

## **Meeting of the Teacher Supply Implementation Group**

**Via WebEx**

**Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> November 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)  
Padraig Maloney, PO, Teacher Payroll  
Harold Hislop, Chief Inspector  
Tara Carton, PO, External Staff Relations  
Mark Bohan, PO, Data Compliance and Support  
Paraic Joyce, PO, School Governance  
Brendan Doody, Assistant Chief Inspector

#### *Also in attendance:*

Damien O'Neill, HEO, Teacher Supply Secretariat

#### *Apologies:*

Chris Kelly, PO, Teacher Education Policy (Teacher Supply)  
John McDermott, APO, Higher Education  
Aoife Conduit, Assistant Secretary General  
Alfie Barrett, PO, Teacher Terms & Conditions

### **1. Minutes of previous meeting and matters arising:**

The minutes of the meeting of 20<sup>th</sup> August 2020 were agreed.

### **2. Covid-19 emergency: teacher supply measures**

#### *(i) Job-sharing teachers and sub work*

The following points were noted:

- The restriction on job sharing teachers undertaking additional hours has been removed for the 2020/21 school year.
- Schools were informed of this development by Teacher Terms and Conditions.

*(ii) Expansion of primary sub teacher supply panels*

The following points were noted:

- The supply panel scheme has been expanded to include most areas of the country.
- The scheme covers more than 2,300 primary schools and 328 additional teaching posts have been created.
- No significant recruitment issues have been reported to date.
- Options for monitoring the operation of scheme are being explored.

*(iii) Teaching Council updates*

The following points were noted:

*Registration for NQTs qualified outside Ireland in 2020*

- Approximately 100 applications were received in advance of 31<sup>st</sup> October deadline.
- A similar arrangement may be needed in 2021.

*Targeting registered teachers not active.*

- The Teaching Council contacted approximately 6,000 registered teachers not currently teaching to request that they make themselves available for substitute positions through the *Sub Seeker* portal or otherwise for longer term positions.
- Following this initiative over 5,000 registered teachers are registered with *Sub Seeker* in November 2020 compared to 1,800 approximately in March 2020.

*Arrangements for school placements 2020/21 (enhancing the availability of PME students to fill substitute vacancies)*

- Following engagement with the Teaching Council, post-primary ITE providers have adopted flexible arrangements for placements in order to enhance the availability of student teachers for substitution roles outside of their usual placement requirements.

### **3. Data to support teacher supply planning**

*(i) Statistics Section Technical Report*

It was agreed that the Technical Report should be updated to take account of recent policy developments, including PTR changes, the additional allocation of guidance posts at post primary level and increases in ITE programme places.

It was noted that it is not anticipated that an updated report will be published in the immediate future.

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

The Group considered the post primary subject teacher demand/ supply model and supporting paper prepared by Statistics Section and was updated on the development of the model, including assumptions made.

The following points were agreed:

- The model should be updated to take account of recent policy developments, including the PTR change, the additional allocation of guidance posts and increases in ITE places.
- The supporting paper should be modified to include an introduction and conclusion.
- Careful consideration will be required in regard to consultations with stakeholders on the model and potential arrangements for publication.

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

The following points were noted:

- Teacher Supply Secretariat met recently with the Teaching Council to consider this issue.
- The inclusion of additional data on the Teaching Council's registration database may require amendments to primary legislation.
- Teacher Supply Secretariat and Statistics Unit will meet to consider the range of data that might be held in a centralised database to support future 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 Communications Working Group recently held a workshop to consider the future phases of the promotion campaign.

- The promotion of diversity in the teaching profession will be a core element of future phases of the campaign.
- Online focus groups consisting of participants from groups traditionally underrepresented in the teaching profession were held recently to inform the Group's considerations.
- Participants were from socio-economic groups with traditionally low participation in higher education, those with disabilities, members of the Irish Traveller community, members of migrant communities and members of the LGBT+ community.
- The Teaching Council plans to continue to attend virtual recruitment and career fairs throughout 2020/21.

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

The following points were noted:

- The development of a recruitment portal for long term teaching vacancies is proceeding, with user testing underway and a commencement planned in December 2020.
- IPPN will liaise with primary and post primary stakeholders in advance of portal launch.
- A number of ETBs have indicated that they may not use the new portal.

It was agreed that ideally all schools would use the new portal and that Teacher Supply Secretariat will follow up on this issue with ETB Shared Services.

*Sub seeker*

The following points were noted:

- A significant number of teachers registered with *Sub Seeker* are not updating their availability status regularly, as requested.
- IPPN are developing mechanisms to encourage teachers to update their *Sub Seeker* status regularly.

