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J. C. W. P.

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subvention chief project

A question of fairness

IT was with a heavy heart that I read the recent criticism by the Director of Audit about the so-called over-payment of a social worker in one of the subvented agencies.

The director's report is no doubt based on fact but the public may not be fully aware of the present policy of subvention in order to form a balanced perspective.

It may not be generally known that staff in subvented or subsidised institutions do not enjoy pension rights, housing benefits, medical benefits or overseas training opportunities. Nor are they allowed to send their children to boarding schools in England as their counterparts in Government employ do.

It is also not generally known, perhaps,

that the offer of some of these benefits from public funds by the Government to subvented bodies is a discriminatory one.

For example, university staff enjoy all these benefits to the full, while doctors in subvented hospitals also enjoy most of these benefits. Generally, therefore, it is teachers in aided schools and social workers in subvented agencies who are singled out for discriminatory treatment.

I have always wondered whether the policy of subvention and subsidy is decided on the basis of fairness or the possible nuisance value of the staff concerned?

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