

Meeting of the Teacher Supply Implementation Group

Via WebEx

Thursday 20th August 2020, 2.00pm

Minutes

In attendance:

Seán Ó Foghlú, Secretary General (Chair)
Deirdre Shanley, Assistant Secretary General
Tomás Ó Ruairc, Director, Teaching Council
Louise Callinan, Senior Manager, Teacher Education, HEA
Deirdre Cullen, PO, Statistics
Martin McLoughlin, PO, Teacher Education Policy (ITE)
Aisling Curley, PO, Pensions
Conor McCourt, APO, Teacher Supply Secretariat (for Chris Kelly)
Aine Garvin, APO, External Staff Relations (for Tara Carton)
Stephen Manning, HEO (for John McDermott)

Also in attendance:

Damien O'Neill, Teacher Supply Secretariat

Apologies:

Harold Hislop, Chief Inspector
Chris Kelly, PO, Teacher Education Policy (Teacher Supply)
John McDermott, APO, Higher Education
Aoife Conduit, Assistant Secretary General
Padraig Maloney, PO, Teacher Payroll
Brendan Doody, Assistant Chief Inspector
Paraic Joyce, PO, School Governance
Alfie Barrett, PO, Teacher Terms & Conditions
Tara Carton, PO, External Staff Relations

1. Minutes of previous meeting and matters arising:

The minutes of the meeting of 25th June 2020 were agreed.

2. Covid-19 emergency: teacher supply measures

(i) *Suspension of limits that teachers on career break can be employed*

It was noted that the limits that teachers on career break can be employed has been suspended for the 2020/2021 school year.

(ii) *Reduction in advertising time for teacher vacancies (primary)*

It was noted that the primary teacher recruitment arrangements have been revised to reduce the prescribed recruitment time.

(iii) Job-sharing teachers and sub work

The following points were noted:

- The restriction on job sharing teachers undertaking additional hours will be removed for the 2020/21 school year. Job sharing teachers can now work additional substitution hours.
- Work on the necessary payroll development is ongoing and it is expected to be operational from the beginning of the next school year.

(iv) Expansion of primary substitute teacher supply panels

The following points were noted:

- The supply panel scheme is being expanded to 94 panels throughout the country for 2020/21.
- Over 2,000 primary schools will be included in the scheme.
- 260 additional teaching posts will be created.
- No recruitment issues have been reported to date.

(v) Teaching Council measures

The following points were noted:

- *Registration for NQTs qualified outside Ireland in 2020*
 - A new process that will allow NQTs who qualified outside the State in 2020 to complete their induction in Ireland has been put in place for the 2020/2021 school year, on a once-off time-bound basis.
 - The Teaching Council is liaising with UK ITE providers and the Irish embassies in the UK and UAE to promote this new initiative.
- *Targeting registered teachers not active.*
 - The Teaching Council has contacted 6,000 registered teachers not currently active to ask that they make themselves available for substitute and other positions.
 - NAPD & IPPN are promoting this measure.
- *Arrangements for school placements 2020/21*
 - Following engagement with the Teaching Council, HEIs are adopting flexible arrangements for student teacher placement in post primary schools. This will enhance the availability of student teachers to be offered additional paid hours in the classroom outside of their student placement requirements.
- The Teaching Council's measures are supported by an ongoing social media campaign.

3. Data to support teacher supply planning

(i) *Statistics Section Technical Report*

The following points were noted:

- The updated Technical Report has been submitted to the Minister for information.
- It is not anticipated that the updated report will be published in the immediate future.
- Stats Section have revised the pupil enrolment projections which will be considered by the Management Board.

(ii) *Analysis of post primary subject teacher demand*

The Group was updated on progress on the development of a model to project post-primary subject teacher demand and supply

The following points were agreed:

- Future subject teacher projections should be considered by the Teacher Supply Data Working Group in the first instance.
- State Section will continue to work on the development of subject specific projections
- Engagement with stakeholders in advance of the publication of the subject teacher projections will be postponed until later in the school year.

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

It was noted that the Teaching Council is currently engaging with the Department to explore options to use its register to support teacher supply planning.

4. Communications and promotion of the teaching profession

(i) *Promotion campaign update*

The Group was updated on the latest developments in relation to the campaign to promote the teaching profession.

The following points were noted:

- The latest phase of the campaign coincided with the CAO change of mind closing date and promoted, in particular, post-primary teaching in Irish, science and MFLs.
- The campaign ran online and on social media and used, for the first time, digital radio advertising, with very positive feedback on its effectiveness.
- Initial metrics from the media partners show a marked increase in traffic to the *Teaching Transforms* landing page during the campaign
- Diversity focus groups, to help inform future campaigns, are planned for early September.
- A workshop for the Communications WG to consider the promotion of diversity in the teaching profession, hosted by an external facilitator and informed by external input, is scheduled to take place in September.
- The Teaching Council is exploring attendance at online recruitment and career fairs for the upcoming year.

(ii) *Development of a recruitment portal for long term teacher vacancies*

It was noted that the development of the portal is proceeding, with user testing scheduled from 25th September and a “go live” date two to three weeks subsequently.

