

Meeting of the Teacher Supply Implementation Group

Via WebEx

16 December 2020 @ 2.00 pm

Minutes

In attendance:

Seán Ó Foghlú, Secretary General (Chair)
Aoife Conduit, Assistant Secretary General
Deirdre Shanley, Assistant Secretary General
Tomás Ó Ruairc, Director, Teaching Council
Chris Kelly, PO, Teacher Education Policy (Teacher Supply)
Deirdre Cullen, PO, Statistics
Martin McLoughlin, PO, Teacher Education Policy (ITE)
Padraig Maloney, PO, Teacher Payroll
Harold Hislop, Chief Inspector
Tara Carton, PO, External Staff Relations
Mark Bohan, PO, Data Compliance and Support
Brendan Doody, Assistant Chief Inspector
Gabriel Martin, APO, Teacher Allocations (for Paraic Joyce)

Also in attendance:

Conor McCourt, APO, Teacher Supply Secretariat

Apologies:

Paraic Joyce, PO, School Governance
Aisling Curley, PO, Pensions
John McDermott, APO, Higher Education

1. Minutes of previous meeting and matters arising:

The minutes of the meeting of 4th November 2020 were agreed.

2. Covid-19 emergency: teacher supply measures

(i) Expansion of primary sub teacher supply panels

The following points were noted:

- 115 Supply Panels have been created nationwide, incorporating 2,300 Schools.
- 329 additional full-time, fixed term teachers are employed on the panels

- Panels are being managed and operated by base and receiving schools using an app
- From reports, the utilisation of teachers is high with over 95% usage in the majority of panels.
- Some areas are not covered in the supply panel scheme and this will be kept under review.
- A new arrangement has been introduced whereby schools which were not able to fill a substitutable vacancy can employ an additional teacher for one day at a later date to support learning in the classroom.

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

The following points were noted:

- 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 substitute roles outside of their usual placement requirements.
- It is being reported that certain schools, particularly in the Dublin region, are finding the recruitment of substitute teachers challenging.
- It was agreed to explore the option of flexible placement arrangements for post-graduate primary ITE student teachers to enhance their availability to fill substitute vacancies.

3. Data to support teacher supply planning

(i) Technical Report

The following points were noted:

- The Technical Report is being updated to take account of recent policy developments, including revised student enrolments, PTR changes, the additional allocation of guidance posts at post primary level and increases in ITE programme places.
- It is intended to publish an updated report in 2021.

It was agreed that consultation with stakeholders will be necessary before publication.

(ii) Analysis of post primary subject teacher demand

It was noted that the post primary subject teacher model is being updated to take account of recent policy developments, including the PTR change, the additional allocation of guidance posts and increases in ITE places.

(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 and Statistics Section have met to consider this issue.
- It was agreed to propose minimal changes to the Teaching Council database to support teacher supply planning and to focus instead on reviewing the Department's internal processes and data capture, including the DTR returns.

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 next phase of the campaign is commencing to coincide with CAO and PME closing dates and will continue to end January 2021.
- The campaign is using social media, radio, national newspapers and student papers (on-line)
- The campaign will incorporate the promotion of diversity in the teaching professions (e.g. highlighting teachers from minority ethnic communities)

The following points were agreed:

- Campaign assets will be shared with members of the TSIG for information once they have been finalised.
- Stakeholders should be kept informed of the promotion campaign.

(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 commencement planned in January 2021.
- The Department is exploring how to ensure that the maximum number of schools engage with the portal.
- A workshop with ESBS, ETBs, IPPN and Teacher Supply Secretariat will to be scheduled for January 2021 to progress this issue.

Sub Seeker

The following points were noted:

- There has been a significant growth in *Sub Seeker* registered teachers, from 1,800 users in March 2020 to approx. 5,100 currently (3,500m primary, 1,600 post-primary teachers)
- IPPN have reported Issues with teachers keeping their availability status up-to-date and are exploring measures to address this.

(iii) Options for engagement with partners on teacher supply

The following points were noted:

- Teacher Supply will be included on the agenda of a meeting with the education partners early in 2021.
- Assets from the current phase of the Teaching Transforms campaign can be shared with the partners for that meeting.
- It is intended that a meeting with the unions on teacher supply will take place early in 2021.

It was agreed that it is important that ongoing engagement with stakeholders on teacher supply is maintained.

