
>
> *If you use supply teachers who know the pupils and their abilities then attainment is not affected.* (primary).

In evaluating the quality of supply teachers used recently, many added comments to qualify their positive evaluation, such as *'only because I use the same supply teachers all the time'*.

The success with which primary, secondary and special schools do this is indicated by responses shown in Table 5.4, which indicates that overall 68% of school respondents considered it 'accurate' to say that they generally use the same supply teacher(s) who are familiar with the school and pupils. The nursery responses may relate to the fact that many claimed rarely to use any supply teachers, preferring to cover internally. The proportion of schools indicating that they use familiar supply teachers was much higher in remote (85%) and rural (77%) areas, and lowest in inner-city schools (46%).

Table 5.4: School responses to 'In this school we generally use the same supply teacher(s) who are familiar with the school and its pupils', by school type

		1	2	3	4	*N*
		accurate			inaccurate	
nursery	%	36	21	14	29	*14*
primary	%	72	20	6	2	*169*
secondary	%	62	26	8	4	*176*
special	%	84	10	2	4	*50*
all	%	68	21	7	4	*409*

Note: Shading indicates that more than 25% of schools gave that particular response.

Just as schools prefer to employ familiar teachers, teachers generally prefer to go into schools that they are familiar with and have had positive experiences in. Over 75% of those responding to the questionnaire said that they worked mainly through a local arrangement made with one or more schools. This is partly because some teachers, particularly the older age groups, are quite contented with part-time and occasional work (see Chapter 3, pp. 35-36). In addition, daily-paid teachers are under no obligation to go to any school that contacts them or that the education authority suggests; they are free agents and can and do turn down work. Table 5.5 (overleaf) shows the reasons given for turning down work. While the main reason is that the teacher was working elsewhere, 102 teachers (almost one fifth of those responding) had turned down work at schools where they had had 'bad' experiences; and around

one tenth of the sample had turned down work in schools with poor reputations and those in inconvenient locations.

Table 5.5: Supply teachers reasons for turning down work (N=546)

	number	%
I had already accepted work at another school	425	78
I did not want to work that particular day	225	41
too far to travel	129	24
previous bad experience in this school	102	19
inconvenient location	57	10
school with poor reputation	48	9
cost of travel	22	4
placement was not subject I am qualified to teach	19	3
placement was not age phase I am qualified to teach	14	3
other (family and personal needs – doctor, dentist)	93	17

Almost half the teachers responding to the questionnaire wrote comments indicating that flexibility was the major advantage of supply teaching: being able to choose when and where you work, to say no if you don't want to work in a particular school, and to *'walk out'* if you are not happy with aspects of the placement such as pupil behaviour. While it is clear that teachers did not generally avail themselves of these opportunities, the point was that they felt that there was the potential to do so.

The combination of the schools' preference for familiar teachers and the teachers preference for familiar and 'comfortable' schools works to promote the system of some schools developing their own pools of supply teachers. In primary schools this may be just one individual; secondary schools may have half a dozen people to call on. In many ways such arrangements work well, having positive impacts on school and teacher contentment and on the pupils' experiences and learning.

However, there are two main limitations to such arrangements, and both become more problematic in a time of general shortfall in numbers of supply teachers. The first is that some schools are more successful than others in achieving their own lists. The second is that when a school is not able to obtain the services of one of its 'regular' supply teachers, it turns to the 'official' system. But because so many schools are operating their own lists, the official system works less effectively. Each of these will be considered in turn.

Variable success among schools in establishing their own lists

Our data show that some schools have much less opportunity to, or success in, establishing their own lists of supply teachers. One school manager commented: *'The most affluent/middle class schools soak up supply at the expense of the most disadvantaged schools.'* Inner-city schools are far more likely to use a wide range of different teachers. In particular, those challenging schools with a high proportion of pupils on free school dinners are significantly less likely to have a pool of familiar supply teachers (Table 5.6a overleaf). They tend to use more different teachers, and many who are unfamiliar with the school. Table 5.6b shows that they are also very much less likely to find supply teachers at all. These schools experience difficulty in attracting supply teachers because daily-paid teachers are under no obligation to go to 'difficult' schools, and may turn down placements offered, as Table 5.5 showed. One headteacher in a school with over 40% on free school meals explained: *'supply teachers can cherry pick, and so schools in leafy suburbs can get supply more easily'*.

Table 5.6a: School response to 'We generally use the same supply teacher(s) who are familiar with the school and its pupils', by high / low proportions on free school meals

		1 accurate	2	3	4 inaccurate	*N*
low proportion on free meals	%	73	20	4	2	*203*
high proportion on free meals	%	43	35	14	6	*62*

Table 5.6b: School response to 'A suitably qualified teacher is available on the day requested', by high/low proportions on free school meals

		often	sometimes	rarely	*N*
low proportion on free meals	%	29	38	33	*192*
high proportion on free meals	%	3	38	58	*60*

Note: A low proportion is here defined as 0-19% on free school meals, and a high proportion as over 30% on free school meals. Special schools have been omitted here because, although they tend to have a high proportion on free school meals, the issues are rather different.

Meanwhile the schools that are more attractive to work in are able to establish their 'own' pools. But as one headteacher commented:

> *Schools are good at finding and maintaining good links with supply staff but due to rising demand are less keen to share with other establishments.*

Some schools were quite explicit that this is their strategy:

> *Get a good supply teacher and hang on to them like grim death.*
>
> *Build up own list - and don't share it!*

While 22 schools respondents wrote in comments of this sort, only 11, possibly those that fared less well in this market, commented on the importance of sharing and co-operation, calling for schools to *'be more willing to share supply cover - the little that is available'*.

The 'official' deployment systems

This chapter has shown that, to varying degrees, schools in Scotland build up their own lists of local supply teachers, and contact these directly. They only use the 'official' system when they were unable to use someone from their 'own' list. This section turns to the strengths and limitations of the 'official' systems, and the way that they interacted with the schools' own systems.

Schools were asked to evaluate the system in their own authority. Table 5.7 shows that schools in authorities with centrally managed deployment were more likely to agree that 'booking supply teachers is straightforward and effective' than those in school-based or mixed systems, where around half the schools said the statement was inaccurate.

Table 5.7: School response to 'In this local authority booking supply teachers is straightforward and effective', by EA deployment system (N = 398)

		1 accurate	2	3	4 inaccurate	*N*
central	%	18	29	28	24	*144*
school	%	5	25	22	48	*214*
mixed	%	9	20	20	51	*40*

In another question, schools were asked to rank the efficiency of the booking system in their local authority on a five-point scale. While 38% of schools in authorities with centrally managed deployment ranked their system as excellent or good, only 8% of those in school-managed systems did so. School managers in authorities where deployment is centrally managed were, then, more likely to see the local arrangements as 'excellent', 'good', or 'straightforward and effective' than those in authorities where schools manage deployment. (However, it should be noted that 31% of school managers in such centrally managed authorities felt that the booking system was 'poor' or 'very poor'.)

It might be expected that one reason why centrally managed deployment was rated more positively than school managed deployment would be that schools have to spend less time finding supply teachers under such arrangements. However, questionnaire responses suggest that this was not the case, and that schools in both central and school managed deployment systems claim to spend equal amounts of time (see Table 5.8). One explanation might be that schools in authorities with central deployment continue to keep their own lists and contact teachers they know. However, Table 5.9 shows that those in authorities with central deployment were much less likely to indicate that it was accurate to say 'a very large number of telephone calls have to be made'. The evidence on this point is thus contradictory.

Table 5.8: Hours spent by schools per week finding supply teachers, by EA deployment system

	Responses from schools in different deployment systems		
	central	*school*	*mixed*
	%	*%*	*%*
less than one hour	25	26	17
1-2 hours	37	41	52
3-9 hours	29	23	24
more than 10 hours	10	10	7

Table 5.9: Ranking by schools of accuracy of statement 'To book a supply teacher a very large number of phone calls have to be made', by deployment system

		1 accurate	2	3	4 inaccurate
central	%	18	20	18	44
school	%	58	22	15	5
mixed	%	56	22	11	11

An important advantage of central management of deployment is that the authority can attempt to distribute the available cover fairly, counteracting schools' tendency to want to hold on to their own contacts. An interviewee in an authority with centrally managed deployment commented:

> *At least you can be fair and give everybody a wee shot of it. Whereas, if the schools were doing it themselves, it is only natural, they are after the best possible staff for their school. And they would actually keep a hold of the staff, whereas, you know, you can turn around and say 'oh but you had a shot last week – it is fair that this school gets a wee bit of cover in as well'.*

The authority can also make strategic decisions about schools' needs, and can prioritise, for example, small schools or those with multiple absences, as well as those in challenging circumstances.

Similarly, the office staff are able to attempt to share out work evenly between the supply teachers. They get to know them, and are able to match their particular strengths and needs to the work available. One commented:

> *You have got to know your staff … and what they are willing to do. And … then you can earmark them immediately for the cover. … It is not everybody who will go into the likes of a special school. Even going into Learning Support in the Secondary schools, you have got to get somebody that is either that wee bit older, or a wee bit more experienced.*

However, any central system is made less efficient by the parallel operation of schools' own systems. Schools may not tell the authority which teachers they are using, and this can cause confusion. Double bookings can occur, when both school and authority achieve finding a teacher. Such instances were described to us in several interviews; this may result in one of the teachers being asked to go home and not receive any pay that day, though the authorities do their best to re-deploy them to nearby schools. There is some variation in how authorities viewed schools making their own arrangements. In some it seemed to be standard, but one supply teacher commented that in a particular authority schools *'are not supposed'* to call teachers, and they *'get rapped over the knuckles for it'*.

School-managed deployment systems fit more comfortably with the schools' tendency to develop their own lists. They are placed firmly in control of their own staffing, and they are able to build up lists of contacts, generally securing the same familiar teachers. However, if the regulars are not available, locating other teachers can be very time-consuming for schools. Table 5.10 shows that members of the school senior management team still do the majority of this work, though in some primary schools secretaries are also involved. The appointment of business managers may reduce this burden on school management.

Table 5.10: Post held by the person operationally responsible for finding supply cover in schools by school type

	nursery	primary	secondary	special	all
	%	%	%	%	%
Headteacher	84	53	5	55	35
Other senior manager	0	5	80	29	39
Secretary/clerical staff	5	39	9	10	21
Business Manager	0	0	4	0	2
Other	10	3	1	6	3
N	*19*	*171*	*173*	*51*	*414*

A disadvantage of school-managed systems is that the education authority does not know where supply teachers are working, and may not have detailed knowledge of unmet demand, and areas of shortage. This was very apparent in some of the responses to the education authority questionnaire that explained that particular data was not available because the schools managed deployment. As we have commented above, school-managed systems are not then able to prioritise the needs of particular schools.

A school-managed deployment system presents greater difficulty for the newcomer seeking work, who is not known in any school. This is a context in which it is

important for teachers to introduce themselves to schools. Some teachers perceived that in such systems work was distributed very unfairly. Retired teachers were most successful in obtaining work because they were 'known', and had all the advantages of experience. The less experienced newcomers found it hard to enter the market when there was no intervention from the local authority.

Permanent supply teachers

Finally in this section we consider the deployment of permanent supply teachers. Many respondents suggested that the employment of larger numbers of permanent supply teachers could potentially solve some of the current problems. In particular, the problems of supply teachers refusing placements would be eliminated. We will consider here how far the evidence available supports this belief. As Chapter 3 (p.27) explained, most authorities have only small numbers of permanent supply teachers. Even where numbers are larger, they are always used in conjunction with a pool of daily-paid teachers.

It should be noted that, while some supply teachers are very keen to have permanent contracts (both in relation to contractual and pay issues and as a stepping stone to a permanent job), large numbers do not want permanency. For them the whole attraction of supply is the flexibility it offers.

Permanent supply teachers are deployed in two main ways. In about two-thirds of the authorities employing permanent supply teachers, they are mainly used to fill long-term roles such as maternity cover or covering vacancies. This group, then, are not available to be sent to the schools that need them at short notice. The remaining authorities generally operate a cluster system, where the permanent supply teacher is allocated a base school, but does short-term or long-term placements in other schools within the cluster.

We asked those schools that had experience of using permanent supply teachers about the benefits (Table 5.11).

Table 5.11: School responses to 'If you have used supply teachers on permanent contracts, what are the benefits?' (N = 137)

		agree	neither agree nor disagree	disagree	*N*
better availability for work	%	53	35	12	*136*
greater commitment	%	50	42	8	*137*

Schools identified benefits such as:

> *Usually teaching their own subject, better experience for pupils.*
>
> *More of a chance to establish positive relationships, therefore fewer discipline problems.*
>
> *Teachers more au fait with planning, current trends and up to date strategies.*

But some schools had had less positive experiences:

> *In my experience the permanent supply teachers have not been of the quality required as effective teachers. Is this a half-way house for ineffective teachers?*
>
> [In a cluster system] *great difficulties arise if multiple long term absences within the cluster. No budget, no availability results in disjointed education for some.*

Only one authority currently deploys large numbers of permanent supply staff in short-term placements. We examined the responses from schools in that authority to see how effective the arrangement is proving from their perspective. Only 14 schools had responded – but their responses were clearly less positive than those in other authorities. For example, in responses about commitment, 23% responded that permanent supply teachers do *not* have greater commitment, compared to 8% overall. Similarly, while overall 43% of schools claimed that 'a suitably qualified teacher is *rarely* available on the day requested' (Table 2.3, p. 15), in this authority, 64% of schools did so. While overall, only 4% claimed that they did *not* usually use familiar teachers, in this authority, 38% did so. Clearly we are talking here about a very small sample of schools, and their responses may well be atypical. But if, as appears likely, numbers of permanent supply teachers are to increase, then it would seem sensible to examine in more depth the views of schools that have experience of such teachers.

