



National CPD Team

CPD for Supply Teachers  
Advice and Guidance

2010

## **Introduction**

A version of this paper was originally published in June 2006, and was based on information from a number of sources – from round tables and individual interviews with supply teachers working in authorities across Scotland, from feedback from the network of CPD managers, and from visits to schools and authorities by members of the National CPD team. In particular, the insights and experiences of the supply teachers and the work of colleagues in Angus Council informed the original paper, and the National CPD team would wish to acknowledge, and to thank, all who were willing to contribute their time, thoughts and work.

In the period since this first publication, the team has continued to gather intelligence regarding CPD for supply teachers, and this paper reflects the current situation. It also draws on feedback from a survey conducted in October 2009, which was completed by 24 of the 32 local authorities.

For the purpose of this paper, “supply teachers” is a generic term used to describe teachers on supply lists, and also those who have qualified as teachers but are not currently on supply lists (appendix 3 explores further the different sub-groups of supply teachers, which will have implications for participation in CPD).

## **Current situation**

Local authorities tell us there are more teachers in Scotland seeking supply work than was the case in 2006. In some cases, these are recent graduates who have not yet been successful in gaining permanent positions and are undertaking supply in order to maintain their skills (and pay their bills) while continuing to apply for jobs. There is some evidence that, partly as a result of the economic downturn, many teachers are finding it difficult to get short or long term supply posts. There is also some concern among the authorities regarding teachers who are recently qualified but are not seeking supply work, usually because they need the security of regular employment. These teachers are hard to reach and easily lost to the education service.

There are two aspects of this which give rise to concern. Firstly, there are negative implications for the teachers who find themselves in this situation. Our survey suggested that they can begin to feel de-skilled and undervalued and that as a result many give up and look for alternative employment. This loss of capacity to the system is regrettable in personal, economic and professional terms.

Secondly there is a potential impact on the quality of learning and teaching. This is a time of change in Scottish education and there is a risk that teachers who have had a gap in service may be “off the pace” in terms of new responsibilities, methodologies and assessment systems, unless efforts are made to ensure otherwise. Clearly it is important for good pupil learning that teachers who have not been in classrooms recently are given good and accessible opportunities to refresh and develop their professional skills. Such teachers will benefit greatly from refresher or return to teaching courses. Indeed many authorities now require or strongly recommend that those who have not taught recently (typically 5 years or more) undertake such a course or provide some other evidence of how they have updated their skills and knowledge.

Currently all the authorities who responded to the recent survey offer places on locally organised courses to teachers on their supply list. Supply teachers, other than those employed in schools on mid to long term contracts, are expected to attend these in their own time, in some instances leaving them unavailable for other work. In addition a small number of the local authorities offer tailored CPD for their supply teachers. In a few cases these are extensive and include network meetings, established Glow Groups, etc.

The issue of Professional Review and Development (PRD) for supply teachers remains largely unresolved except for those on mid-long term contracts. This means that there are issues around some teachers’ readiness to engage fully in curricular reform. Some authorities offer a contact person (usually an Education Officer or Quality Improvement Officer) who will offer time for PRD to supply teachers, but this facility is seen by some supply teachers as de-contextualised and impersonal.

Teachers report a lack of clarity in some cases regarding the expectations and entitlements of supply teachers in respect of their CPD. What is clear is that many, perhaps most, supply teachers see CPD as being relevant and important in ensuring that their practice, skills and knowledge are kept up-to-date, and sufficient for the work that they do. Schools and authorities similarly regard it as very important that this should be so. It is therefore important that the situation of supply teachers and CPD should be clarified in order that they can contribute effectively to learning and teaching.

CPD is important for all those involved in teaching our children and young people and that must include supply teachers. Clearly, however, local authorities and schools have to balance a number of competing priorities and ultimately must make judgements about how they deploy resources to achieve the most impact.

