

Meeting of the Teacher Supply Steering Group

10 September 2020 @ 2.00 p.m.

Via WebEx

Minutes

Attendees:

- Seán Ó Foghlú, Secretary General, DES (Chairperson)
- Deirdre Shanley, Asst Secretary General, DES
- Tomás Ó Ruairc, Director, Teaching Council
- Lewis Purser, Director Academic Affairs, Irish Universities Association
- Seamus Mulconry, CPSMA
- Antoinette Nic Gearailt, ACCS
- Louise Callinan, HEA (for Alan Wall)
- Anthony Finn, University of Glasgow
- John O'Halloran, UCC
- Tara Carton, PO, External HR (for Aoife Conduit)

Also in attendance:

- Chris Kelly, PO, Teacher Education Policy, DES
- Conor McCourt, APO, Teacher Education Policy, DES

Apologies

- Harold Hislop, Chief Inspector, DES
- Aoife Conduit, Asst Secretary General, DES
- Eithne Guilfoyle, DCU
- William Beausang, Asst. Secretary General, DES
- Alan Wall, CEO, HEA

1. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 21 May 2020 were agreed.

2. Covid-19: Teacher Supply Measures

Department measures

The Group was updated on teacher supply measures put in place by the Department in response to Covid-19,

The following points were noted:

Suspension of limits that teachers on career break can be employed and removal of the restriction on job sharing teachers working additional days.

- These measures are intended to increase the availability of teachers for short term substitute work.

Expansion of the primary substitute teacher supply panels.

- The expansion of the primary substitute teacher supply panels follows from the pilot scheme operated in the 2019/20 school year
- There are currently 107 supply panels employing 301 teachers in more than 2,000 schools, including Gaeltacht and Irish-medium schools.
- The Department is identifying if there are any locations not covered by a supply panel.
- The Department will continue to engage with the INTO and management bodies with regard to the expansion of the substitute teacher supply panels.

The Group noted with appreciation the positive engagement of schools, school management bodies and the INTO in the expansion of the supply panels.

Advertising time for primary teacher vacancies

The stipulated advertising time for primary teacher vacancies has been reduced.

Teaching Council measures

The Group was updated on teacher supply measures that have been put in place by the Teaching Council in response to Covid-19

The following points were noted:

Registration arrangements for NQTs qualified outside Ireland in 2020.

- NQTs qualified outside of Ireland can undertake their induction in Ireland in 2020/21 on a once off time bound basis
- The Irish embassies in the UK and the UAE, as well as UK HEIs, have been requested to publicise the new induction arrangements.

Campaign targeting registered teachers not active in the teaching workforce

- Following from the Teaching Council's campaign targeting registered teachers not active, and an awareness raising campaign by IPPN, the number of teachers registered with *Sub Seeker*, the central substitute teacher recruitment portal, has increased from 1,800 in March 2020 to 4,600 approx. currently.

Revised arrangements for school placements in 2020/21.

- The revised school placement arrangements, agreed between the Teaching Council, the ITE providers and the Department, will enhance the availability of PME students to fill short term substitute vacancies.

Recruitment position 2020/21

It was noted that initial feedback from schools indicates that the supply of teachers has increased in comparison to 2019/20 and that consequently the filling of vacancies has been less challenging to date. However at post primary level, it was noted that the filling of posts in certain locations was beginning to be more problematic as well as in certain subject areas (e.g. Irish and modern foreign languages). It was agreed that it is too early in the school year to have an accurate overview of the position

It was noted that Covid-19 may lead to further recruitment pressures that have not yet been identified.

3. Update on actions

(a) Data to support teacher supply planning

(i) Technical Report

It was noted that the Technical Report, updated following further analysis by the Department and having regard to the feedback received from stakeholders, has been finalised and sent to the Minister for information.

(ii) Analysis of post primary subject teacher demand

It was noted that work is ongoing to develop projections of post primary teacher demand at subject level.

(iii) Potential use of the Teaching Council register to hold additional data to support teacher supply planning.

It was noted the potential use of the registration database to provide additional teacher / subject data to support teacher supply planning will be considered at the next meeting of the Teacher Supply Data Working Group.

(b) Communications & promotion of the teaching profession

(i) Promotion campaign update

CAO change of mind promotion campaign

The following points were noted:

- The campaign in particular targeted post-primary teaching in Irish, science and MFLs and ran online and on social media.
- Digital radio advertising was used in the campaign for the first time with positive feedback on its effectiveness.

- Initial metrics from media partners show a significant increase in visits to the *Teaching Transforms* landing page during the campaign (e.g. 27 May 2020 0 visits v. 27 June 2020 1,035 visits).

Promoting diversity in the teaching profession, including minority groups

The following points were noted:

- A future phase of the promotions campaign will be targeted at promoting diversity in the teaching profession, including amongst socio-economic groups that have low participation in higher education, migrant communities, and the LGBT+ community
- A workshop for the Teacher Supply Communications Working Group on the promotion of diversity in the teaching profession, facilitated by the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment, is planned for 9th October 2020.
- The development of the campaign will be informed by feedback from focus groups composed of ITE students from minority groups, which are currently being held.

(ii) Recruitment portal for long term vacancies

The following points were noted:

- The development by IPPN of the recruitment portal is proceeding, with user testing scheduled from 25th September and a “go live” date planned for two to three weeks subsequently.
- Primary level stakeholders have been briefed and a meeting with second level users is planned in the near future.