5.4 Databases

Education authority databases of supply teachers are kept in a variety of forms, ranging from index cards in the authority office, through spreadsheets, to on-line booking systems. While some authorities reported that computerised systems are 'very effective', they were considered by others to be 'not very effective' (Table 5.12).

Table 5.12: EA responses to 'How effective is list in enabling efficient deployment in relation to form of supply list?' (N = 31)

	number of EAs in each category		
	very effective	quite effective	not very effective
paper list	2	5	0
computerised database	8	5	4
both	1	6	0

Note: One EA did not respond as their new system was in course of development

In some cases this was because they were spreadsheets, and their only advantage over a paper list is that the spreadsheet is easier to update. Some, but not all, of the authorities that had developed interactive booking systems considered them to be 'very effective', though the schools were generally less positive. Several other authorities are currently developing such systems in the hope that this will improve the effectiveness of deployment; it is therefore worth considering their strengths and limitations in greater detail.

Online booking systems

Online booking systems are the main way in which responsibility for deployment is being shifted to schools. They are also viewed (especially by those who do not use them) as potentially contributing to improving the effectiveness of deployment. In the course of the research we examined several different systems. These varied in terms of design, but operated on the same basic principles. The school indicates the dates, and where relevant the subject, that they need cover for, and a list of names comes up of teachers who fit these criteria. Teachers who are already booked, or who work part-time, and are therefore not available for work on all the days requested, do not appear on the screen. The school then telephones a teacher from the list, and once

agreement has been reached, records the booking on the system. The name of that teacher will not then appear when another request is made.

The systems we saw had various additional features, for example: allowing the school to view the diary for a teacher and see the bookings already entered, and check that their booking was there; allowing teachers to specify which geographical areas they could reach, and even to specify particular schools; offering the option of having the list in random order so that those at the start of the alphabet do not get all the work. The same system can be used by the local authority staff to make bookings (for schools that cannot yet access it on-line, or for long-term cover).

In theory such a system should work well. Only teachers available for work are displayed, and this should make it impossible to make calls to teachers who are working elsewhere. Thus it should save schools time, and reduce the number of unnecessary phone calls received by supply teachers.

However, in practice the use of on-line booking systems has not fulfilled expectations. This is because the data is not sufficiently up-to-date and schools can waste time attempting to contact teachers who are not available. One reason for this is that some schools do not record their bookings on the system. It is easy to see why this happens. Most schools contact, in the first instance, a teacher they have previously used. Thus they do not need to enter the on-line system. Recording the booking then becomes a separate activity that they need to remember to do. But until they do this, other schools will try and contact a teacher who is already booked. Authorities have tried hard to persuade schools that it is necessary to record bookings promptly, even to the extent of *'naming and shaming'* those who do not in headteachers' meetings. A further problem is that schools also fail to 'un-book' teachers on the system if they no longer need them. This means that teachers may not get work because they appear to be booked out. One development that may improve this is the introduction of business managers in schools. Booking and maintaining records of supply cover would be part of their core work, whereas for a headteacher or assistant head it is an additional burden: *'If we have to access the database it can take up far too much valuable time and is extremely stressful.'*

But a more serious concern is that many supply teachers are registered with more than one authority, and so the teacher may be working in an authority other than the one that has the on-line booking system. In the course of the research some schools and education authorities suggested that systems need to cover wider areas: for example, the former Strathclyde region, or the whole of Scotland. A national database would be the only way to completely resolve this problem. An alternative suggestion was that authorities could pay teachers a retainer on the basis that they work only in that authority. But this would be less effective in ensuring that supply teachers are working where they are needed.

A further concern is that the list of teachers quickly gets out of date as people gain permanent posts, stop supply teaching or move house. Thus one school manager commented:

> *Electronic booking system does not work as it* [is] *not updated - inaccurate phone numbers, and names of teachers no longer on supply leads to wasted time making phone calls.*

Most databases (whether computerised or paper) are overhauled and updated only once a year, when each teacher is written to and asked if they wish to stay on the list,

and if their availability has changed. Authority staff claimed that during the year they would input changes that they were told about, but often teachers do not tell them. Furthermore, some teachers change their availability from week to week, or at very short notice, depending on other work or family commitments. The booking systems available do not allow this much flexibility.

For all these reasons, the online booking systems have not fulfilled their promise, and schools still find themselves making large numbers of phone calls.

There are a number of ways in which such systems could be developed. For example, it may be feasible for teachers to update their own details, if they have access to the system. This could be done if all supply teachers were allocated a base school near their home. Minor developments, such as adjustments to the categories used or the amount of information given, would be easier to bring about; the staff using these systems had many suggestions that would make the systems meet their needs more effectively. A national database was mooted by several respondents as the only satisfactory way forward. One education authority noted on the questionnaire:

> *One of the major frustrations in current practice is the lack of interface with other authorities. It is possible for a supply teacher to register with any number of authorities. It is highly possible for all these authorities to seek to communicate availability of work to this person. The frustration is where the supply teacher is working, more often long term, and he/she does not advise other authorities of this. The effect is considerable. … Could a national database be considered?*

How teachers are contacted

The telephone is still the main method of contacting supply teachers, and is used in conjunction with online booking systems as indicated above. This is a relatively inefficient mode of communication in that the supply teacher may be out, and thus considerable time can be wasted. When the teacher picks up their messages in the evening the person who phoned them may not be available, and if they are already working and are not able to accept the new booking, they may feel little inclination to ring back to say so. Thus both schools and teachers complained about the excessive numbers of phone calls, and the time wasted in making these. We were told of occasions when schools had made more than 50 calls in their attempts to achieve supply cover.

Some respondents commented that the supply desk in the local authority needed to be open much earlier to receive telephone calls from schools trying to book emergency cover, and that it would also be helpful to be able to talk to authority staff in the early evening. The authorities all operated a system of standard office hours, though some had answer-phones available at other times. It is worth noting that this issue of suitable hours for communication was one of the areas where supply agencies in England proved more effective than the local education authorities; they operated a shift system and were available on the phone for very much longer hours than the LEAs.

E-mail presents itself as a potentially attractive alternative; however, the majority of supply teachers are not yet on-line at home. Thus the only effective use of email that we encountered is in communicating with permanent supply teachers in their base school, in cases where a cluster system operates. Even in this case it was often supplemented by a telephone call if no response was immediately received.

5.5 Deployment within schools

The expectations that schools have of supply teachers vary enormously across school sectors, as shown on Table 5.13. For example, 98% of primary schools and 71% of special schools expected that whatever the length of placement, a supply teacher would mark pupils' work. But in secondary schools, this was generally an expectation only on long-term placements (23% all placements, 73% on long-term placements only). For nursery schools the question was largely seen as inapplicable. This section will consider the expectations in each sector in turn.

Table 5.13: Activities schools expect short-term supply teachers always to undertake (N = 415)

	nursery %	primary %	secondary %	special %
mark pupils' work	18	98	23	71
plan lessons	47	29	12	32
update pupil records	35	4	8	16
undertake lunch/ play supervision	18	2	0	40
attend staff meetings	76	11	13	45
attend parents' meetings	23	3	5	6
attend CPD sessions	29	2	5	24
involvement in extra-curricular activities	12	2	1	11
teach age groups or subjects other than those they are qualified to teach	12	1	52	31

Note: Shading indicates responses given by more than 40% of each category of school.

Primary supply teachers, as indicated above, are generally expected to mark pupils' work. Just over a quarter of schools also expect them to plan lessons. But equally, two-thirds of primary schools considered that provision of lesson plans was one of the three most important factors that make supply teachers effective. Chapter 3 (p.37) explained the teachers' strategy of arriving with activities suitable for all ages and stages to keep the pupils occupied while they read the plans left for them and locate resources.

While the remaining activities on the list are not generally expected of short-term supply teachers, the majority are expected of those undertaking long-term placements. Exceptions are undertaking lunch or play supervision (never expected in 82% of primary schools), involvement in extra-curricular activities (never expected in 50% of primary schools), and teaching age groups or subjects other than those the teacher is qualified for (never expected in 90% of primary schools). However, there is considerable variation between schools. One headteacher commented: *'Supply teachers are encouraged to join in all aspects of this school, and pupil learning experiences.'*

While primary teachers would normally expect to take one class for the whole day, that is not necessarily the case. One teacher described taking seven classes in a day, and teaching 260 different pupils in two days.

Secondary schools present a very different set of expectations. Over half expect supply teachers to teach subjects other than those they are qualified to teach. This seems surprisingly low in the light of data from secondary supply teachers indicating that short-term placements are normally 'general cover'. One teacher explained:

General cover … means that you could be doing anything, which just involved you sitting in a room, passing out what had been left for the class to do and supervising that the pupils would responsibly carry that out.

This teacher commented on the lack of job satisfaction in such work, and particularly so when he found himself supervising classes in his own subject. Because the schools did not know that the subject of the teacher who had been sent, '*work had been left of a nature that any teacher could have supervised*.' Several teachers commented that on occasions they have found that their own subject is being supervised by another (non-specialist) supply teacher, while they have to supervise pupils in a subject they are not familiar with. In some schools the member of staff managing supply cover might try to rearrange classes in such situations, but this does not always happen. Thus in many secondary schools short-term supply teaching is regarded as little more than supervision or *'baby-sitting'*; pupils are provided with work set by their own teacher or the head of department, and the supply teacher is not expected to *teach*. It may be for this reason that less than a quarter of secondary schools expect short-term supply teachers to mark work.

Long-term supply teachers are expected to carry out most of the duties listed in Table 5.13, although, as in primary, involvement in extra-curricular activities is not expected in over half the schools responding. One teacher reported being expected to write reports and attend parents' evening on a five-week placement

The expectations of supply teachers in special and nursery schools share some common features, and are rather different from primary and secondary schools. There is more often (though not universally) an expectation that even a short-term supply teacher will act as a member of the staff team, attending meetings and CPD, planning lessons and updating pupil records: *'daily recording is done as a staff team'* (special). In both nursery and special schools the expectations depended on whether the teacher had qualifications and experience in that sector. Teachers commented that in special schools and units they sometimes found that they could not really contribute because they did not have the necessary skills and knowledge. In particular, knowledge of routines and of individual needs was seen as vital, and this is difficult to acquire on a short placement.

5.6 Summary

Two main systems are used in the deployment of short-term teachers:

- central management by the authority (ten authorities); and
- local management by schools using a list provided by the authority (14 authorities).

Remaining authorities used a combination of these two systems, varying across sectors, between short- and long-term placements, or depending on school preference.

However, in practice most schools develop their 'own' lists of local supply teachers, and contact them in the first instance. This practice has advantages and limitations. Teachers are able to work in familiar schools, and schools have familiar teachers. However, those schools in more challenging circumstances are less likely to establish their 'own' lists, and as a result have greater difficulty in getting any supply teachers and are less likely to use teachers who are familiar with the school. Only a central deployment system can ensure that the needs of such schools can be prioritised. Moreover, when schools are unable to draw on the services of their regular supply

teachers, they turn to the official system, but because so many schools are making their own arrangements, the official system is less able to work effectively.

Deployment of permanent supply teachers is seen as potentially helpful in that permanent supply teachers could not refuse placements. However, most authorities with permanent supply teachers use them mainly in long-term placements. Others use them to provide cover in a cluster of schools.

Seven authorities still have their list in paper form only. Others make it available electronically. A variety of on-line booking systems are being developed, some of which are sophisticated and should simplify the task of finding an available teacher. However, in practice they have not fulfilled their promise. There are three reasons for this:

- schools do not always record their bookings (particularly when they phone their regular supply teachers);
- many teachers are registered on the list of more than one authority and appear as 'available' on the system when they are in fact working in another authority; and
- authorities do not generally update the whole list often enough.

There are very different expectations of short-term supply teachers in primary and secondary schools. Those in the secondary sector often supervise pupils doing set work, generally in a subject other than their own specialism. In primary schools, short-term supply staff are expected to teach and to mark pupil work, often following the class teacher's weekly plan.

Emerging issues

This chapter has raised a number of concerns and highlighted a variety of ideas about potential solutions. These include:

- increasing level of staffing to allow internal cover to be more widely used;
- greater use of permanent supply teachers for short-term placements;
- continuing development of on-line booking systems;
- a national database.

Some of the dilemmas identified do not appear to be amenable to easy solution. In particular there is a tension between schools' wish to control their own staffing, and their equally reasonable wish not to have to spend hours finding supply staff when teachers from their 'own list' are unavailable.

Similarly there is a tension between authorities' aim to manage the situation fairly for all teachers and schools, and schools' preference for controlling their own staffing.

Chapter 6: Support, professional development and quality issues

6.1 Introduction

Three key issues are addressed in this chapter: firstly, the support provided by the authority and within schools for teachers who are in schools on a temporary basis; secondly, provision which is made for supply teachers' professional development; and, thirdly, procedures for monitoring quality in relation to supply cover.

In relation to all three aspects, teachers undertaking both short-term and long-term placements reported lack of support and opportunity. However, this was more acute for those doing short-term cover (who comprise 50% of the teacher survey sample, see Table 3.4, p. 28). Teachers on long-term cover are more likely to be integrated into existing systems.

6.2 Support from authorities

This section relates to both the support given prior to going into a school, and the day to day support that enables supply teachers to go into a school and fulfil the role for which they have been requested – to take responsibility for a class or classes of pupils.

Support directly from the local authorities

The extent to which authorities say they provide some basic support to supply teachers is summarised in Table 6.1.