In addition, different local authorities will have different structures and arrangements, for example for devolving budgets or managing supply teachers. This guidance therefore does not set out to be prescriptive but rather to set out core principles that can underpin detailed consideration of these issues by local authorities and school leaders – it is for them to find ways of making those principles work in their context. To assist with that, it also illustrates useful approaches which are already well embedded in some local authorities and which therefore might be particularly useful to others.

### **The research the CPD team has undertaken suggests four guiding principles which authorities should consider when developing support for CPD for supply teachers**

- **Supply teachers have the same professional obligation to participate in the process of professional review and development as teachers who have permanent contracts**

This participation should include self-evaluation and needs identification. Where possible an opportunity for professional discussion should be available to teachers on the authority supply list.

- **Supply teachers have the same requirement to engage in continuing professional development as teachers who have a permanent contract, and are entitled to support from employers to meet that.**

It is in the interests of all (not least supply teachers themselves), that teachers taking classes whether on a long or short-term basis are up to date in terms of their skills and knowledge. This applies equally whether a teacher has a permanent or temporary contract. The main resource allocation to support this will often be the skill, time and expertise of colleagues.

Some supply teachers believe that many potentially valuable CPD activities are impossible for them to engage in – participation in working groups, for example. They may feel uncertain that that they will stay in the school long enough to fulfil the commitments of membership of such groups. Where supply teachers are invited to join such groups as observer/contributor, on the basis that they will both gain in terms of CPD, and contribute much from experience – they may bring valuable insights gained from other establishments.

It is important for pupil learning that colleagues, schools and authorities respond as positively as possible to supply teachers seeking opportunities for professional development within available resources.

- **As registered teachers, supply staff are expected to take ownership of their own professional development, and to identify and realise opportunities to meet their needs as identified through the PRD process**

This expectation applies to teachers who have permanent contracts and applies equally to all teachers undertaking supply work in schools.

Many authorities already have made provision for supply teachers not actually employed by them to join courses which they run if places are available. Generally this is on the basis that such teachers are

neither paid, nor charged, for attendance. This strategy requires a good flow of information between the authority and the supply teachers. However, there are real practical difficulties in achieving this, and it may in addition be equally as important for supply teachers to gain access to schools and work-place based learning or to seek opportunities in an online environment.

- **Authorities expect supply teachers to participate in the process of professional review and development, and to undertake continuous professional development.**

The statement reflects the value that authorities place on supply teachers and the skills, knowledge and experience that they can bring to the schools they serve. There is a need for authority staff to assure themselves that supply teachers are making a positive impact on pupil learning when they are employed in schools and centres. Authorities might consider the need for some dedicated support to realise this issue.

## **Suggested Areas for Action**

**(The actions described are illustrative rather than exhaustive and describe the good practice already in place in many areas. All local authorities should consider this good practice when further developing their own approaches to supporting supply teachers.)**

### **Local Authorities should consider:**

- Developing a “Welcome Pack” including recommended professional study for supply teachers including current authority and national initiatives and
  - A clear expectations of supply teachers in relation to involvement in CPD and an expectation that they will as professionals take ownership of their own learning
  - A copy of Appendix 1 of this paper – Supports for Supply Teachers
  - A clear expectation that all supply teachers will be involved in an annual PRD interview
  - An offer to all supply teachers of contact with an identified base school
  - An offer to all supply teachers opportunity to be involved in base school INSET days where appropriate
  - An offer to all supply teachers of an opportunity to be involved in workplace based CPD activities
  - An offer to all supply teachers to be involved in authority run courses and events at no charge even if not currently employed
  - Establish clear conditions under which supply teachers may or may not be paid for involvement in CPD , including arrangements – if any – for travel costs
- Establishing courses and events specifically to meet supply teachers' priorities and concerns at times when supply work is not available e.g. INSET days (as, for example, in Appendix 2)
- Supporting networking opportunities for supply teachers (as above)
- Consolidating current good practice with regard to supply teachers on long-term temporary contracts receiving PRD/ CPD through school
- Ensuring that all supply teachers have Glow passwords so that they have appropriate access to up-to-date information on CPD opportunities
- Taking a positive view of requests to volunteer in school in order to gain experience where this is possible
- Continuing to promote a view of CPD as extending far beyond attendance at courses amongst supply teachers