(iv) Teacher supply newsletter

It was noted that it is planned to publish the next edition of the newsletter in early 2021.

5. Higher Education

(i) ITE programme application numbers 2020

The following points were was noted:

- 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.
- The HEA is currently finalising programme level returns from the HEIs and the impact of this measure is not yet clear.

(ii) Post primary teacher upskilling programmes

Update on programmes already approved

The following points were noted:

- The Minister announced details of new upskilling programmes for post primary teachers in mathematics, physics and Spanish.
- Programmes are due to begin in January 2021
- There has been strong interest in the sector and application numbers and expressions of interest are in excess of available places.

Potential for additional upskilling programmes/ expansion of approved programmes in 2021

- The Group considered the potential for additional upskilling programmes in 2021, including the subject areas.

The following points were noted:

- Additional funding will be needed for 2021 for new programmes.
- The Higher Ed Coordination Group will consider this issue at its next meeting.

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

The following points were noted:

- The recommendations of the School Placement Working Group report are currently being considered.
- The potential of *Sub Seeker* to be adapted to support a school placement portal is being explored and the Teaching Council, the Department and the IPPN met recently to consider this issue.
- Some schools have raised concern in regard to school placements and the visit of supervisors in the context of the Covid-19 emergency.
- The Teaching Council and Teacher Education Policy (ITE and Professional Development) have issued an advice note to schools in this matter and a second advice note to include guidance on HEI supervisors visiting schools is due to issue shortly

It was agreed to give further consideration to the timing of the publication of the School Placement Working Group report.

(v) Céim (Standards for Initial Teacher Education)

It was noted that *Céim* has been launched and will be adopted by ITE providers with effect from September 2022.

(vi) Teaching Council registration: revised subject criteria

The following points were noted:

- The subject criteria for Computer Science and Politics & Society will take effect from January 2021 and for the remainder of curricular subjects from January 2023.
- All subjects now require 60 ECTS credits, which will support the development of 4-year, 2 subject undergraduate ITE programmes.
- It will be possible to register as a teacher of computer science and as a teacher of politics and society with effect from January 2021.

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 waiver from abatement for 50 days will be applicable from January 2021.
- It is intended to issue a circular to this effect early in the New Year
- DoE provided the necessary data to DPER to support a request for a complete waiver from abatement for teachers, in the context of Covid-19.
- DPER indicated that, should retired teachers become crucial to teacher supply, they will, on request, give an immediate response.

It was agreed to consider seeking a complete waiver, in the context of difficulties being experienced by some schools in recruiting substitute teachers, as reported by the sector.

(ii) 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:

- The Covid-19 emergency has led to additional challenges for the Teaching Council in registering teachers within normal timelines.
- For the period since the Covid-19 emergency began, applications for registration are being processed on average in less than 12 weeks.
- The Council is compiling data on the processing of registration applications which will be submitted to Teacher Education Policy (Teacher Supply).

(iii) Review of the refund of fees scheme: potential for the prioritisation of upskilling programmes.

The following points were noted:

- The Refund of Fees Steering Group reconvened and met for the first time recently.
- Consideration is being given to the inclusion of CPD leading to registration in a post primary subject as one of the priority categories for funding. Teacher union representatives on the Steering Group were broadly supportive of the proposal.
- It is intended to draft a circular on the refund of fees scheme in the New Year.

(iv) PDST resource for returning teachers

The following points were noted:

- “Teaching in Ireland”, the online “toolkit” developed by the PDST has been accessed by approximately 1,200 individuals since its launch

- Approximately 10% of these have completed the survey, the majority of whom are serving teachers.

It was agreed that the resource needs to be promoted to returning teachers or teachers considering returning.

7. Teacher Supply Action Plan

The following points were noted:

- The latest draft of the revised Teacher Supply Action Plan is being circulated to the various teacher supply working groups for observations and suggested amendments or additions
- It is intended that the Action Plan will be further updated to reflect feedback from the working groups and brought to the Implementation Group for its consideration
- It is intended to publish a revised action plan in as soon as possible in 2021.

The following points were agreed:

- The revised Action Plan should include progress to date as well as setting out the revised actions.
- Further consideration will be given to the timing of the publication of the revised Plan

8. AOB

It was agreed to schedule a briefing with the Minister on teacher supply early in the New Year.

9. Date of next meeting

It was noted that a schedule of dates for 2021 will be circulated to members