Table 6.1: Number of authorities providing different kinds of support for supply teachers (N = 32)

	Yes	No	No response
Named individual within authority to contact by supply teachers in case of need	23	6	3
Resources and materials for use by supply teachers	6	23	3
Other forms of support	12	13	7

The majority indicated that there was a named individual for supply teachers to contact, most often staff in personnel sections or an education officer. Where there was access to resources and materials it was to the general resources available to all teachers, for example through resource centres, with the view also expressed that the necessary resources and material were available in schools. Responses noted under 'other' included access to authority staff for interviews and advice. Expectations were clearly that the main sources of support for supply teachers would be within schools and that *'each school provides support in their own way'*.

Authorities where management of deployment is devolved to schools are less likely to have a named contact person, though based on interview data, this does not mean that supply teachers do not contact the authority and, when they do, their issues will be dealt with by an appropriate person. Access to resources and other forms of support is more likely to be available in authorities with a centralised approach to deployment.

Teacher interview and panel data suggest that supply teachers do not have much contact with authorities beyond getting onto the supply list and, in some cases, being sent to schools. According to some '*the most likely reason to be in touch is when your*

pay is incorrect.' Whatever the reason for being in touch with the authority certain factors are valued: a named contact who deals with your request; friendly reception; and being known as an individual. For many teachers, the main concern in relation to support from the authority is lack of professional development; this is addressed later in this chapter (pp. 72-7).

Information prior to going into a school

The way in which teachers receive information about the schools to which they are being sent depends whether deployment is managed centrally or is devolved to schools. The majority of authorities indicated that they provide the school address, the name of the contact person and the contact details, and details of the cover needed.

However, when teachers were asked about the information received about a new placement, their responses indicate that they do not all receive this information. Of those who work in many different schools, and hence have the greatest need:

- 78% indicate that they are given the address;
- 45% the name of the contact person;
- 51% contact details;
- 70% the nature of cover required.

In addition, 10% reported receiving details of transport or car parking.

This suggests that some supply teachers go to new schools knowing neither the name of the person they will be meeting nor the work they are going to be asked to do. Teachers from one authority mentioned that they received a list of all schools in the authority with names of the headteacher and the phone number. This was considered to be good practice and was suggested by others as something that authorities could do to help improve the service.

6.3 Support within schools

In-school support covers a range of issues including induction; staff available for ongoing support; receipt of school documentation; provision of lesson plans; information about pupils; and general social support and acceptance within the school. To set this in context it is helpful to consider the factors that maximise supply teacher effectiveness. School managers were asked to select the three most important factors from a list provided (Table 6.2).

Table 6.2: Factors selected by schools as the most important to maximise supply teacher effectiveness

Factors	nursery %	primary %	secondary %	special %	all %
supply teacher having worked in school previously	83	80	78	75	79
provision of detailed lesson plans	28	64	74	53	65
a named individual to provide support and supervision	67	56	65	69	62
provision of schemes of work	28	39	29	18	32
thorough induction	72	19	28	37	27
provision of information about pupil attainment	11	11	8	31	12
recent professional development activity	11	17	3	6	10
provision of school policies	22	7	10	6	9
N	*18*	*173*	*174*	*51*	*416*

Note: Shading highlights the sector in which the highest proportion of respondents selected each factor.

The most frequently selected factor in all school sectors was the teacher having worked in the school previously; in such a case induction is not required. Many schools generally employ familiar supply teachers, and this could explain why induction is ranked only fifth on the list overall. However, it was selected by a much higher proportion of nursery respondents (though the small number of nurseries in the sample requires us to be cautious in interpreting this). For primary and secondary schools, supplying detailed lesson plans was the second most frequently selected factor. Special schools put greater emphasis on supplying information about pupil attainment than did the other sectors.

Induction and support

The majority of schools surveyed indicate that there is a named person responsible for induction of supply teachers (85%) and for their support (89%). There were no notable differences across school sectors. The person with this responsibility is generally the headteacher in smaller schools and a depute head in larger primaries and secondary schools. Other staff identified as undertaking this responsibility include senior, principal and class teachers, and clerical/secretarial staff.

The majority of school respondents rated their procedures for induction and support as 'fairly effective' (Table 6.3), thus suggesting they are not totally satisfied with their current approaches. Special schools were more likely to identify that there is need for development in these areas.

Table 6.3: Schools' evaluation of the effectiveness of their induction and support procedures

		very effective	fairly effective	needs to be developed	no arrangements	*N*
Induction	%	22	51	22	5	*372*
Support	%	28	54	16	1	*372*

In contrast to the school response, less than half the supply teachers reported that they have a person to provide induction and support either 'always' or 'more often than not'. Table 6.4 shows the figures by sector.

Table 6.4: Supply teachers reporting that there is a person to provide induction and support 'always' or 'more often than not' by school sector

	nursery & primary* %	secondary %	special %	all %	*N*
a person responsible for your induction	27	42	43	38	*594*
a person responsible for supporting you	28	47	34	40	*616*

* Most respondents for this stage worked in both nursery and primary schools. Insufficient respondents worked only in primary to give a meaningful separate analysis.

That only a minority report receiving this kind of support is of concern, especially as the majority of schools reported that they have such people in place. It may suggest that although schools do have people with designated responsibility, in the day-to-day life of schools, supply teachers, especially those on short-term cover, may not necessarily come into contact with that person. Table 6.5 (overleaf) shows that those who have worked in many different schools in the last year report lower levels of support.

Table 6.5: Supply teachers reporting that there is a person to provide induction and support 'always' or 'more often than not' by no. of schools worked in

	work in one school %	work in many schools %	*N*
a person responsible for your induction	49	23	*594*
a person responsible for supporting you	51	23	*616*

An important support issue for supply teachers, which emerged during panel discussions, is knowing who to ask for help. The view expressed was that the best person is another friendly teacher, and in a larger primary school, your 'stage partner'. This concurs with the views of some of the senior management in schools who were interviewed. Many supply teachers reported that they want to appear competent and efficient and not needing to ask for help; some may feel intimidated by going to the headteacher or take the view that they do not want to bother busy senior staff. They generally recognised that management could not always give the time to the supply teacher. The supply teacher was there to be a solution to problems facing the school on a given day, not to create further problems for the headteacher.

School documentation

School documentation can take a variety of forms including general school or staff handbooks, handbooks specifically for supply teachers, timetables, and school behaviour and discipline policies. The surveys of schools and teachers asked about provision and receipt of these. Responses in relation to handbooks are set out in Table 6.6.

Table 6.6: Schools reporting that they supply support documentation to supply teachers

	nursery %	primary %	secondary %	special %	all %
Staff handbook	41	39	22	48	33
Handbook designed to meet needs of temporary staff	64	63	74	64	68
N	*17*	*167*	*176*	*52*	*412*

During the interviews with the case study authorities, one indicated that all primary headteachers are expected to provide a supply teachers handbook; the others indicated that they know some schools have prepared special leaflets or information packs, but there is no particular policy or guidance from the authority about that. One indicated that a group of supply teachers worked together and put forward ideas about guidelines that each school could provide, but this has not yet been endorsed by the education department. Provision of school-specific information is very much the decision and responsibility of school management.

Sixty-eight percent of schools reported providing a handbook designed to meet the needs of temporary staff. However, only 37% of the supply teachers reported generally receiving staff handbooks, with some differences across sectors:

- nursery and primary supply teachers 21%
- secondary supply teachers 44%
- special school supply teachers 46%.

Interviews with two special school managers indicated that supply staff are used mainly for long-term cover because of the difficulties of finding short-term supply

teachers. The schools' approach is to treat them like any new member of staff. Induction packs are supplied, including school policy documents, though not specifically designed for supply teachers. Staff work closely together and the supply teacher is supported within the team. Nursery headteachers reported, in interviews, that induction includes a tour of the premises and all resources. Supply teachers work closely with the nursery nurses who provide support along with other teachers.

The primary school managers who were interviewed varied in their practices. Headteachers in smaller rural schools indicated that they prefer a personal approach to induction and that the headteacher and other teachers, or indeed the school secretary, are always on hand to provide the information needed. The headteacher him/herself is likely to *'go in and out'* especially if there are difficult pupils or discipline problems. It is considered *'daunting giving people loads of things to read – it is much better communicating, talking to them.'* Some larger urban primaries also take a similar approach but others emphasised documentation. One large primary provides the general handbook that has all the information about the school *'including the staff lottery syndicate'*. The preferred approach is to have the supply teacher work closely with the stage partner who then makes sure the supply teacher knows all about the *'mundane but important things'* like where the staffroom is and where the toilets are. Other primary schools supply short handbooks prepared specially for supply teachers coming into the school, but continue to emphasise the importance of personal contact with the headteacher and other teachers.

Of the eight secondary schools involved in interviews, two interviewees said they do not provide a handbook or induction pack but, as with primaries, emphasise personal contact – *'making sure they know how to get around the school'* and *'keeping them under my wing'*. One supplied a support pack that *'any new teacher or student'* would get; others did have specially designed induction packs or leaflets, two of which had been put together in consultation with supply teachers.

Interviews with supply teachers and panel discussions revealed that, from their perspective, school practice varied in providing necessary information and, as a broad generalisation, supply teachers suggested that *'some schools are very good, some mediocre and some dreadful'*. Their experience also varies according to the anticipated length of stay. The longer they are in a school the more likely they are to be treated like permanent members of staff, and the more familiar they become with the ethos and practice of the school. This is reflected in the data from the survey. Of those who had worked mainly in one school during the previous 12 months, 43% reported receiving handbooks, while only 25% of those who had worked in many schools reported this. However, surprisingly high numbers of those working mainly in one school still reported not receiving this information.

From the supply teachers' perspective, of prime importance is *'survival information'*. This includes things like basic housekeeping issues (location of classroom, toilets and staffroom; fire drill and location of fire exits), day-to-day running (timetable, when the bell rings, what to do with dinner money), and names of pupils. Teachers speak of having to ask pupils for such information. This can produce responses varying from helpful guidance from well-behaved pupils, to less accurate information from pupils *'who wind you up'* (primary). Secondary teachers doing general supply spoke of being handed a piece of paper with a different class each period and a list of room numbers and being left to their own devices to find their way around the school. This

had led to *'struggling against the flow of pupils because they have a one way system you don't know about'*. One teacher explained:

> *Some of the larger schools, it's just like going into a concrete jungle and you know you are pointed in a vague direction and said to get on with it or the staff room is up there down a long corridor, you know, Lord of the Rings type stuff, so very difficult.*

Although 80% of teachers reported in the survey that they are 'always' or 'more often than not' given a timetable, there are still cases where this is not given. Thus there were numerous tales, in both primary and secondary schools, of pupils misinforming the teacher about *'when the bell goes'*, or of being:

> *… busy teaching away and a bell rings and you turn round and the weans are all packed up ready to go … and you've not been prepared for it and you're still in the middle of saying what you're saying because you don't know what the times are.* (secondary).

Supply teachers believed that having this kind of information is important in establishing their credibility and authority in the classroom. Having to ask the pupils is an indicator to the pupils that the teacher is not in control. They suggested that this kind of information can readily be supplied, and indicated that they found good practice in some schools which provide short, two-page information guides for supply teachers. This however is not frequently encountered and one teacher recorded finding such a guide in only two out of ten schools. Another example of good practice in primary schools was where the timetable is laminated and on the wall in every classroom.

Behaviour policies and support with discipline

Issues related to behaviour and discipline emerged frequently. In the school survey a high proportion expressed the view that pupil behaviour is worse with supply teachers but relatively few said that they provide supply teachers with the school behaviour policy (Table 6.7).

Table 6.7: Schools reporting (a) agreement that pupil behaviour is worse with supply teachers; and (b) that supply teachers are supplied with the school behaviour policy (N = 412)

	nursery %	primary %	secondary %	special %	all %
Strongly agree/agree that pupils' behaviour is generally worse with supply teachers	47	60	76	76	68
Supply teachers are given school behaviour policy	0	20	34	33	27

In the teacher survey 38% of the respondents indicated that they 'always' or 'more often than not' receive information on behaviour policies (20% of those working in nursery/primary schools; 49% in secondary schools and 36% in special schools). The distinction between long- and short-term supply cover is again evident in that 50% of those who worked mainly in one school during the previous 12 months reported receiving the school behaviour policy, while only 28% of those working in many schools reported this. Given the importance of the issue, it is perhaps surprising that so few schools make this available.

Interviews and panel discussions revealed that supply teachers considered knowledge of school behaviour policies to be important precisely because schools have different policies. While some primary teachers feel they could use their own approach to discipline it is generally agreed that following school procedures is more beneficial to

the pupils. Having a copy of the school's policy helps clarify issues, but support and back-up when there are problems is extremely important.

Some secondary supply teachers report having discipline problems with pupils and not being supported: *'teachers turn away and say it isn't their problem.'* On the other hand, another teacher reported getting better support than the average classroom teacher, with special arrangements made for behaviour issues. Another spoke of good practice in one secondary school: a single sheet was provided with examples of four or five situations that could arise, and how the school wanted them dealt with.

Some supply teachers expressed the view that how the school is managed overall influenced pupil behaviour; this is not necessarily just an issue for supply teachers.

Provision of lesson plans

Both primary and secondary school respondents ranked the provision of detailed lesson plans as being an important factor contributing to the effectiveness of supply cover (see Table 6.2, p.64). Ninety-three percent reported that lesson plans are 'always' or 'usually' provided in the case of planned absences, and 70% in the case of unplanned absences (Table 6.8). Responses were similar from primary and secondary schools.

Table 6.8 Schools reporting provision of lesson plans to supply teachers

		always	usually	Occasionally	never	*N*
Planned absences	%	56	37	6	1	*414*
Unplanned absences	%	15	55	26	3	*416*

However, only 45% of those responding to the teacher survey indicated that they are 'always' or 'more often than not' given lesson plans, with 28% indicating 'rarely' or 'never'. Those on long-term cover are of course expected to be planning their own lessons and so our focus here is on those doing mainly short-term cover. Of such teachers, 51% reported that they are 'always' or 'more often than not' supplied with lesson plans with 21% reporting 'rarely' or 'never'. It would appear that there is some disjunction here between the reports given by school managers and those of supply teachers.

