

Supply Agencies

Local Authority Pools: In some areas you can register with your local authority pool of supply teachers. This means that you are employed by the LA, which gives you similar employment rights to permanent teachers, such as access to the Teachers' Pension Scheme.

Agencies link up schools who need teachers and teachers who need work. Signing up with one will involve a face-to-face meeting, which you should treat like a job interview. You will need to inform the agency of your subjects and when you're available. You can sign up for more than one agency but you need to balance the chance to find more work against the hassle of updating agencies on availability etc. Some agencies offer incentives to sign up exclusively with them such as guaranteed work.

Agency credentials: The best agencies will have the Department for children, schools and families (DCSF) quality mark to show that they meet the standards of good practice in managing and providing supply teachers for schools. Some will have the ISO (International standardisation of Organisations) accreditation. Additionally being a member of a recruitment trade professional organisation is also helpful. Some agencies belong to the recruitment and employment confederation (REC).

Signing up for an agency doesn't guarantee that you will get work. You will be competing with other supply teachers for every job.

Multiple agencies – You can register with as many agencies as you like however, be aware that under *The Conduct of Employment Agencies and Employment Businesses Regulations 2003* if you go into a school with one agency unless you have had a break of 8 weeks from the day after your last day OR 14 weeks from the first day (the first day is either the start of the first assignment or the start of a repeat assignment following a break of more than 42 days since any previous assignment) you cannot work in that school through a different agency unless the school pays the first agency an introduction fee which in most cases they will not be willing to do.

Terms of engagement - Never sign terms of engagement without the pay rate being stated – the reason for this is because the agency could then pay you any rate they wish such as TA rates!

Pay rates – These can vary dramatically between agencies. Please be aware that some agencies will quote a daily rate with the holiday pay included and some will quote a daily rate with the holiday pay accrued in addition to the pay rate, both are legal as long as your holiday pay is shown as a separate payment on your payslip.

Third party payroll/Umbrella companies – This is a standard way for larger agencies to pay you. It is your decision if you sign up to this or if you wish to be paid via PAYE. Be aware that you are responsible for completing expense forms and keeping receipts in case you are audited if you sign up to a third party payroll.

Introduction fee – If you are placed in a school by an agency and the school offer you a contract you would need to notify your agency because in most cases the school would be liable to pay an introduction fee as per the agency's Terms of Business.

Teachers Pension – Unfortunately agencies cannot contribute to the Teachers' Pensions however, the new Automatic Enrolment is now in place and if you are eligible you will be automatically enrolled into the agency's pensions scheme. For further details visit <http://www.thepensionsregulator.gov.uk>

AWR Rules – Since the implementation of these rules in October 2011 there is a lot of confusion amongst teachers as to how this works. The Agency Workers Regulations is a complex piece of EU legislation but here it is in a nutshell – Once you have worked for 12 weeks, in the same school, doing the same role, without a break of 6 weeks or more, you are then entitled to comparative pay.