### **Schools should consider:**

- Being prepared to act as a base school for identified supply teacher(s), and to offer all supply teachers ‘based’ in the school contact with an identified experienced colleague in school to act as mentor
- Involving supply teachers in INSET day and collegiate time activities where this is sought, and where possible
- Involving supply teachers in working parties and other groups on an ‘observer/contributor’ basis
- Welcoming supply teachers who wish to volunteer for experience where this is possible
- Encouraging experienced teachers/ departments to involve supply teachers seeking CPD as far as possible
- Giving supply teachers access to school-based CPD resources e.g. Glow password, staff library, ICT
- Taking responsibility for PRD for supply teachers on long-term temporary contracts
- Providing an “Induction Pack” of school information for supply teachers
- Identifying collegiate support for supply teachers within the school
- Ensuring supply teachers have appropriate information on additional support needs for pupils in classes to be taught

### **Supply teachers should consider**

- Negotiating a ‘base’ school
- Engaging with PRD process and seeking a PRD interview at school or authority level as appropriate
- Engaging in process of self-evaluation and professional needs identification , for example by using CPDReflect

- Taking ownership of own professional development and seeking out appropriate CPD activities, including networking with other supply teachers
- Being aware of, and benefiting from, the very wide range of activities that provide opportunities for professional development , for example by using CPDFind
- Asking your local authority to arrange a Glow password
- Keep a record of CPD undertaken, for example by using an online tool such as CPDReflect
- Accessing the range of online support available to every teacher (see appendix 1)

**Contact the team**

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Visit the team blog at <http://itsblogs.org.uk/cpdteam/>

## Supports for supply teachers

You can go directly to many of these sites (links shown) or you can access all of them from CPDFind.

### CPDFind

If you are a teacher seeking employment or supply work, it is very important for your future employability that you maintain and develop your professional knowledge and skills.

[CPDFind](#) is a national database of CPD opportunities for all Scottish educators. It has a wide range of activity on offer and you can search the database for particular issues or types of opportunity. By typing in “free” you will see all the cost free opportunities available to you.

Through CPDFind you can access a large number of agencies and resources which can support CPD for supply teachers. These include:

### Your local authority

You will find all the appropriate contact details [here](#).

Depending on your location, you may want to contact more than one authority

You could ask:

Do they have a welcome pack?

Are you welcome to attend local CPD events?

Do they have a list of these?

Do they have a procedure for PRD for supply teachers?

Do they hold a meeting(s) for supply teachers?

Is there a local network of supply teachers?

Can they arrange for you to be given a GLOW password? (If you do not already have one)

### LTS Curriculum for Excellence

[The CfE website](#) delivers the experiences and outcomes in a friendly and easily accessible format and provides pointers to further CPD that is available.

### Scottish Qualifications Authority

[The SQA Academy](#) is a site where you can access professional learning for many aspects of assessment.

Combined with LTS's [Assessment is for Learning](#) site, you will get a formidable overview of assessment in Scottish education

### HMIE and Journey to Excellence

[Journey to Excellence](#) is an excellent online CPD resource which covers the 10 dimensions of excellence with a comprehensive set of video and downloadable think-pieces.

### Open University

Through its [OpenLearn](#) programme, the OU provides a variety of free CPD on topics such as citizenship, partnership working, teaching strategies, child development, inclusive education and a range of other topics.