We asked how useful such plans are. Of those supply teachers doing mainly short-term work, 52% reported that they were very useful; 43% fairly useful; and 5% not particularly useful. We also asked about the limitations of lesson plans. Teachers' responses are reported in Table 6.9.

Table 6.9 Supply teachers' views on limitations of lesson plans (N = 549)

	%
lack of knowledge about what has already been covered	52
lack of information about pupil levels	48
insufficient detail	27
resources not specified	24
other – please explain	13

More detailed insights were obtained from interviews and panel discussions. The experience of *primary* teachers appears to be that the weekly or daily plan (rather than a detailed lesson plan) is usually in the classroom for them. The view was expressed

that most experienced primary teachers should be able to continue with the maths and English curriculum but that in other areas such as environmental studies it is more difficult to pick up on what the class teacher is doing, especially if materials are not left. Some suggested that they would prefer to go prepared with their own materials if they are covering for only a day or two. Having lesson plans and worksheets left creates its own problems. Every school has its own approach to lesson planning; this means the supply teacher has to get used to different styles. It is not always possible to understand another person's abbreviations, nor is it always possible to find the resources referred to. When piles of worksheets are left with detailed plans and timing *'that is more stressful to deal with because you feel you have to fulfil it completely and to the letter.'*

In *secondary* schools the usefulness of lesson plans depend on whether or not the teacher is covering his/her own subject. One chemistry teacher indicated that when teaching chemistry there is no problem as *'98% of Scottish schools use well designed universal packages based on Higher Still.'* However, as much of general supply work involves covering subjects other than their own, teachers are dependent on material left either by the class teacher or provided by the principal teacher. Supply teachers demonstrated different attitudes to this from *'you take your library book and read it and let them get on with it'* to *'going round and helping them as best you can'*; however not having the subject knowledge is a limitation. Some expressed a willingness to teach most subjects, but all found some subjects more difficult than others. Sometimes this can all run smoothly and at others there are problems, which include: not enough work being left, especially for the most able pupils; the pupils having already done that work; pupils quickly getting bored with worksheets; or, even worse, copying from text book to jotter. Teachers commented that there is often not enough time to read and take in the lesson plan at short notice. Other problems include resources either not being available or not easily located.

Information about pupils

Schools did not generally rank provision of information about pupils as a key factor in maximising supply teacher effectiveness (Table 6.2, p. 64), though special schools ranked this higher than other sectors. This contrasts with the recent Ofsted report about supply teaching in England (2002), which concluded that lack of information about pupils' levels and previous work was a key factor limiting the effectiveness of supply teachers.

The teachers' responses indicated that they would find more information useful. Just under half the survey respondents indicated that a limitation of using lesson plans is lack of information about pupil levels. But only 24% of the supply teacher sample reported receiving such information 'always' or 'more often than not', while 56% indicated 'rarely' or 'never'.

Interviews and panel discussions suggested that background knowledge about pupils is particularly important in relation to special educational needs, including behavioural problems, and health needs of pupils. In particular they were concerned about issues that could result in disruption (e.g. not being told about a child *'who could sometimes wreck the classroom'*); and about issues such as medical needs, where ignorance might result in harm to the pupil. One secondary school reported that in every room there was a folder with a class list, and pupils with particular needs were asterisked; supply teachers were aware they should ask about such pupils.

Social support and acceptance:

The teacher survey revealed high levels of general satisfaction with their reception in schools, though they are least satisfied with pupil attitude (Table 6.10).

Table 6.10 Teachers' level of satisfaction with interpersonal aspects of supply teaching (N=676)

	very satisfied %	fairly satisfied %	neutral, not applicable %	slightly dissatisfied %	very dissatisfied %
reception you get in schools	57	35	4	4	1
attitude of other teachers to you	56	35	3	5	1
attitude of pupils towards you	28	46	7	15	4

Reported satisfaction levels are highest among older teachers (Table 6.11). Chapter 3 (p. 35) explained that opportunities for social interaction are among the factors motivating this group to do supply teaching.

Table 6.11: Teachers 'very satisfied' with aspects of supply teaching by age (N = 676)

	20-29 %	30-39 %	40-49 %	50-59 %	60+ %
reception you get in schools	41	43	54	55	82
attitude of other teachers to you	35	44	52	57	79
attitude of pupils towards you	25	26	27	22	41

The proportion of supply teachers who work mainly in one school recording 'very satisfied' is higher in each category than for those working in many schools. A higher proportion of those with full registration are satisfied than those with only provisional registration (Table 6.12).

Table 6.12 : Supply teachers reporting 'very satisfied' by number of schools and GTCS registration

	No. of schools worked in		GTCS registration	
	one %	*many* %	*provisional* %	*full* %
reception you get in schools	63	50	51	58
the attitude of other teachers to you	63	50	47	58
the attitude of pupils towards you	34	18	24	29
N	*295*	*241*	*590*	*97*

Both the interviews and panel discussions suggested that across all sectors levels of welcome and support vary from *'being cuddled by the headteacher'* (primary) to being *'thrown into the corridor'* (nursery). Some leave you to *'sink or swim'* (primary). Some teachers reported that *'day to day support is great'* (primary), *'wonderful'* (primary), *'invariably excellent'* (secondary). Certain schools have *'lovely atmospheres'*. Some mentioned the impact of the headteacher on creating the ethos in the school, which encourages teachers to be supportive of others coming in. But where staff are *'ground down'* because of *'bullying'*, they have no energy left. In secondary schools, support can vary between departments according to the organisational approaches of the principal teacher. Supply teachers can be ignored in the staffroom and numerous tales were told of *'you can't use that mug'* and *'you can't sit in that chair.'* Many supply teachers suggested that it is their own responsibility to be friendly and to be good at establishing relationships in such contexts, but that being *'thick-skinned and resilient'* is important for survival. One secondary teacher

suggested that teachers literally do not have time for supply teachers – not that they do not like them, they are simply too busy. Another suggested that they could be *'brusque'*, but that this was caused by stress rather than unfriendliness.

6.4 Provision of opportunities for professional development

Professional development is taken to mean all opportunities that teachers have to improve their skills and abilities as teachers. This includes in-service opportunities both in school and offered by the authorities, courses, use of learning packs, and private reading. It was noted that in general usage the term CPD is becoming associated with the 35 hours of development in teachers' own time, which is a requirement of the agreement *A Teaching Profession for the 21st Century* (Scottish Executive, 2001b). This was beginning to emerge in the data but there was considerable variation in developments in different authorities and in awareness amongst supply teachers.

This section focuses on temporary or daily-paid supply teachers. Permanent supply teachers are likely to be treated the same as all other permanent staff in an authority. Only 14 permanent supply teachers responded to the survey. Thirteen reported taking part in professional development in the previous year; the other had taken up post only two weeks before completing the questionnaire, but before that had been daily-paid and had not had any professional development.

A key finding is the very limited opportunity for daily-paid supply teachers to access any professional development. Not all supply teachers want to be involved; however, many, both short-term and long-term, would like to, and feel that they are excluded from the system. Both authorities and schools distinguish between long-term and 'casual' supply teachers, and are more willing to invest in those undertaking long-term work.

Opportunities to take part in professional development activities

Thirty authorities responded to a question about what professional development opportunities were available to supply teachers, although in one case it was noted that personnel staff had completed the questionnaire and could not respond to this question. That may also explain the other missing responses. Two replied that they had nothing currently on offer but that strategies were being developed.

The following positions were identified in the responses:

- seven authorities indicated that their programme for permanent staff is open to supply teachers; two of these specifying only those on long-term placements;
- eleven authorities indicated that supply teachers can take part in school development programmes/in-service days; two of these specifying only those on long-term placements;
- two authorities offered return to teaching courses;
- two allowed supply teachers to access probationer (induction year) courses;
- two reported including supply teachers in long-term placements in formal, planned CPD;
- two reported courses designed for and targeted at supply teachers;
- one reported that supply teachers have access to development packs available in schools.

Authority interviewees generally acknowledged that, while these opportunities are available in theory, they could not say that supply teachers take advantage of them. They felt that professional development opportunities for supply teachers are not what they would want them to be; more than one spoke of *'a nettle to be grasped'*, particularly in the light of the agreement *A Teaching Profession for the 21st Century* (Scottish Executive, 2001b). One spoke of seeking to develop more on-line provision for courses of professional development for all teachers with the benefit that this would also make them more accessible to supply teachers.

One of the case study authorities runs courses specifically for supply teachers and has organised a supply teacher network. This was on the initiative of the local authority manager, a former headteacher, who recognised that no-one *'owned'* the supply teachers or took responsibility for them. The network offers the opportunity for supply teachers to meet and to share experiences and concerns and, by arrangement, to meet with local authority staff who are dealing with their placements, salaries, pensions etc. However, it also offers development courses which are responsive to the needs identified by the supply teachers, for example issues they hear about in the schools but do not know about. For example, courses have been run on ICT skills and on 'brain gym' and there are plans to address planning and assessment. Although there is a core of around 20 teachers committed to the network, and it is now co-ordinated by a supply teacher, higher numbers attend the training events, which are paid for by the authority. It was acknowledged that there are still limitations, for example, the time and location of meetings do not suit all teachers. Advertising the network is through posters in schools and is dependent on headteachers passing on the information and by word of mouth. Headteachers and supply teachers who were interviewed within the authority are aware of the network, though the teachers have not attended due to the acknowledged limitations. This, however, is a rare example of an authority being proactive in its support for the professional development of supply teachers. Another authority ran a series of courses through the year specifically targeted at supply teachers.

While some other authorities indicated that some professional development opportunities were theoretically available, as shown above, supply teachers generally reported that they could not take these up for financial reasons. They are paid for the days they are contracted to teach and, if a school wishes to include a supply teacher in an authority-run course, it is generally the responsibility of the school to fund that from their staff development budget. Similarly, if a school wishes a supply teacher to attend a school in-service day, the school would have to pay the teacher for that day. In a few cases, supply teachers reported receiving such support from their schools, and a few school managers talked of being willing to do this. But in general, budgetary constraints dictate that it is more likely that a permanent member of staff would be funded for development than a temporary teacher. If a supply teacher is funded, headteachers are more likely to commit resources to those doing long-term cover in their schools.

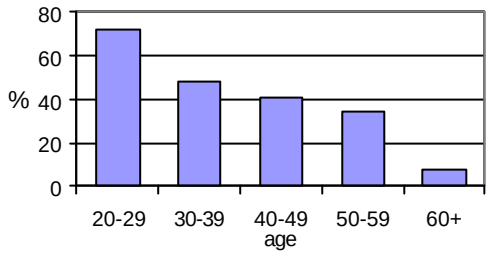
At least one authority has asked its schools to include those temporary teachers who are in the school for more than four weeks in professional review, and to fund staff development for them from the devolved school budget. In the school survey, some 85% of respondents indicated that they expected supply teachers to attend professional development activities only when on long-term placement; only 7% said they expected all supply teachers to take part. Supply teachers spoke of willingness to

attend in-service and other opportunities without being paid, and some had done so, but the alternative of a paid day's work generally took priority.

One authority cited the tendency of teachers to work for more than one authority as a reason for not providing professional development activities to supply teachers; they argued that teachers they invest in can then work for a neighbouring authority.

Overall, 37% of the supply teachers in the sample had taken part in any professional development activities in the last year. Twenty-six percent had taken part in activities organised by a school, and 20% in activities organised by the local authority. While 61% of those supply teachers doing mainly long-term work had taken part, only 19% of those doing short-term work had done so, and 49% of those doing a mixture of long- and short-term work. There was a clear age-related pattern of involvement; the younger teachers were much more likely to have taken part (Figure 6.1).

Figure 6.1: Percentage of each age group participating in professional development activities in last 12 months (teacher survey) (N = 658)



The low participation among the older teachers reflects the reasons that many of them gave for doing supply work; they do not want the additional workload and expectations that permanent teaching brings, which could include having to invest extra time in attending and doing work associated with professional development. Many of those who are retired see no point in professional development because they consider themselves to be at the end of their careers. Moreover, it is the older teachers who are most often engaged in short-term supply (Table 3.9, p. 33), and are thus the least likely to be able to access professional development activities.

Development needs of supply teachers

In responding to the questionnaire, representatives of 15 authorities estimated that their supply teachers are fairly up-to-date with recent curricular developments; only one stated that they are very up-to-date; two that they are not up to date and three said it varied. The remainder either did not know or did not respond. Comments suggested that authorities consider that supply teachers' awareness of recent developments is variable, but that generally there are no robust mechanisms in place to assess this.

In the school survey, respondents were asked to evaluate on a 4-point scale the skills and knowledge of the supply teachers they have used in the last year (Table 6.13 overleaf). Nursery and primary respondents gave higher ratings than secondary and special school respondents. But many commented that it was not possible to generalise: *'some are excellent, some are frankly awful.'*

Table 6.13: School survey: Responses to 'How good is supply teachers' knowledge of the curriculum?'

		1 excellent	2	3	4 very poor	*N*
nursery	%	38	46	8	8	*13*
primary	%	24	67	7	1	*165*
secondary	%	9	69	21	1	*159*
special	%	7	70	19	5	*43*

Note: Shading indicates that over 35% of respondents in any school sector selected that response.

A major weakness identified was in supply teachers' ICT skills, which were rated by 57% of school respondents as being poor or very poor. It was noted that this is not necessarily a particular weakness of supply teachers but also of permanent teachers. Supply teachers, however, have had less opportunity to participate in the ICT courses that have been on offer.