(iii) Turasabhaile

The Group was updated on the operation for 2020 of *Turasabhaile*, the teacher recruitment portal developed by the post primary management bodies. The following points were noted:

- 160 teachers submitted applications through the system, 80% from the Middle East and 20% approx. from the UK.
- The most common vacancies were for teachers of science and mathematics, with smaller numbers sought in art and modern foreign languages.
- 40 teachers were recruited directly through *Turasabhaile* and a number of others recruited indirectly (i.e. following initial matching of teachers and schools through *Turasabhaile*).

It was agreed that the success of *Turasabhaile* demonstrates the benefits of a central recruitment portal for schools as well as teachers seeking positions, including teachers currently employed overseas.

It was noted that the higher education sector would be in a position to promote a central recruitment portal via social media.

It was agreed that the Irish embassies would be a useful channels for creating awareness of a central recruitment portal amongst teachers resident outside the State.

The Group noted with appreciation the work of the post primary management bodies in regard to the development and operation of *Turasabhaile*.

(c) Higher Education

(i) ITE application numbers 2020

The Group considered application numbers for ITE programmes in 2020.

The following points were noted:

Applications through the CAO system (July 2020 compared to July 2019)

- First preference applications to level 8 programmes in general have increased by 1.1% approximately.
- First preference applications to primary ITE programmes have not changed in percentage terms.
- First preference applications to post primary ITE programmes have increased by 7%.

PME applications (2020 compared to 2019)

- Applications to the post primary PME through the PAC system (NUI universities and DCU) have increased by 3% approximately, but this figure contains a degree of duplication.
- Initial analysis of PAC applications indicates that the most popular subjects include English, history and geography. There were more applicants with French than the other modern foreign languages and, of the STEM subjects, there are more mathematics and biology applications than chemistry and physics.

(ii) HEA call for upskilling programmes

The Group was updated on the HEA call for upskilling programmes

The following points were noted:

- Following dialogue with the Department, revised upskilling programme proposals have been submitted by the HEIs.
- It is likely that programmes will start later in the 2020/21 academic year than was originally intended, having regard to institutional capacity and ability to recruit students in the context of Covid-19.
- The Teacher Supply Communications Working group will consider a centralised campaign to promote the new programmes.

(iii) Supports for ITE student

The following points were noted:

- As in 2019/20, €1m will be available to PME students through the Student Assistance Fund (SAF) in 2020/21.

PATH programmes

- Funding under PATH has been effective in supporting access to ITE for targeted groups, and PATH is being extended for a further three years.
- Student bursaries are in place under a number of PATH programmes.
- The next round of projects is to be approved in Q4 of 2020.

(iv) School placements

It was noted that the Teaching Council and the Department will engage with each other in the coming weeks to progress this matter.

(v) Additional places in third level programmes

The following points were noted:

- The Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science has requested the creation of additional third level places, having regard to Covid-19 and the calculated grades process.
- The ITE providers have created additional places on undergraduate ITE programmes, the majority at post-primary level'.
- .

(d) Policies and arrangements for schools and teachers that impact on teacher supply

(i) Teacher absences due to State examination employment

It was noted that, due to Covid-19, no change to the arrangements for the leaving certificate oral and practical examinations is planned for the 2020/21 school year.

(ii) Teacher absences due to CPD

The following points were noted:

- CPD will be delivered increasingly online, in the context of Covid-19, with any face to face engagement in general only after the first term.
- The support services are exploring the use of retired teachers and associates in order to maximise teacher presence in the classroom.
- NEPS and the Inspectorate have arranged a coordinated approach to school engagements in 2020/21.

(iii) Review of summer courses.

It was noted that the review of summer course was completed and that the number of courses available has decreased, which will impact on the number of EPV days taken by teachers.

(iv) Impact of EPV days

It was noted that new arrangements are in place for EPV days for 2020/21, including that a substitute teacher may be employed to cover the first day of EPV absence and that subsequent EPV leave may be taken only where the effect on a school's operation is minimal.

(v) Teacher sharing / potential for post primary supply panels

It was noted that the teacher sharing scheme and the potential for post-primary supply panels have not been progressed due to the Covid-19 emergency.

(vi) Retired teachers and substitute work

The following points were noted:

- It is anticipated that a DPER circular on abatement will issue in the near future
- The Department continues to engage with DPER regarding the employment of retired teachers.

(vii) Potential for the employment of primary teachers in post primary settings

It was noted that the employment of primary teachers in post primary settings was considered by the Department with the education partners, in the context of the development of a sequence for the employment of teachers in post primary schools.

It was agreed to continue to explore the potential for the employment of primary teachers in post primary settings.

(viii) PDST return to teach resource

The following points were noted:

- A "return to teach" online resource is being developed by the PDST for teachers who have not taught in recent years and who are returning to the classroom.
- The resource should be operational in the coming weeks and will link with existing relevant PDST support materials.

4. Covid-19 and schools in Scotland

The Group considered the paper "*Handling Covid-19 in Scotland's schools: issues of interest to the Steering Group*" prepared by Professor Anthony Finn.

The Group was updated on developments in Scotland, including: government teacher supply plans; recruitment issues; arrangements for ITE student school placements; numbers of teachers at high risk from Covid-19; evidence of early school experience in 2020/21.

5. Revised Teacher Supply Action Plan

The Group considered the latest draft of the Teacher Supply Action Plan, revised to include actions (i) to explore measures to increase flexibility in order to facilitate access to, and participation in, the post primary PME, and (ii) to explore the development of supports for teachers who wish to return to teaching.

It was noted that the Action Plan is a working document and that, in the context of Covid-19, it is not intended to publish a revised version in the immediate future.

6. AOB

None

7. Next meeting

The date of the next meeting (26 November 2020) was noted.

**Teacher Supply Secretariat
September 2020**