## CPDStepin

[CPDStepin](#) is a national, online professional community for temporary and supply teachers. It will offer the following facilities:

- educational news
- information from MyJobScotland
- a **discuss** area where teachers can take part in discussions, Glowchat and Glowmeets
- an **ask an expert** facility
- a feed from CPDFind of free, online CPD opportunities (of which there are many!)
- additional, regular CPD from teachers / practitioners across Scotland using Glowmeet.
- a **share** area for teachers to share resources and practice
- access to CPDReflect to maintain a CPD portfolio
- support for temporary teachers putting on their own CPD (Teachmeets)
- specific CPD for temporary teachers will be offered on Glowmeet

CPDStepin is available through your Glow user ID. If you don't already have a Glow ID, one can be arranged for you. See the [National CPD Team blog](#) for more details

## National Glow Groups

Once on Glow, Glow groups allow you to share your CPD journey with colleagues. If you have a GLOW password you can join one of the many specialised professional communities where you can discuss issues and share resources and practice.

Some existing National Glow Groups are:

- Literacy
- Numeracy
- CPDCentral
- Early years
- Literacy and Gaidhlig
- Technological studies
- English teachers

## Appendix 2

### Local Authority Support for Supply Teachers

Some examples of interesting practice

#### Perth and Kinross



At the end of the probationer year all probationers who have not got permanent posts are invited to come along to the monthly network session. Any teacher who enlists on the supply list is invited to attend by way of support.

One session per year, in April or May, is set aside to brainstorm using co-operative learning techniques what the group would like for the following year and the programme is then developed to deliver on their identified needs. They prioritise what they wish first by voting. There is a mixture of training to support the person and their job.

The sessions run the last Thursday of each working month - 4pm for a 4.30pm start till 6pm. The first 30 minutes allows time for networking

There are also one or two workshops on themes – this year the development of IT and GLOW and hands on “Expressive Arts”

So far this year we have had a GLOW training session and fixed people up with passwords and a GLOW group and a session on practical ideas on RME from an outside provider. I have attached the programme for the year.

#### City of Edinburgh and Moray House

##### Returning to Teaching course.



The Moray House School of Education, Edinburgh University, in conjunction with the City of Edinburgh Council, offer a refresher course for teachers who have been away from teaching for a number of years or are new to the Scottish system. Participants come from authorities across Scotland.

The course runs on 10 Thursday evenings between 6 and 9pm, from April to June.

Course delivery is shared between staff from Edinburgh University and the City of Edinburgh Council and has been running for over 10 years. It has attracted 100s of teachers over this period who have been planning to and actually returning to the classroom as a consequence of this course.

In addition to the excellent and appropriate classes that are prepared, and revamped each year, for each course, participants enjoy the collaborative endeavour of undertaking this course together and learning from each other. The shared experience of learning with teachers with similar yet different backgrounds is an extremely positive element for many of the teachers.

At the start of the course many participants feel they have lost their 'teaching confidence' necessary to manage a classroom situation yet many participants report increased confidence by the end of the course

The evaluations each year confirm the high-quality of the course and the value it brings to returning teachers

## **Stirling Council**



Stirling has reached an agreement with their LNCT which reaffirms the value the Council attaches to supply teachers. It states the commitment of the authority to the provision of high quality learning and teaching for all pupils, and recognises that managing the performance of teaching staff is a key element in this. All permanent and temporary teaching staff are entitled to an annual meeting to discuss their own professional review and development.

To support this, the Council also offers a full programme of CPD activity to all supply teachers.

In 08/09 officers established a small focus group of supply teachers to look at the welcoming procedures for supply teachers in schools. This work is in its final stages and will be shared with schools.

## Who are Supply Teachers?

For the purpose of this paper we suggest that supply teachers fall into five broad groupings, categorised by the kinds of contract they have; in turn these different contracts have implications for the nature of the work they do, and for their professional development.

The groupings are

### 1. Teachers with permanent contracts as supply teachers

A small number of authorities have employed a group of supply teachers, both primary and secondary, on permanent contracts. These teachers act as a front-line for absence cover and to release colleagues, and are required to teach in a range of subjects and/or stages.