For the supply teachers themselves, provision of professional development was the most frequently mentioned improvement they would like from both local authorities and the Scottish Executive. During interview and panel discussions the majority expressed frustration at lack of opportunity. Even those who had had some opportunities (mainly the younger teachers on long-term placements) spoke of inequality of opportunity. All too often supply teachers made comments such as:

> *Nothing is on offer for supply teachers.*
>
> *You could only go by invitation and you don't get invited.*
>
> *I was told it was only for permanent staff.*
>
> *Some of us have done nothing since coming in to supply teaching..*

Supply teachers were asked to write on the questionnaire what professional development activity they would most like to be involved in during the next year. Almost a third listed ICT updating; this was the most frequently mentioned need, matching the school managers' perception. This was closely followed by the need for updates on both subject and policy issues, and behaviour management. Other frequently mentioned areas were learning support and special needs, assessment and classroom management. A number said they would be happy to have anything at all. Further suggestions were for courses specifically designed for supply teachers to take account of issues such as working in different schools; covering subjects other than their own; and the particular employment rights of supply teachers.

The supply teachers commented that they had difficulty accessing information about professional development opportunities. They found it difficult to obtain such information in schools, where often it is not passed on or they do not have time to look for information on notice-boards or *'piles of notices on a table'*. They suggested that there could be direct mailing to their homes. An alternative proposal was for every supply teacher to have a base school, even if it is not one that they teach in all the time. This could provide a focus for receiving all up-to-date information, and possibly for accessing computers. By extension, the headteacher could be asked to provide support for professional review and development.

The policy context

The agreement *A Teaching Profession for the 21st Century* (Scottish Executive, 2001b) introduced a contractual 35 hours of professional development activity for all teachers. This was an aspect of CPD that authorities were in the process of developing for their permanent staff over the period of this research, and it was evident that some authorities are more advanced in their developments than others. It was acknowledged that supply teachers need to be included in some way but that strategies have still to be developed. It was assumed that temporary teachers on long-term contracts will be included within school procedures. One supply teacher who was on a long-term 0.6 contract (i.e. 3 days per week) had been asked to show evidence of 20 hours CPD. Other supply teachers spoke of seeing permanent staff with their folders and *'going to their CPD meetings'* and feeling left out.

Some authorities issued all supply teachers with the information they were issuing to permanent staff. Some supply teachers reported having received this but were unsure how to make use of it. Much of the focus was on the Chartered Teacher programme, which they do not feel is appropriate to their context. It is particularly unclear as to who would take responsibility for carrying out professional review and agreeing development plans with supply teachers, especially for those who undertake short-term cover in a large number of schools, or who only work occasionally. Within the authority that had a supply teacher network (described above), CPD portfolios have been provided, and teachers started to complete these at a network meeting. The authority manager has offered to provide support to those supply teachers who want it.

Younger supply teachers expressed concern about not being involved in structured CPD as they saw it limiting their career progression. They felt that when they applied for permanent posts, the fact that they had done less CPD than those who were just completing the induction year would put them at a disadvantage.

The local authority representatives who were interviewed all recognised the importance of ensuring that all supply staff, as members of the teaching profession, are included in some way, but conceded that there are difficulties to be resolved, particularly in relation to short-term supply staff.

The case of probationers (GTCS provisionally registered)

Chapter 3 (pp. 32-3) outlined the position of teachers who are provisionally registered with GTCS and who are still trying to complete probation as supply teachers. Of those in our survey, just over half (51%) had taken part in professional development activities during the previous 12 months. This suggests that there are many probationers left without support. Two authority interviewees spoke of their needs: one said they can be included in the core probationer programme, but that they do not always know about this because the management of supply cover is devolved to schools; the other said they can *'fill in'* on the new induction programme *'if they want'*.

Some of the teachers on our panels had completed probation while on supply, but they had been in long-term appointments with in-school support. One secondary teacher who had moved from school to school had not managed to complete. He thought he had probably not taught his own subject enough, but was aware that he had not kept a proper record. He saw this as his own fault, but it could be construed that continuous support might have encouraged the maintenance of that record. Other supply teachers in this position conveyed a sense of 'lost-ness'. One primary teacher admitted that she

was not clear on how to get through probation, she was not attached to a school and was not included in in-service. *'I haven't gone on any courses; I've done nothing'*. She reported she had no probationer support and had not completed probation after three years. A secondary teacher from a different authority told a similar story and concluded *'we have been forgotten about.'*

Following the introduction of the induction year as part of the agreement *A Teaching Profession for the 21st Century* (Scottish Executive, 2001b), many permanent posts are advertised now as available only to those who have full registration. Understandably, supply teachers who have not yet achieved this feel they are going to be overtaken by those now completing the induction year. To improve their position, under the new arrangements these probationers can now reach the Standard for Full Registration in one year and one term (270 days) whereas the previous system involved the probationer working 380 days before reaching this Standard.

6.5 Quality issues

Monitoring the performance of supply teachers is important for the quality of experience of the pupils, but when accompanied by feedback, it is an important aspect of enabling teachers to develop. As noted, professional review is being introduced for all mainstream teachers and we have discussed the view found in most authorities that those doing long-term cover will be included in due course but that there is difficulty in providing that support for short-term supply teachers.

Eleven authorities indicated that they have in place a system for monitoring the performance of supply teachers, with seven noting that written reports are received from headteachers. This generally seemed to be for long-term placements only. Varying practices were reported, for example, at the end of every placement of more than four weeks, or once a year, or only if the teacher does not meet the quality requirements of the school. One authority asks for written reports on those doing short-term cover after 5 consecutive working days, or 5 working days in any month in the same school. Some authorities indicated that there is nothing formal and that monitoring is *'very ad hoc'*. One authority reported that it had sought to introduce headteacher reporting but this had been resisted by the unions and is therefore not in place. In one authority these reports are used to help determine future placements and to provide references if requested. In another they were used in determining which teachers should be offered permanent contracts. Such reports are likely to take on increasing importance in the light of the Court of Session ruling and the criterion of *satisfactory* service for qualifying for permanent status.

The majority of schools responding to the questionnaire indicated that they have a named person for monitoring (84%) and supervising (85%) supply teachers; the figures are slightly lower in nursery and primary, (77% and 72% respectively). Primaries and special schools are most likely to identify that there is need for development of these procedures, but overall, most school respondents indicated that their procedures were 'fairly effective' (Table 6.14).

Table 6.14: Schools' views on the effectiveness of monitoring and supervision of supply teachers

		very effective	fairly effective	needs to be developed	no arrangements	*N*
Monitoring	%	19	49	27	5	*359*
Supervision	%	21	51	24	4	*362*

In all but secondary schools it is most likely to be the headteacher who has responsibility for monitoring and supervision; in secondary schools it is more likely to be shared by the depute head and the head of department/principal teacher.

Supervision and monitoring are clearly closely related as both imply some kind of oversight. Both local authorities and school management revealed a distinction: supervision seems to relate to oversight which leads to providing some kind of additional support to help a supply teacher's practice, while monitoring implies more of a 'weeding out' of poor teachers.

In most of the schools where headteachers/depute heads were interviewed supervision was on a very informal basis, dependent on *'being around'*, *'keeping an eye on them'*, *'anecdotal views of other teachers'*, *'asking how it is going'*, *'sensing the relationship with the pupils'*. In secondary schools this was mainly the role of the principal teacher, who might also provide support in relation to teaching and learning. Unsatisfactory short-term teachers were likely not to be asked back, and most school managers spoke of teachers who they would not use again. Support is more likely to be offered to long-term supply teachers in terms of meeting with them, discussing problems and giving advice. In primary schools, this could mean giving them a different and *'less challenging'* class.

In a small number of schools, both secondary and primary, management spoke of including long-term supply teachers in the school's normal quality assurance procedures, which included observation and discussion of quality of learning and teaching using '*How good is our school?*' criteria.

Monitoring may also involve checking with the normal class teacher, when they return, whether the work has been covered adequately, and *'picking up vibes from the children'*. A supply teacher reported that the school management asked the pupils waiting for the school bus how they got on with the supply teachers. In relevant authorities, headteachers/depute heads mentioned completing and returning the report to the council office.

A major aspect of monitoring is the informal networking of school headteachers and deputes to check on a supply teacher they have not used before, or to alert others to problems. Some authorities acknowledged this as practice, and indicated that they need take no further action in relation to poor teachers as schools would not ask them back.

Education authorities, in response to the questionnaire, reported varying responses to complaints about the quality of supply teachers. The seriousness of the complaint was an important factor in determining action and it was largely expected that school management would deal with minor problems. Twelve authorities reported that teachers would be invited to come for interview with an appropriate education officer and would be offered some kind of development, and in some cases ongoing monitoring in further placements. Four reported they would be dealt with on an ad hoc or individual basis, with a further five indicating that complaints rarely occurred.

In the authorities where we interviewed staff, complaints about supply teachers appear to be a rare occurrence. One reported *'one case three years ago'*; another reported two or three each summer and another two or three in recent months. One depute head told us that he would not report poor teachers to the authority, but would simply not use them again. People are occasionally removed from the supply register but this

does not happen often. It is acknowledged that teachers who do not work well in one situation may be satisfactory in another context, but it is also recognised that in a situation where there is a shortage of supply teachers it is sometimes necessary to use those considered less than satisfactory: *'We can no longer afford to consider quality; we take bodies.'*

Supply teachers' 'monitoring' of schools

Two schools spoke of asking teachers to complete forms giving feedback on their experience in the school. However, this was not an issue explored in the survey and so we do not know the extent of such practice.

'Monitoring' of schools from the perspective of the supply teacher is more about making decisions about which schools not to work in, discussed in Chapter 5 (pp. 51-2). Only 9% indicated that they had turned down work because of the school's reputation, but 19% reported that they turned down work because of previous bad experiences in a school. One supply teacher spoke of monitoring all calls from schools via the answering machine and, when the call is from a school she does not want to go to, she does not answer.

Authorities indicated that some teachers did *'pick and choose'* which schools they went to, and that this was sometimes based on perceptions of schools' reputations or pupil behaviour, especially in areas of social deprivation. One authority stated that if *'bad experience'* was given as a reason for turning down work they would investigate. Authorities report that they rarely receive complaints from supply teachers and if they do, these are dealt with on an individual basis, generally in consultation with the headteacher of the school. In the teacher survey, 3.5% of the respondents reported complaining to the authority. The main school-related issues were to do with perceived unfair treatment by other staff.

It appears then, that there are market forces in which both supply teachers and schools make selections. The outcome of these is that some teachers do not get the work they would like, and some schools find it very hard to obtain supply teachers. Yet there are very few monitoring processes in operation which would enable the authorities to identify and address these problems through providing support to the rejected teacher or to the unpopular school.

6.6 Summary

Support systems for supply teachers are limited, and often entirely lacking. Schools report that there is rather more support provided than supply teachers say they receive in schools.

Many short-term supply teachers lacked opportunities for professional development. Schools are unwilling to fund development for those not on their staff, and authorities may be reluctant to provide development for teachers who were not committed to that authority. Most supply teachers were left to fund development themselves (either by attending school CPD days without payment, or paying to attend twilight sessions). This is a particular concern because:

- schools identified weaknesses in supply teachers' knowledge, and in particular their ICT skills
- some supply teachers have not yet achieved full GTCS registration; and
- lack of professional development limits the future options open to supply teachers.

A small minority of authorities are already addressing these issues.

While some authorities have systems to monitor the quality of long-term supply teachers, there is no systematic monitoring of those undertaking short-term placements. When schools are faced with poor teachers they simply do not ask them back. Only rarely do authorities attempt to provide development activities to tackle the problem. Similarly, there are no systematic procedures for monitoring the quality of experience the supply teachers have in schools.

Emerging issues

To enable supply teachers to perform effectively more consistent support and development is needed, particularly for those involved in short-term supply work.

Schools should provide:

- brief 'survival information' which can be assimilated quickly;
- a clear statement and exemplification of behaviour policy and someone to help when it is needed;
- information about pupils in relation to previous work and attainment levels, and to medical or behavioural issues; and
- access to adequate resources.

Authorities should provide:

- a strategy for professional review and development planning for all supply teachers, and staffing to ensure that this takes place;
- ring-fenced or central funding for this, especially for short-term supply teachers;
- urgent measures to support those supply teachers who have not yet managed to achieve full registration;
- strategies for collecting feedback from schools about teachers, and from teachers about schools; this should be used to ensure appropriate support and development for both teachers and schools;
- procedures to identify and if necessary remove any ineffective supply teachers who are resistant to development activity.

Chapter 7: The effects of different recruitment, deployment and support systems

7.1 Introduction

Having examined a number of key themes in the management of supply cover in the foregoing chapters, the purpose of this chapter is not only to review what has been found but to seek to identify the effects of different approaches on the experiences of authorities, schools and supply teachers. In doing this, our intention is to identify some principles for improvement which can provide a basis for recommendations for consideration by the Executive and other bodies, as appropriate. These recommendations follow in the final chapter of the report.

There is no doubt that this study has confirmed that the management of supply cover in the teaching profession in Scotland is both critical and complex. It is critical because the provision of education for pupils depends on there being appropriately trained staff available to provide the flexibility required to meet both the predictable and the unpredictable absences from their normal responsibilities of established teachers. Because this is the most critical aspect of all, we start the chapter by looking at the impact on pupils.

But it is also critical – and complex – because of the diversity of teachers who are engaged in supply teaching. The supply workforce includes people at very different stages in their careers, with differing professional aspirations and motivations and varied patterns of availability to schools.

The complexity of the management of supply cover is also a consequence of the geographical diversity of the country and of the need to be able to match the qualifications and skills of temporary teachers to the absences which occur. It is perhaps because of this complexity that we have seen such a range of approaches to the management of cover across the country. A key question that we will be addressing in the sections that follow will be whether a more unified national approach is either desirable or possible.

