Managing our Absence and Cover Efficiently

The following questionnaire/prompts are intended to support schools in reflecting on their current practice and process in relation to manging cover. To get the most from this tool kit is recommended schools review the attached guidance document which highlights a range of good practice's which support the efficient management of Agency Supply costs.

Schools are asked to identify priorities to improve processes/ outcomes and to ensure the very best value

Priority	Support needed	timescale
1		
2		
3		
4		

School _____
Size _____

Person responsible for Cover _____ Role in School _____ Self Evaluation toolkit

Routine and/ or daily cover	Yes	No	Priority (H,M, L)	Potential school action
1. Are all senior leaders and staff who are involved in planning cover need fully aware of the cost implications and realise it is a precious budgeted resource?				
2. Are there clear processes for the authorisation of the procurement of cover which include the associated costs and clear reasoning for the cover to support the robust management of cover?				
3. Is the decision making regarding cover and any procurement SLT led?				
4. As a school do we use agency as a 'last resort' for routine cover?				
5. Is only the daily unknown cover left to the day in question?				
6. As a school we find creative ways to cover without having to call in supply and we are happy to share this good practice with other schools?				

	Yes	No	Priority (H,M,L)	Potential school action
7. Do you have a pool of cover supervisors or TA's trained to step up and provide cover?				
8. Where an insurance policy exists do you seek to provide cover within or as close as possible to the income provided?				
9. Do we limit the impact of planned absences such as professional absences and cover needs generated by internal events, which are not covered by funding, through planning ahead?				
10. Do you ensure that all staff understand there is an expectation that cover be limited when designing school events/ activities and is this regularly communicated? i.e. clear 'no planned cover' weeks, events moved / cancelled to reduce impact on cover				
11. Where cover is required to support ALN needs are the needs for the day across the whole school considered before Agency staff are requested?				
12. Are you fully utilising any empty periods on existing staff timetables to ensure equity of load and provide additional cover?				
Agency cover for vacancies / Longer term cover	**Yes**	**No**	**Priority (H,M,L)**	**Potential school action**
13. Does your school have an established working relationship with certain agencies ?				
14. As a school do you ever challenge the costs of individual supply and agency rates?				
15. Have you negotiated a reduction in the agency fee element of the Framework pricing?				
16. Where cover is associated with significant absences, does school have clear processes around HR and occupational Health running alongside?				
17. Where vacancies or absences reduce the staffing budget is this reported to governors with appropriate virements to offset Agency costs incurred?				
Additionality RSS , TAs, grants, interventions, well-being etc.	**Yes**	**No**	**Priority (H,M,L)**	**Potential school action**

	Yes	No	Priority (H,M,L)	Potential school action
18. Where costs are recoverable, we always ensure that we recoup the costs and process the claims at the full value?				
19. Where agency staff are linked to grants does the school ensure the costs of staff do not exceed the grant available?				
20. Where agency staff are linked to grants are clear plans in place to cease/reduce the additional support as funding reduces/ ceases?				
21. Where additional staff are required is the requirement regularly reviewed?				
22. Where staffing needs increase and decrease on a cyclical basis have you explored the use of annualised hours contracts?				
23. If the school has a regular daily need for additional TA support or cover have you analysed the number of days a year used and employed super nummary staff to cover the additional need at a lower cost than agency?				
General & looking forwards & training	**Yes**	**No**	**Priority (H,M,L)**	**Potential school action**
24. Do you ensure clear records are always kept of the type of Supply and the reason supply is required in a format that can be analysed for patterns? And do you reflect on previous year cost?				
25. Is cover a routine focus for discussion within SMT and/or Governing body?				
26.Do you have any good practices or any innovative ways of working/ creative schemes to share with other schools?				
27.Do you have an internal policy to support clarity and decision making around cover needs and would this help consistency through Carmarthenshire?				
28. As a school do you ever meet specifically to reflect how cover can be arranged differently?				
29. If your school has an ALN Unit, is cover considered globally across the school?				
30. Is the cost of cover in an ALN Unit clearly coded to the unit to support analysis of need?				
31. Do you ensure all Insurance income possible is claimed every month in a timely manner?				

	Yes	No	Additional Comments
32. Is cover built into cost of trips and visits with pupils and is this netted off (full cost recovery)?			
33. Is the school aware If a staff member is employed via an agency on the framework as long as 4 weeks notice is given by the end of the 8th week of the intention to transfer the agency worker to the councils payroll no extended agency period or charge can be applied.			
Ancillary questions -	**Yes**	**No**	**Additional Comments**
34. Would you be interested in whole Local Authority training, discussion and support on this issue?			
• What would be the key areas of interest/ topics?			
• When and how would this best be undertaken?			
• Would you be interested in attending some authority led training on managing teacher/ staff absence?			
35. Would you be interested in the development of a Teaching Assistant/ Cover supervisor pool?			
36. Would you be interested in the development of a TA Apprenticeship program within Carmarthenshire?			
37. Would you like a visit/ opportunity to discuss cover with colleagues in Local Authority?			
• Who would be the best person for us to contact on managing absence and covering colleagues?			