5. Higher Education

(i) ITE programme application numbers 2020

CAO programmes

As of July 2020 and in comparison to July 2019, it was noted that:

- Overall applications to level 8 programmes generally have increased by 1.1% approx.
- First preference applications to level 8 primary ITE programmes have remained static in percentage terms
- First preference applications to level 8 post primary ITE programmes increased by 7% approx.

PME programmes

It was noted that applications for the post primary PME through the PAC (NUI universities and DCU) have increased by 3% approx. in comparison to 2019, noting that this percentage includes a degree of double counting given the parallel application streams within PAC. The most popular subjects include English, history and geography.

(ii) HEA proposal for upskilling programmes

The following points were noted:

- The Department is currently reviewing revised programme proposals from the HEIs.
- HEIs will need sufficient time to promote and recruit for the programmes.
- Programmes are expected to start in January 2021.

(iii) Supports for ITE student

The Group consider an update provided by Higher Ed Equity of Access

The following points were noted:

- €1m SAF funding will be ring-fenced for PME students for 2020/21
- 20% of PME students were in receipt of supports under SUSI in 2019/20, at a cost of €2.3m approx.
- Other support measures being considered include:
 - Increasing the thresholds for post graduate grants to match the undergraduate thresholds
 - Targeted supports for PME students

(iv) Review of school placement guidelines / implementation of Working Group report SPWG report

The Group noted that a plan for the implementation of the recommendations of the School Placement Working Group report is currently being drafted.

6. Policies and arrangements for schools and teachers that impact on teacher supply

(i) Teacher absences due to State examination employment

It was noted that 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 the Covid-19, with any face to face engagement in general only after the first term.
- The Support Services are actively exploring the use of retired teachers and associates in order to maximise teacher presence in the classroom.
- NEPS and the Inspectorate have met to ensure a coordinated approach to engaging with schools.

(iii) Review of summer courses

The following points were noted:

- The number of course available to teachers has decreased following the review of summer courses.
- Early indications show a decrease in the number of teachers who undertook courses in 2020. Confirmed figures will be available in mid-September.

(iv) Impact of EPV days.

The Group was updated the new arrangements in place for EPV days for 2020/21 in light of the Covid-19 emergency, including that a substitute teacher may now be employed to cover the first day of EPV absence.

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

The following points were noted:

- 2 schools enquired with the Department regarding sharing teachers in accordance with Circular 0015/2019 but ultimately no schools opted to take part in the scheme.
- Post primary schools provided feedback to Teacher Allocations Section on the teacher sharing scheme at the teacher allocations conferences

- The potential for post-primary supply panels has not been progressed due to the Covid-19 emergency. However, an additional 1,000 posts have been created at post-primary level in response to the expected increase in demand due to Covid-19.

(vi) Retired teachers and substitute work

The following points were noted:

- DPER has approved a waiver of abatement for teaching staff under Section 52 (4) of the Public Service Pensions (Single Scheme and Other Provisions Act) 2012 subject to certain conditions and limited to an aggregate of 50 days or less in an academic year. However given that the landscape in the education section has greatly changed with the COVID- 19 pandemic and following a request at senior political level it was agreed that the Department would seek to have the waiver from abatement expanded to include all retired primary and post-primary staff and the 50 day limitation removed.
- It is anticipated that a DPER circular on abatement will issue in September/ October 2020.

It was agreed to continue to engage with DPER regarding the employment of retired teachers.

(vii) Streamlining of registration processes for out of State applicants / professional orientation model for schools to support out of state teachers

The following points were noted:

- Due to competing work demands arising from the Covid-19 emergency, it was not possible for the Teaching Council to provide an update to the Group on processing times for teachers seeking registration who qualified abroad.
- An update will be provided by the Teaching Council for the next meeting of the Group

(viii) Review of the system for the allocation of teachers (timing and duration) – timeframes, redeployment scheme rules etc.

It was noted that, due to competing work demands arising from the Covid-19 emergency, the review of allocation of teachers has not been progressed to date.

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

It was noted that External Staff Relations had engaged with the teacher unions regarding the employment of primary teachers in post primary settings in the context of the sequencing of filling of vacant teaching posts.

It was agreed to continue to explore this option.

- (x) *Review of the refund of fees scheme: potential for the prioritisation of upskilling programmes.*

It was noted that the Working Group on the refund of fees is to meet in September.

- (xi) *PDST return to teach webinar*

The following points were noted:

- A return to teach webinar is being developed by the PDST to support teachers who have not taught in recent years and who are returning to the classroom.
- Existing PDST support materials will also be used to provide support to these teachers.

7. Revised Action Plan

The Group noted the revised actions regarding return to teach supports and flexible access to the PME, which had been agreed by the Higher Education Coordination Group at its meeting of 22 July 2020.

The following points were agreed:

- To include the revised actions in the Plan.
- That the revised Plan remains an iterative working document for the Department and relevant agencies/ partners but that it will not be published in the immediate future.

8. AOB

The Group noted that the effects of the Covid-19 emergency on teacher supply and demand were not yet fully evident and that further actions to support teacher supply might be required in the short term.

It was agreed that Statistics Section will analyse career break data from the teacher payroll.

9. Next meeting

24th September 2020.