It will certainly assist the national picture if the moves towards agreed definitions of temporary teachers are adopted following discussions within the Scottish Negotiating Committee for Teachers (see Chapter 2, p. 11).

7.2 Effects on pupils

This study did not set out to measure the effects of supply cover on pupils' experience in any direct way. However, we did seek the views of our adult respondents on the impact that various aspects of supply cover had on pupils' learning experiences.

There can be no doubt that the quality of education for pupils may be affected if they are subjected to more than infrequent deployment of internal or external cover. It is interesting to note that inspection reports on schools by HMI rarely refer to issues of cover as such. What some reports do raise is problems arising from instability in staffing. In such situations one may expect a greater than average deployment of supply cover, but this in itself is not usually raised as an issue. This contrasts somewhat with the situation in England, where concerns were such that Ofsted carried

out a survey of the issues of quality arising from the deployment of temporary teachers (Ofsted, 2002).

Comments from our school respondents acknowledged that the effects of the deployment of supply teachers on pupils depend very much on the individual teacher. Table 7.1 shows how our school respondents characterised the overall effect of supply teacher deployment on pupils.

Table 7.1: School survey: The effects of using supply teachers on pupils: percentage that 'agree' or 'strongly agree' with each statement (n = 412)

	nursery %	primary %	secondary %	special %
The use of supply teachers is positive in that a change of teacher stimulates pupils	6	18	1	10
Supply teachers introduce staff to new ideas	60	34	14	39
Pupils' behaviour is generally worse with supply teachers	47	60	76	76
Supply teachers can supervise pupils but little is learned	27	14	37	29
Pupil achievement in the short term is negatively affected by supply teachers	47	46	75	61
Long-term pupil achievement is lower when they are regularly taught by supply teachers	67	66	86	80
The use of permanent supply teacher provides continuity for staff and pupils	81	79	69	87

Note: Respondents selected from a 5 point scale with a 'neutral' point. Thus it cannot be assumed that if 50% 'agree' or 'strongly agree', the other 50% disagree.

Very few respondents agreed that supply teachers can have a stimulating effect on pupils. Primary headteachers were the most likely to agree, possibly because their pupils get less change of teachers anyway, and because in general the supply system seems to work better for primary schools than secondary, where the issue of subject match dominates, and special and nursery, where headteachers commented that what was needed was stability and continuity. However, pupils may also benefit if supply teachers introduce staff to new ideas. Overall 40% of respondents ticked 'neutral' on this, but a third of primary and special school, and 60% of nursery headteachers agreed that supply teachers do introduce new ideas. Secondary schools were the only group where the majority disagreed with the statement; again this may relate to the fact that most teachers are used for general cover.

In every sector there was agreement that pupils behave worse with supply teachers; secondary headteachers tended to 'strongly agree'. However, 15% of primary headteachers disagreed with the statement.

We used three different statements to try to assess views of the impact of using supply teachers on pupil learning. The first of these, 'supply teachers can supervise pupils but little is learned', met with overall disagreement, though there was a balance between agreement and disagreement among secondary managers, presumably depending partly whether they were able to use subject specialists or not. The second statement was that pupil achievement in the short-term is negatively affected. Here the majority agreed. The strongest agreement was among secondary respondents, while primary headteachers were more evenly divided. The third statement concerned long-term achievement and the impact of regular use of supply teachers. Again the

strongest agreement was among secondary managers (over 86%). A smaller majority of nursery and primary headteachers also agreed with this.

Overall, then the respondents to the school questionnaire presented a picture in which the use of supply teachers often results in poor behaviour and has a negative impact on learning. This is most forcibly so in secondary schools, but repeated use of short-term supply teachers in any sector is believed to have negative consequences for pupils.

Individual responses from nursery schools emphasised young children's need for stability and continuity, but also the need for the teachers to have relevant expertise: *'It depends on the supply teacher: when we are able to get the nursery qualified and nursery experienced supply teacher then it is very positive for children.'* Similarly in primary schools it was felt important and desirable for the pupils to know the staff concerned: *'If you use supply teachers who know the pupils and their abilities then attainment is not affected.'*

Many secondary school respondents also said that pupils do not like change – *'they want their "own" teacher'*. It was also noted that some very good supply teachers with experience, can improve the teaching / learning process when deputising for *'poor'* staff - *'but this is very rare!!'* The length of the placement is also a key factor:

> *The effectiveness of supply staff depends on the individual and the length of time employed in the school. Once settled they are a valuable asset but cannot replace the normal teacher whose knowledge of the pupil is invaluable.*

The major concern in secondary schools is the limited availability of subject specialists, particularly for short-term cover, and the potential impact of this on pupil achievement. We have shown that two-thirds of secondary schools claim that they are 'rarely' able to use a subject specialist (Chapter 5, p. 47). The alternative is to use internal cover. Again, most schools indicated that a subject match was rarely achieved. However, use of internal cover is more likely to ensure that pupils have a teacher whom they know, and who may be better tuned in to appropriate approaches to classroom management, reducing the risk of bad and disruptive behaviour. Internal teachers may also have a better idea of the level of work to expect from individual pupils.

In special education there was concern that pupils who have profound, multiple learning needs require continuity and consistency. Teachers can only build up their knowledge of individuals through experience of direct contact. One special school reported that *'For two consecutive years pupils' achievement of annual targets has been adversely affected by* [staff] *absence.'*

Table 6.2 (p. 64) showed that the factor that school managers considered most important in maximising supply teacher effectiveness was the supply teacher having worked in the school previously, and this is reiterated in the comments above. Table 5.4 (p. 51) showed that many schools have regular arrangements with a small number of supply teachers; we found that many school managers spoke very highly of these individuals. It is the schools in the most disadvantaged areas which are not able to make arrangements of this sort; they tend to use many different supply teachers. Thus the pupils in such schools are probably the most negatively affected by their experiences of supply teachers.

Where a wide range of supply teachers is used (most often in secondary schools, and those in disadvantaged areas), respondents indicated that some of these are very weak. This is a consequence of both the lack of selection in recruitment in many authorities,

and the lack of opportunities for professional development. Even where teachers are not generally weak, the lack of professional development opportunities means that they are often not up-to-date with recent developments and ICT. This inevitably impacts on pupils.

7.3 Effects on schools

Poor quality supply staff can have a very negative impact on a school. The teacher needs support, management have to deal with poor behaviour, and the returning teacher has to spend time 'picking up the pieces'. In this section we consider first how schools evaluated the supply teachers they used (Table 7.2).

Table 7.2: Schools' rating of supply teachers used in last year (N = 386)

		1 excellent	2	3	4 very poor
professional behaviour	%	38	56	5	0.5
ability to form relationships with teachers	%	30	64	6	0.5
communication skills	%	22	67	10	0.5
knowledge of the curriculum	%	17	67	14	2
ability to form relationships with pupils	%	24	58	17	1
enthusiasm	%	25	53	20	2
commitment	%	25	50	22	3
behaviour management	%	11	58	29	2
willingness to contribute to life of the school	%	20	38	33	8
ICT skills	%	6	38	48	9

Note: Shading indicates that 25% or more of respondents selected that rating.

The vast majority of school respondents rated the supply teachers they had used as 1 (excellent) or 2 (good) for most of the qualities and skills listed. Professional behaviour was rated positively by over 90% of respondents, as was ability to form relationships with teachers. Even behaviour management, which has frequently been identified as a concern by both schools and supply teachers, was rated positively by 69% of school managers. The only aspect rated negatively by a majority of schools was ICT skills. This would appear to be a direct reflection of the lack of professional development opportunities available for supply teachers.

When these responses are analysed across school sectors, we find that secondary managers are the least positive about their supply teachers on almost every factor listed (with the exception of ICT skills, which secondary managers rated more positively than primary managers). Behaviour management was rated 3 (poor) by 38% of secondary managers, and 4 (very poor) by 3%.

Many of the primary headteachers commented on the high quality of the supply teachers they use:

> *We have a small group of supply teachers we use regularly who are outstanding.*
>
> *I am able to use a recently retired member of staff who is excellent.*

But some reported that *'casual staff are very varied'* and commented *'any who are deemed unsatisfactory are not used in the future.'*

The secondary school managers commented that it was not possible to answer this question because they use so many different supply teachers, of varying quality:

> *The quality of supply is so variable a central assessment would be misleading and statistically inaccurate.*
>
> *With 23 supply staff over the year ranging from superb to awful, it is nearly impossible to answer this.*

Some commented on teachers in relation to the stage of their careers:

> *Regular supply staff I would rate as 1 and 2. Being kind, other supply staff simply demonstrate why they have not gained a permanent contract.*
>
> *Those who are seeking longer term are depressed. Returned people are always cheery (I wonder why?) and effective.*

While the previous comment spoke positively of returners, another headteacher stated: *'Quite often they have been out of full-time education for quite a while which affects their ability.'* Comments on retired teachers varied: those who *were 'recently retired … tended to be excellent'*, while *'some who retired some time ago struggle more than most*.'

It is apparent, then that while many supply teachers are seen as very satisfactory, there are also some weaker teachers who impact negatively on schools (and on pupils). The weaknesses identified in these comments related particularly to being out of touch, and could be addressed through professional development activity.

Schools are also affected by the time and effort they have to put in to locate a teacher, as described in Chapter 5 (p.54), and by having to arrange for internal cover. Senior staff in schools can also find that the arrangements for managing supply cover can take an inordinate amount of their time. Even in schools where the main responsibility for deployment rests with the education authority (so the schools' main formal responsibility is simply to inform the authority of the need for a supply teacher), there are headteachers and depute heads who are spending many hours a week in resolving supply cover difficulties.

A particular concern for many schools was that the list of supply teachers provided by authority (whether a paper list, a spread sheet available on line, or an interactive booking system) is not kept adequately up to date. Most education authorities only revise their list once a year, removing those who are no longer available. Thus schools can waste a considerable amount of time phoning people who are not available.

The provision and use of an interactive database has at least the potential to reduce significantly the amount of time spent by senior managers on managing supply cover, though as Chapter 5 (pp. 57-59) indicated, this potential is not generally fulfilled, both because the list itself is not up to date, and because supply teachers register with and work in more than one authority. Only a national database could resolve the latter concern.

Across the country the greatest difficulties in securing appropriately skilled supply teachers are experienced by nursery and special schools. In both cases there tend to be few supply teachers with the relevant experience who are available locally. Primary schools experience the least difficulty overall, largely because of the generalist nature of primary teaching. However, there are some supply teachers who seek to avoid particular year groups within the primary sector.

In the secondary sector, the desire to secure supply teachers in particular subject specialisms is frequently unfulfilled. This creates additional work for internal teachers. It is normal practice for the absent teacher or the principal teacher to supply appropriate work for the pupils, and the supply teacher is doing little more than *'babysitting'*, a term used by many school managers in secondary schools. The use of internal cover frequently leads to teachers taking classes in subjects other than their own. This can have a demoralising effect on those teachers who are asked to carry additional teaching loads, and may impact negatively on their regular classes, in that the tasks they had planned to do during their non-contact time are not achieved.

Schools' own ability to manage the deployment of supply cover is undoubtedly assisted where there is more scope within the school's own budget to fund additional staffing. The degree of flexibility within devolved school budgets varied; as we have indicated, some schools are able to spend their budget for supply cover to pay for additional staff, so that they can provide internal cover. But this amount of freedom is not available to all.

7.4 Effects on supply teachers

We asked teachers to indicate their level of satisfaction with their experience. The following two tables indicate overall levels of satisfaction (Table 7.3) and then provide a disaggregation by age group (Table 7.4).

Table 7.3 Level of teachers' satisfaction with particular aspects of supply teaching (N = 676)

		very satisfied	fairly satisfied	neutral / not applicable	slightly dissatisfied	very dissatisfied
the schools you are placed in	%	55	38	4	3	1
the classes you are placed in	%	35	53	5	6	1
the amount of work you are offered	%	53	33	6	7	1
the degree of choice you have about where you work	%	44	28	20	5	3
the degree of choice you have about when you work	%	50	28	16	4	2
the reception you get in schools	%	57	35	4	4	1
the attitude of other teachers to you	%	56	35	3	5	1
the attitude of pupils towards you	%	28	46	7	15	4
your opportunities to contribute to pupils' education	%	30	45	9	11	5
pupil behaviour in the classes you teach	%	21	45	7	20	7

Note: Shading indicates the level of satisfaction most often chosen for each aspect of supply teaching.

Table 7.3 indicates that overall levels of satisfaction are generally high. The areas where satisfaction is lower are pupil behaviour and attitude, and opportunity to contribute to pupils' education. This is mainly a concern for short-term supply teachers, who are not able to see the long-term outcomes of what they do. In particular, those in secondary schools supervising pupils doing work in a subject they are not familiar with can feel very frustrated.

Table 7.4 (overleaf) shows that the teachers in their sixties indicated very much the highest levels of satisfaction. The reasons for this have been discussed in Chapter 3 (pp. 35-36). Levels of satisfaction increase with age in many areas, but notably not with pupil behaviour and pupil attitude. This reflects the point that has emerged at several points in this report, that younger supply teachers tend to be less content with their experience. However, their discontent may not relate so much to their immediate

experiences as to their aspiration to be working in a more secure situation, such as a permanent post.

Table 7.4: Supply teacher questionnaire: percentage indicating 'very satisfied' by age (n = 676)

	20-29 %	30-39 %	40-49 %	50-59 %	60+ %
the schools you are placed in	41	48	54	55	72
the classes you are placed in	30	40	34	33	41
the amount of work you are offered	46	51	46	53	67
the degree of choice you have about where you work	25	33	40	46	64
the degree of choice you have about when you work	36	35	47	53	67
the reception you get in schools	41	43	54	55	82
the attitude of other teachers to you	35	44	52	57	79
the attitude of pupils towards you	25	26	27	22	41
your opportunities to contribute to pupils' education	25	20	28	31	44
pupil behaviour in the classes you teach	21	18	24	17	25

Note: Shading indicates more than 50% of teachers indicating 'very satisfied'.