Such teachers are usually well accommodated by the same CPD opportunities enjoyed by teachers with a permanent base. They generally have excellent access to information about CPD activities, and will be exposed to the very wide range of collegiate activities and opportunities, other than courses, that are promoted in authorities and schools as supporting professional development. They will also have access to PRD in line with permanently employed colleagues.

### 2. Medium to long-term contracts in a single school

Teachers are contracted to provide cover for a specific teacher who is expected to be absent from work for a considerable length of time, or for a post that will not be filled in the short term.

These teachers may also be treated by the school in the same way as colleagues with permanent contracts. The school may take the view that it has the resources to support the post in respect of the professional development which the post holder requires, whether the post holder happens to have a permanent, or a long term temporary contract. In either case, the school can see the benefit to its pupils and their learning of investing in the post holder in terms of his or her professional development. Supply teachers in this position usually are able to participate fully in the PRD process, with access to information, opportunities and resources.

### 3. Frequent short term contracts in a variety of schools

Teachers in this position are expected to be very flexible. They may be offered placements in different schools and in different authorities almost on a daily basis, and may therefore work in several different schools in the course of a single week.

These supply teachers may have major difficulties in relation to continuing professional development: They are not in any school long enough to benefit consistently from the constant flow of information that normally comes through schools to teachers, including information about CPD opportunities and in some cases, perhaps their understanding of the wide range of activities that can be undertaken for professional development is less well developed than that of their full-time colleagues. It is likely therefore that opportunities and activities that could be undertaken may not be recognised. Where these teachers attend courses held during the day, they are unavailable for work - potentially a major financial disadvantage, even where the authority makes places on courses available to them without charge, as many do.

Workplace based collegiate activities taking place over a period of time are a major source of professional development for all teachers. Consistency of workplace and the opportunity to develop collegiate relationships over an extended period of time are precisely the conditions that such supply teachers do not have. In this situation schools also find it difficult to see how they can invest in, and benefit from, the professional development and review of such teachers.

These supply teachers are usually not expected to attend school INSET days or collegiate time activity

There are concerns in some of the local authorities about their ability to support the professional development of colleagues who may be working only very intermittently, and to ensure that their contribution is effectively monitored, as they may not have easy access to PRD.

#### **4. Short-term contracts in a single school**

A number of considerations may lead a supply teacher to specify that s/he will teach in only one particular school. It may be that the location of the school is such that it is the only one that the teacher can easily reach or it may be centred on a strong sense of loyalty to a particular school. Teachers who have retired often fall into this category.

In some cases, teachers in this group are reluctant to engage in CPD or to be involved in PRD as they perceive their contribution as supporting colleagues and helping out, rather than as focussed on pupil learning.

#### **5. Teachers seeking supply/teachers who have taken a career break/teachers returning to teaching/teachers in other employment**

This group offers the most significant challenge as they may not appear on the register of any local authority, or be in touch with professional colleagues, and yet a prolonged absence from the classroom can mean that they feel deskilled and out of touch with innovative and emerging practice. They are unlikely to have easy access to information and opportunities for collegiate activity and other CPD activities. They may find a return to the classroom to be challenging, and characterised by new expectations and responsibilities that can seem bewildering. This group of teachers require a quite different form of CPD and our experience has been that the most successful transition back into teaching happens with the support of a dedicated "Returning to Teaching" opportunity

**Two further groups of teachers have particular difficulty in terms of accessing good CPD and PRD these are:**

#### **Supply teachers on the Alternative Route to Full Registration**

There are particular difficulties for those teachers who are trying to evidence their achievement of the Standard for Full Registration while working on supply.

These teachers need to identify:

- someone to endorse the record of CPD in Probationer Profile submitted to GTC
- someone to carry out required classroom observations and report on this
- advice and support in relation to CPD needs e.g. Principal Teacher, CPD Leader, EIS Learning Rep

#### **Teachers coming to Scotland from other education systems:**

- need induction to the Scottish education system as a whole
- need introduction to national priorities, initiatives and accepted practice