

Supply teachers empowered to rate and review agencies

Supply teachers will now be able to rate and review supply agencies thanks to a new, independent website facility developed by the NASUWT, the largest teachers' union in the UK.

The move follows extensive research and work by the Union with its supply teacher members which found that they are routinely being exploited by unscrupulous supply agencies and denied the pay, training and support to which they are entitled.

www.supplyadvisor.co.uk allows supply teachers to:

- Find agencies in their area both by postcode or by name;
- Rate agencies using a simple star rating system on levels of pay, quality of training, ease of finding work and support received;
- Write reviews, explaining their experiences, both good and bad, of the agency, or agencies, they have used;
- Read reviews written by other supply teachers, including viewing their star rating and seeing the average levels of pay that are offered;
- Add new supply agencies as and when they open; and
- Participate in regular polls, highlighting the key issues that affect supply teachers.

The move comes as representatives at the NASUWT's Annual Conference in Birmingham are set to debate a motion condemning the exploitation of supply teachers through the use by some agencies of umbrella companies and zero-hours contracts.

Chris Keates, General Secretary of the NASUWT, said:

"Supply teachers are a vitally important resource for schools."

"The NASUWT is deeply concerned about the exploitation supply teachers are routinely facing at the hands of unscrupulous agencies."

"This website facility puts supply teachers back in control."

"It will be a powerful tool to enable supply teachers to influence the market, shining a spotlight not only on the poor practices of bad agencies but also highlighting those agencies that treat their teachers well."

"Supply teachers are often simply too frightened to speak out about their treatment by some of these unscrupulous supply agencies due to threats of 'blacklisting'."

"This is compounded by the fact that many supply teachers are being asked to sign contracts which include gagging clauses designed to cover up a range of illegal practices."

"No working person should be treated in this way."

"Supply teachers are paid with taxpayers' money and it is scandalous that this is being siphoned off by offshore umbrella companies who are seeking to avoid paying tax and national insurance by exploiting supply teachers and schools."

"The Government should act to regulate supply agencies, but given the appalling track record of this Coalition in being prepared to regulate to protect working people, the NASUWT is empowering supply teachers themselves to name and shame."