While these tables indicate high levels of satisfaction with many aspects of their work in schools, this does not tell the whole story. Supply teaching is about more than the work; it is also about the lifestyle of being a supply teacher. We asked respondents to write in comments about the main advantages and disadvantages of being a supply teacher, from their own perspective. Their responses have then been sorted and grouped under headings (Table 7.5).

Table 7.5: Advantages of supply teaching listed by frequency of mention in teachers' comments on the questionnaire (N = 699)

grouped advantages	number
Flexibility	301
Less work	214
Gain experience	154
More free time	102
Less pressure	69
Variety (on a daily basis, of adults and pupils and environments – not boring)	68
Pay (supplements pension, good daily rate, better than other part-time work)	53
Social (meeting people, keeping in touch)	31
Rewarding (welcomed in schools, challenging work, benefits to pupils)	24
Experience of teaching is better (fewer distractions from admin and paperwork)	20
Keep in touch with education (if retired)	16
None	12

The major advantages relate to flexibility (being able to choose when and where to work and to take days off when you want to) and workload (less planning, marking, meetings etc.). The younger teachers emphasised gaining experience.

Among the hundreds of individual statements about the advantages, the following selection give a flavour of the positive views teachers held:

> *Workload is less. Supply teaching is more rewarding as I work regularly in the same school. I know pupils well and they know me. I have gained a great deal of experience in a variety of subjects.*

Well paid. Undemanding compared with a permanent post. Choice – go to a school you like, or choice not to return if you don't. Freedom – time to yourself if you don't want to work on a particular day. Exposure – opportunity to see a variety of teaching methods, discipline etc.

It fits in with child care. I don't have to feel guilty if I take time off when my children are unwell. You can vary the amount of work you do. Can be more selective of the school you work in. Broad experience of teaching requirements.

Flexibility. Widens experience in nursery, primary, secondary, and special ed. I worked as a primary head before I retired. The experience I have gained since retiring would have been invaluable in that post.

I can take work to fit in with my children – I don't take work if I need to take them to appointments or e.g. music festivals. If they are ill I can cancel work I have booked. I enjoy a real variety of work. More energy to put into teaching.

I attend the same schools regularly which enables me to feel a part of the staff and to be accepted by the pupils as a regular visiting teacher familiar with the daily routine.

However, as we have indicated, there are negative aspects to supply teaching, particularly for those near the start of their careers. Table 7.2 shows the disadvantages that teachers noted. Again, these have been grouped under broad headings.

Table 7.6: Disadvantages of supply teaching listed by frequency of mention in teachers' comments on the questionnaire (N = 699)

grouped advantages	number
Relationships: lack of long-term relationships with pupils and staff	192
Uncertainty: on a day-to-day basis	160
Pay arrangements (lack of sick pay and holiday pay, uncertainty about future pay)	155
Job satisfaction (not seeing long-term results of your work or contribute to long-term development of school / subject)	146
Pupil behaviour	139
Information (not knowing basic school info., pupils names, pupils' levels)	111
Status – 'just a supply teacher' (often linked with lack of support)	100
No security	74
No sense of belonging	73
Stress	60
Lack of professional development	56
Unable to plan future – get a mortgage, move house, etc.	48
Subject concerns – not teaching own subject, difficulties of teaching other subjects, 'baby-sitting', not being up to date in own subject	39
Lack of support from management in the school	27
Not enough work	24
Workload (extra work preparing and marking in unfamiliar subjects / age groups)	10
None (most often retired teachers with pensions working in their old school occasionally)	18

The disadvantages most frequently listed relate to structural features of being a supply teacher: e.g. lack of long-term relationships with pupils and staff, uncertainty on a day-to-day basis, uncertainty about future pay, not seeing long-term results of your work, and perhaps little can be done about these. Such issues are indicated in the comments below:

Do not really get to know the children unless you are often in the same class. Cannot 'bond' with children. Very often children 'play up' with supply teachers to see how for they can go.

Uncertainty. Insecurity. My two younger children (15 + 18) are still to going through university and must leave home to do this. I need a secure income. Some colleagues still think I get paid more on supply (I don't). No sick-pay – I feel unwell.

Can be quite stressful going to so many different schools and teaching many children with behaviour problems.

But many of the issues that supply teachers identified as disadvantages of their work could be addressed. These are highlighted by the selection of comments below

Some schools do not treat you fairly and you are looked on as on outsider. No regular salary- sometimes no work. No sick or holiday pay.

Reception poor in some schools. Attitude of permanent teachers who show little interest in work you have done and give little insight of their class.

Often ignored in staffroom - not introduced if in new school. Attitude of, it's up to you as you are paid, when you ask for ideas of stage class is at or topic.

Being expected to teach a class without any information or planning available.

Attitude of teachers to supply staff. Attitude of children to supply staff. Little training for short term supply. No feedback

I have not kept up with development as they have happened. I am therefore a bit 'out of date' on several aspects. When I have to do practical investigation etc. I really struggle as I don't have any of the training full time staff [receive]. *Not knowing pupil names or anything about past attainment. The list is endless.*

Not paid for professional development unless on long-term contract. Apparent lack of union concern. Supply staff feel they must never complain as rocking the boat will prejudice employment prospects. No conditions of service - no info on entitlements for extra work, marking, assessment, travel to parents' evening etc.

These responses show the effects of some of the ad hoc aspects of the employment of supply teachers. They also enable one to see quite simply how the experience could be improved. In planning future developments it will be important to be cognisant of both the advantages and disadvantages stated by supply teachers. Not all of the advantages will necessarily be sustainable. Greater professionalisation of the employment of supply teachers may well lead to greater time commitment, for example.

On the basis of our study, we would describe the supply workforce as a whole as being largely made up of teachers who do take themselves seriously as professionals and who wish to make a real contribution to the education of pupils in Scotland's schools. At present their contribution is sometimes undermined and less than fully realised because of their marginal status. The recommendations which we have framed (Chapter 8) have been designed to ensure that more is done to retain the good quality members of this workforce in the profession and to ensure that they are properly supported in their often difficult roles in schools, indeed that there is a significant improvement in the 'professionalisation' of supply teaching.

We have seen how mixed the experiences of supply teachers are. In Chapter 3 (pp. 30-36) we identified three groups in particular: those who are early in their careers, most of whom are anxious to secure permanent posts and are only doing supply teaching as a way of staying in the profession; those combining supply teaching with another occupation (often child-care) and in many cases returning to teaching after a career break; and those approaching retirement or already retired, who work in order, at least in part, to maintain some income additional to their pensions.

It is particularly among the first group that we found significant dissatisfaction with the lot of supply teachers. Many feel that their position as teachers is tenuous, their employment is insecure, they lack confidence and often feel marginalised in schools. These are the people who have experienced been treated as 'just a supply teacher'. In the worst instances, they do not feel that either their education authorities or the schools in which they are working see them as full members of the profession. A particular concern within this group are those who have not yet achieved full registration. It is crucial that if this group is not to be lost to the profession their particular plight is addressed as a matter of urgency, by first identifying them, and then offering appropriate support and placements that will enable them to meet the requirements.

It was partly because of the unsatisfactory nature of this common practice of many supply teachers being newly qualified that the guaranteed induction year was introduced. It was undoubtedly a very positive move from the point of view of teacher induction and professional development and one which other parts of the UK may well observe with envy. It was always strange that so much of the supply workforce consisted of the least experienced teachers, when the challenges of supply teaching are judged by many to be considerably greater than employment on a regular basis in one school. We found mixed views on the likely impact of the end of the first year of the guaranteed induction posts. How many of these people will secure re-employment in the same school or authority in which they have been working is not clear at present. It is to be anticipated that many of those who do not secure such positions will be seeking employment – reluctantly – as supply teachers and will therefore be competing with those other 'pre-McCrone' supply staff. However the great majority of these new entrants into the supply pool will have the distinct advantage of having completed their full registration and will have experienced a well supported post for their first year of teaching. This makes addressing the need of the 'pre-McCrone' group all the more urgent.

In order to take advantage of opportunities for more extended contracts and eventually permanent positions, it is essential that these supply teachers are regarded as full members of the profession and that their career development is taken seriously. At a minimum it is important that these people have the opportunity to experience recruitment by professional evaluation and deployment according to their skills, qualifications and interests – as far as possible. They should also have an entitlement to career development interviews and to a range of opportunities for professional development.

There are two aspects to the professional development needs of supply teachers. The first they share with all teachers, that is the need for professional updating in policy, pedagogy and curriculum. The second aspect is distinctive to supply teachers however and that is the need for the support of the particular skills and qualities which they need in order to fulfil their temporary roles successfully. Among these we have noted the need for the ability to assess pupils' learning needs very rapidly, and for real strength in classroom management, especially relating to pupil behaviour.

At the other end of the spectrum, a minority of the retired teachers who now work on a supply basis, are resistant to being pulled into professional development and career review schemes. Only 5% of the sample said they did not want to be involved in professional development. Many of these were older teachers who indicated that they would be fully retired in the next year or so. For these few, it may well be that their

need for the distinctive training for supply teachers mentioned above is minimal or even non-existent, especially if they have been successful and effective teachers. However, schools indicated that some older teachers were out of touch. At present it is for school managers and education authority officers to make judgements about the significance of these matters, but as a general rule, unless there is a real shortage of supply teachers locally, it would seem preferable to be employing people who do have a full professional commitment and have aspirations for their career development.

Given the key role which supply teachers play in maintaining the education service across the country, it is highly desirable that there is a much more professional approach to their employment. Too much of their current experience is casual and ad hoc. All supply teachers should know under what conditions they are being employed, what their rights and entitlements are, at the same time as being entirely clear about their responsibilities. Too often at present these matters are approached on a custom and practice basis, which can vary greatly in different schools and authorities and the overall effect is that of a casualised and undervalued section of the teaching workforce. Of course, in approaching their employment in a more professional manner, it is important that the key elements of flexibility and responsiveness are not lost. Schools will continue to need a bank of teachers available at short notice and there are many supply teachers who prefer to work on this basis. The only group of supply teachers who at present have anything like a professional basis of employment are those employed as permanent supply teachers.

7.5 Effects on education authorities

The 32 education authorities in Scotland are hugely varied in size, demography and geography. The challenges of organising supply cover in a heavily populated large urban authority – such as Glasgow – are very different from those in a sparsely populated mainly rural authority - such as Scottish Borders. And the challenges of each of these is different again from an island authority such as Orkney or Shetland, where ferries or air transport may play a key part in achieving a satisfactory system of supply cover.

What all authorities do have in common however is some responsibility for ensuring that a system of supply cover does exist which meets the needs of schools and pupils in those schools. We noted earlier that this is a responsibility which has been largely removed from local education authorities in England, reflecting the reduced overall responsibility for management of schools held by LEAs south of the border.

So, if all Scottish authorities recognise and accept the management of supply as part of their responsibility, the variety in local arrangements is significant. In Chapters 4 and 5 we found that some authorities take full responsibility for the recruitment and deployment of all supply staff. At the other extreme, some authorities do little more than maintain a list of supply teachers who may be available within their area. In these areas responsibility for deployment is largely given to schools. Such authorities hold very little data on the supply teachers working in their schools and therefore can have very little strategic role in their management. While concerns about the quality of some supply teachers exist almost everywhere, where authorities have had little involvement in their recruitment the risk of poor quality teaching may be greater. Not only is this bad for the schools where poor quality teachers are working, it is bad for the teachers themselves, since they are unlikely to be getting any systematic support or development. On the other hand, where supply teachers have been through a more

formal selection process, they may well feel better supported and can therefore provide a better quality of teaching within the education authority.

Where there is great difficulty in securing a sufficient number of supply teachers, authorities sometimes undertake expensive recruitment campaigns. These rarely produce more than a few additional teachers and so may not be cost effective.

It could be assumed that authorities would ideally wish to place the most experienced and skilled supply teachers in the schools where the most challenging circumstances exist. Where the authority has little role in deployment this is unlikely to happen. Indeed the converse may well result – the better supply teachers are more likely to receive requests from more schools and can therefore choose those which they themselves prefer, which may be those which are most comfortable or 'easiest'.

Variations on these two extremes include authorities where there is a halfway house, for example with the authority always being responsible for long-term cover and schools for short-term. The other form of variation is where the official approach is abrogated in the interests of pragmatism, for example where a school actually books a supply teacher and then informs the authority. This is sometimes done because the school has little confidence that the official system will produce a supply teacher when s/he is required and the school has its own informal network of contacts locally. The effect of this on the authority will be that there is less knowledge centrally about the deployment of temporary staff within schools.

The decision to establish a pool of permanent supply teachers has been taken by a growing number of authorities. The best-established example is that of South Lanarkshire, an authority which is both physically large and includes many large urban settlements. The advantages of such a pool include the facilitation of the development of a group of experienced supply teachers who can be supported and deployed in a manner which is planned rather than ad hoc. Disadvantages include the possibility that the skills and qualifications of the particular group of staff do not match the needs in the authority's schools at particular times and so there may be some inefficiency in the system, for example the underemployment of some supply teachers whose subject qualification is not currently needed in schools which are accessible to that person. It is for this reason that many other authorities are introducing – and perhaps experimenting with – the establishment of a pool of permanent supply teachers for the primary sector but not for the secondary sector.

Using a pool of permanent supply teachers appears to be much better employment practice than where a small number of authorities keep temporary teachers on a series of fixed term contracts as a means of maintaining flexibility in their staffing commitment and thereby avoiding the financial consequences of employing more staff than they can afford.