## **5. Higher Education**

*(i) ITE programme application numbers 2020*

The following points were was noted:

- Data on initial enrolments to ITE undergraduate programmes will be requested from HEIs in mid-November.
- As part of the leaving certificate calculated grades process, additional places were agreed in high-points undergraduate courses, including primary and post-primary ITE

programmes. Data on the uptake of these places is being collected and should be available for the next meeting.

- The number of places on primary ITE programmes in State funded HEIs will not change for 2021 entry (1,000 B. Ed. and 200 PME).

*(ii) HEA proposal for post-primary upskilling programmes*

The following points were noted:

- The Minister has announced details of new upskilling programmes for post primary teachers in mathematics, physics and Spanish.
- The programmes are of two years' duration and will accommodate two cohorts (over 300 teachers in total).
- Programmes are planned to commence in January 2021.
- A promotional campaign to raise awareness and promote participation in the programmes is being undertaken, including:
  - Notification to education partners including teacher unions, management bodies, education centres and teacher professional networks
  - A direct email to each registered post-primary teacher through the Teaching Council.
  - Promotion on social media.
  - An update to the Teaching Transforms landing page to include details of new programmes and a downloadable poster for schools
- Appropriate oversight arrangements for the programmes will be put in place
- Terms of reference for an external evaluation of the programmes have been drawn up.

It was agreed to explore the possibility of providing additional upskilling programmes in 2021 for other subjects where teacher supply is challenging.

*(iii) Supports for ITE student*

The Group considered the paper on student support measures in Budget 2021.

The following points were noted:

- A review of the SUSI scheme has been announced.
- Funding has been secured to increase in the SUSI fee grant from €2,000 to €3,500 for postgraduate students. The fee grant income threshold will also increase to €54,240 from €31,500. These changes will take effect from September 2021.
- An additional €20m has been secured for SUSI in 2021 to cover the cost of additional demands on the 2020/21 scheme and anticipated demands for the 2021/22 scheme. It is anticipated that the additional funding will support more than 4,000 students.

- An additional €1.5 million to increase the 1916 Bursary Fund to €5 million per annum, has been secured. This additional funding will fund the cost of an additional 200 bursaries worth €5,000 per annum.
- €50 million has been provided for in Budget 2021 for once-off assistance to third level students in recognition of the challenging circumstances of the pandemic.

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

The following points were noted:

- The recommendations of the School Placement Working Group report are currently being considered.
- The Department and the Teaching Council met recently to progress this issue
- Options for an online school placement portal will be explored, including the potential for the use of *educationposts.ie*

*(v) Céim (Standards for Initial Teacher Education)*

It was noted that the *Céim* will be launched shortly and is expected to be adopted by ITE providers in September 2022.

*(vi) Teaching Council registration: revised subject criteria*

The following points were noted:

- 37 subject criteria have been reviewed and subject criteria for 2 new subjects have been finalised (Computer Science and Politics & Society)
- The expected commencement date for the Computer Science and Politics & Society subject criteria is January 2021 and is yet to be determined for the remainder of subjects.
- The Teaching Council will engage with the Department regarding the commencement dates.

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

*(i) Retired teachers and substitute work*

The following points were noted:

- The Department requested an expansion of the waiver from abatement initially granted by DPER.
- DPER indicated that, should retired teachers become crucial to teacher supply, they will, on approach, give an immediate response.

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

It was noted that a report would be provided to the Group at the next meeting.

- (iii) *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.

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

The following points were noted:

- The Review of the Refund of Fees Scheme report is under consideration.
- A Steering Committee is being established to oversee the implementation of the recommendations of the review.
- It is intended to issue a revised circular on the Refund of Fees Scheme as soon as possible in 2021.

- (v) *PDST resource for returning teachers*

The following points were noted:

- An online return to teach resource has been developed by the PDST to support teachers who have not taught in recent years and who are considering returning to the classroom.
- The Teacher Supply Communications Working Group will explore options to promote this new resource.

## **7. AOB**

- (i) *Teacher Supply Groups / participation from D/FHERIS*  
(ii) *HE Working Group - future approach*

It was agreed that the composition and role of the Higher Education Coordination Group should be reviewed in the context of the establishment of the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science.

- (iii) *Engagement with school management bodies*

It was agreed to explore opportunities for engagement with school management bodies on the issue of teacher supply.

*(iv) Spanish visiting teacher programme*

The following points were noted:

- An MoU between the Department and the Spanish Ministry Of Education and Vocational Training agreeing a pilot Spanish visiting teacher programme has been finalised.
- The programme will operate on a pilot basis for 2 years from September 2021.
- For the first year of the pilot up to 5 Spanish teachers will be made available to schools for appointment.
- Teachers will have an initial one year contract of employment with the school/ETB which may be renewed for one further year, if both parties to the contract agree.

**8. Next meeting**

To be determined

---

**Teacher Supply Secretariat  
November 2020**