However, our findings suggest that in many cases the deployment of permanent supply teachers has not entirely fulfilled the expectations of schools that this will solve all their problems, partly because they have been used extensively for long-term placements. There are also suggestions in our data that even where permanent supply teachers are used in a cluster system for short-term placements, the assumed advantages of continuity and familiarity are not happening. This suggests a need for further investigation of the experiences of schools and teachers in such arrangements.

We noted above that all authorities maintain a register of supply teachers. These vary enormously in their construction, their use and their accuracy. In order to be of use to

authorities or schools however, it is essential that lists are actively maintained. We saw how a number of authorities have now developed an on-line booking system for supply teachers. These have the potential to be effective if schools play their role fully in putting in their data, but the effect on the authority can be to reduce the strategic element in the deployment of supply staff. Furthermore, when such databases are held by individual authorities, the employment of particular staff in neighbouring authorities can mean that time is still wasted contacting people who are unavailable.

There was limited evidence of co-operation between neighbouring authorities. This tended to happen where a larger authority had been disaggregated in the local authority reorganisation. There are certainly many supply teachers who make themselves available for work in more than one authority. This occurs particularly in the central belt. The question which these border issues raises is whether there could be wider co-operation between authorities. At its most extreme form this would amount to a national register for the deployment of supply cover. Given the existence of electronic booking systems in many sectors of industry and commerce, the possibility of a nationally administered scheme is worthy of serious consideration. A national database of all teachers is already maintained by the GTCS. With appropriate technological investment and the deployment of a team for its maintenance and management it should be possible to develop a system which can be inputted by education authorities, schools and teachers themselves. However the potential downside of such an approach is the loss of strategic intervention, i.e. the deployment of appropriate staff to particular positions. Possibly a group of experienced permanent supply teachers should be kept in reserve, and deployed only in the most disadvantaged schools.

7.6 Summary

Effects on pupils*:* School managers indicated that the repeated use of supply teachers often resulted in poor behaviour and had a negative impact on learning. This was most clearly the case in secondary schools, where many supply teachers are covering subjects in which they are not specialists.

Effects on schools*:* Many school managers devote a great deal of time to finding supply cover, particularly in secondary schools. In the secondary sector, extra work is created when supply teachers are not specialists in the relevant subject; work has to be set and marked by internal staff. Where quality is poor, internal staff have to provide support and often deal with poor behaviour. However, the vast majority of school respondents rated the supply teachers they had used as excellent or good across a range of professional qualities and skills, but considered supply teachers' ICT skills to be poor.

Effects on supply teachers*:* The supply teachers themselves indicated that overall levels of work satisfaction were generally high. Most (but not all) supply teachers got as much work as they want. Schools were generally found to be welcoming (though teachers reported some very negative experiences). The areas where satisfaction was lower were pupil behaviour and attitude, and the opportunity to contribute to pupils' education. This is particularly a concern for short-term supply teachers, who are not able to see the long-term outcomes of what they do. In particular, those in secondary schools supervising pupils doing work in a subject they are not familiar with, can feel very frustrated. Many supply teachers (and particularly those in the early stages of

their careers) were dissatisfied with their contractual and payment arrangements and conditions of work. Many supply teachers lack career and professional development opportunities, and often feel marginalised as teachers. Those who have not yet achieved full GTCS registration are a particular concern.

Effects on education authorities*:* This depends very much on the systems that the authority has adopted. Where deployment is managed by schools, the authorities lack data on the teachers working in their schools, and can therefore have very little strategic role in their management. Where little selection is used in adding supply teachers to the list, the risk of poor quality teaching may be greater. The creation of a pool of permanent supply teachers may reduce possibilities for flexibility in staffing to meet changing demands.

Emerging issues

Throughout this chapter we have emphasised diversity and complexity in the management and organisation of supply cover in Scotland's schools. It would be appealing to be able to offer solutions to some of the current difficulties which would simplify the complexity and encourage, if not uniformity, then at least some national benchmarks of good practice. There are a few principles which we can list which do attempt to provide some clarity in this complex field, but there will be few practices which can be adopted across the country as a whole. Among the principles which should be helpful in guiding all those concerned towards positive improvements and which have emerged from our analysis in this study are the following:

- clarity of terminology
- compilation of secure and up to date data about all supply teachers
- employment of pools of permanent supply staff, where possible and/or increasing schools' staffing complements to allow greater scope for internal cover
- secure and explicit employment status for supply teachers
- recognition of a range of professional development needs among the supply workforce
- recognition of the key contribution which the supply workforce makes to the education provided in Scotland's schools and the need to retain in the teaching profession those within this workforce who are successful.

The recommendations which follow in Chapter 8 have been built around these principles.

Chapter 8 Recommendations

8.1 Introduction

Through our study of the management of supply cover, drawing largely on perspectives from those working in education authorities, schools and from supply teachers themselves, we have established that the current situation is one that may be described as complex and diverse. In spite of this it must be recognised that current systems are largely effective in ensuring that educational provision in Scottish schools is maintained. However, the study has also confirmed that there are areas of considerable difficulty where supply teachers can be very difficult to find when they are needed. There is evidence of fragility in the systems which must be a cause for concern. Given this fragility, the strongest message to emerge from the study must be the need to recognise fully the contribution which supply teachers – and those who support them – make to the education service.

In offering recommendations for consideration by the Executive and others, as appropriate, we are building upon the principles established in the preceding chapter. The underlying purpose of the recommendations is to seek improvements that will help to ensure the maintenance of good quality educational provision for pupils. Because the essence of supply cover systems must be the ability to be responsive to changing needs, the extent to which a single simple system can be developed is limited. However, there is scope for considerably more common and consistent practice across the country which could help to reduce some of the uncertainty and confusion that currently exists, at least in the experience of the supply teachers themselves. Such developments could also lead to improvements in the match between the needs of schools and the particular skills and experience of supply teachers.

8.2 Recommendations

1. *A national framework for the recruitment, deployment and employment of temporary staff should be established.*

   This should cover the following matters:

   - *selection procedures*: all teachers seeking to be employed by an education authority on a supply basis should be given a formal selection interview. An assessment should be made of their suitability for supply work and whether they are acceptable, a record should be made of their experience, skills, qualifications as well as their mobility and availability. All newly recruited teachers should be offered an induction session
   - *the suitability of different groups of teachers for supply work*: in the longer term it would be positive to see a move away from the use of those near the start of their careers as supply teachers. In general the older and more experienced supply teachers seem to be better able to cope with the particular demands of this role. Supply teaching could be made more attractive to experienced teachers, possibly by creating a career structure within the supply pool, and also by including a move to the supply pool as a formal part of

'winding down'. This would free up some permanent posts for younger teachers.

- *the respective responsibilities of education authorities and schools in the management of supply cover*: the division of responsibility between authorities and schools for recruitment and deployment of supply teachers should be clearly stated. School and central management of deployment both have advantages and disadvantages. On balance we recommend a system that acknowledges schools' preference for establishing their own lists of local teachers, but when this fails, allows them to seek help from the centre. For this to work it would be essential for schools and supply teachers to keep the centre informed of their whereabouts, preferably through an on-line system. Where schools have particularly difficulty in obtaining supply teachers the authority should then be able to prioritise their needs.
- *registration of supply teachers with education authorities*: while it is inevitable that teachers will want to seek work wherever it may exist, and thus to register on the lists of more than one authority, it may be possible to introduce the notion of a 'base' authority, through which the teacher accesses professional development etc. Teachers would have to declare which is their base authority and which others they are registered with. A national database would assist with this.
- *the procedures for allocating supply teachers to particular posts:* these procedures should cover the way in which the need for the employment of a supply teacher is established, the way in which an appropriate teacher is identified and approached and the sequence of steps taken once a suitable person has been found to fill the post.
- *the form of contract issued to supply teachers:* all supply teachers should be issued with a formal contract for each posting which they take. This should state the nature of the post being undertaken and its anticipated duration.
- *the pay and conditions under which supply teachers are employed:* there should be a national system for calculating the pay of supply teachers and an agreement about their entitlement to sick pay, annual leave and similar matters.
- *the normal duties of a supply teacher:* this should cover matters such as responsibility for planning and marking work, updating pupil records and whether they are required to attend school meetings, parents' evenings, etc. Some clear distinctions should be made between short-term and long-term placements in this respect.

2. *A national code of practice concerning the employment of supply teachers should be developed. This should set out minimum standards required of schools and authorities, and should be subject to local development and implementation.*

The code of practice should cover the following matters:

- *the provision of necessary information to supply teachers about the procedures within the authority and information about the school:* this should include general procedural information about the employment of supply teachers as well as information specific to the particular posting, to cover: the school timetable; the teacher's class and subject teaching allocations; a summary and

exemplification of the behaviour policy; health and safety matters (including fire procedures); information about school facilities and, location of resources;, information about pupils.

- *the identification of a link officer in the authority and a link member of staff in the school:* every education authority should have a person (or persons) identified to be responsible for the team of supply teachers registered within that authority. This role should be proactive and extend beyond contractual and deployment matters to include regular liaison with all supply teachers and responding to their changing aspirations and availability. The responsibility for support of supply teachers within each school should also be clearly allocated – the particular approach will vary between different phases and sizes of school but whatever approach is adopted, it should provide a guarantee that every supply teacher knows who they should relate to on various matters.
- *each posting of a supply teacher should be the subject of evaluation:* as a minimum requirement, at the end of each posting, the supply teacher should meet with the appropriate member of staff in the school and review the experience. This will provide an opportunity for the supply teacher to debrief the school on work covered and any concerns about pupils. It will also provide the school with an opportunity to provide feedback to the supply teacher on their work and on the likelihood of further posts within the school being available. Brief proformas should be devised for the recording of these discussions.
- *the entitlement of supply teachers to career review interviews on an annual basis with either the authority co-ordinator and/or the responsible school staff member:* it is essential that all supply teachers have the opportunity for a serious review of their work each year and that they have the opportunity to record their perceived development needs. Where supply teachers are employed in more than one authority, consideration should be given as to whether the review carried out in their first choice authority may be made available to the others.
- *the provision of professional development opportunities for all supply teachers:* authorities should be seeking means to ensure equitable access to certificated CPD (such as the Chartered Teacher programme), provision of dedicated training for supply teachers and opportunities for ongoing professional updating. It should be a requirement of registration with an authority that supply teachers attend certain identified development activities.
- *clearly defined systems for supply teachers to access professional development activity and for the funding of this:* this could either be done centrally through the authorities, with letters sent directly to supply teachers' homes, or could be achieved by allocating each supply teacher a base school which would receive funding for this purpose.
- *the provision of training for supply teachers who may wish to work in the special education sector and/or the nursery sector:* this is necessary as a means to improving the availability of supply teachers who are appropriately equipped to undertake work in these sectors.

3. *Consideration should be given to the establishment of a national database of supply teachers*.

   The register of teachers held by the GTCS is likely to provide a good basis for the development of a sub-register of those teachers who are working as, or available to work as, supply teachers.

   A study should be commissioned to research the viability of developing such a register into a national interactive booking system.

4. *Education authorities should consider their provision of permanent supply teachers*.

   There are advantages and disadvantages to such systems. It may be helpful to carry out additional research to assess how well the various systems for the deployment of permanent teachers impact on schools and on the teachers themselves. Small and widely dispersed education authorities may not be able deploy such a pool of supply teachers efficiently but they should consider co-operation with neighbouring authorities. Large authorities may wish to organise pools of permanent supply teachers around clusters of schools, particularly those which are having difficulty in achieving supply teachers by current procedures.

   In general, pools of supply teachers are more likely to be established in the primary sector than in secondary.

   Some authorities may wish to consider the establishment of a task force style team of supply teachers who may be highly experienced and versatile teachers who can offer schools developmental support as well as cover. Such teachers could be productively deployed even during periods when the need for supply cover is low.

5. *Education authorities and schools should consider ways of reducing the demand for supply teachers.*

   Reductions in demand could be achieved by reviewing timing of professional development courses and meetings, and possibly by reviewing the timing of the school day to allow one afternoon per week when pupils are sent home and staff can attend meetings and development activities.

   Authorities may wish to consider whether their systems for internal cover in schools could be further developed and whether staffing budgets could be expanded. On balance, short-term unexpected absences of teachers are best covered internally. This is the normal approach in most secondary schools and ensures greatest continuity for pupils. Careful consideration should be given to the possibility of increasing schools' staffing establishment so that there is greater scope for internal cover and less use of supply cover. This could be achieved through assigning a proportion of the existing budget for supply cover to the main staffing budget to increase schools' own flexibility in responding to need. In particular internal cover might be considered the norm in secondary schools for short-term placements where there is unlikely to be a subject specialist supply teacher available.

6. *Consideration should be given to the ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the impact of supply cover on provision in schools and on the attainment of pupils*

   Very little hard data exists which demonstrates the impact of supply cover on schools. Education authorities should monitor schools' use of supply cover over time and assess the extent to which pupil attainment correlates with this. In particular this would consider the extent of cover by non-subject specialists (whether supply teachers or internal cover) in secondary schools.

   Inspections of schools and education authorities by Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education should consider the deployment of supply cover and consider whether there is any apparent effect on the school, including aspects of ethos and management as well as pupil attainment.

8.3 Conclusions

None of the six recommendations listed above can be implemented overnight. They will each need to be considered by the appropriate bodies and then be the subject of careful consultation with relevant stakeholders. Some of the recommendations have significant resource implications which have not been calculated as part of this study.

The major thrust of the recommendations is to achieve greater recognition of the significance of supply cover in the education service and to create a more professional framework for the management of supply cover. The evidence of the study is that while in many respects current systems function effectively, there are some aspects which are far from satisfactory and there is therefore great scope for improvement. In the interests of pupils in schools, supply teachers and the wider teaching profession, the recommendations should be given urgent consideration.

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