

Meeting of the Teacher Supply Steering Group

Via WebEx

25 May 2022 @ 2.00 pm

Minutes

In attendance:

Dalton Tattan, Asst Secretary General, Department of Education
Aoife Conduit, Asst Secretary General, Department of Education
Tomás O Ruairc, Asst Secretary General, Department of Education
Phil Fox, Acting Director, Teaching Council
Paul Thornton, ACCS (for Antoinette Nic Gearailt)
Anthony Finn, University of Glasgow
Lewis Purser, Director of Learning & Teaching and Academic Affairs, IUA
Declan Kennedy, School of Education, UCC (for Fiona Chambers)
Rory D'Arcy CPSMA (for Seamus Mulconry)

Also in attendance:

Chris Kelly PO, Department of Education
Steven Lucas, Statistician, Department of Education
Conor McCourt, APO, Department of Education

Apologies

Anne Looney, Executive Dean, Institute of Education, DCU
Harold Hislop, Chief Inspector, Department of Education
Antoinette Nic Gearailt, ACCS
Fiona Chambers, Head of the School of Education, UCC
Áine Doyle, Minister's Adviser
Seamus Mulconry, General Secretary, CPSMA

1. Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting of 16th December 2021 were agreed.

2. Covid-19 emergency: teacher supply measures

The following points were noted:

Operational measures

- A number of operational measures to support teacher supply, implemented in the context of the Covid-19 public health emergency, are due to be withdrawn for 2022/23. These include the suspension of the limits on substitute work applying to teachers on career break and job sharing teachers.
- The situation will be kept under review and measures can be reinstated at short notice if required.

Undergraduate student teachers

- The Teaching Council is currently processing applications for registration from third year undergraduate ITE students under Route 5 (Student Teachers). 4th year students on graduation will be able to register shortly under Route 1 (Primary) or Route 2 (Post Primary). The Council is currently engaging with approx. 1600 students who have indicated their wish to register under Route 5.
- The Council intends to register next year's third year undergraduate ITE students in the period leading to end December 2022.

Primary substitute teacher supply panels

- It is intended to review the operation of the supply panels in 2021/22 to inform panel arrangements in 2022/23.

Retired teachers

- Retired teachers who work 50 or less days in the 2022 calendar year will not have their pensions abated.
- The TSIG has agreed that the Department will not at this point seek an extension beyond the 50 day annual limit for the waiver of pension abatement. The waiver remains in place to end 2023.
- Very few retired teachers had their pensions abated in 2021.

3. Data to support teacher supply planning

(i) Post primary teacher demand and supply report

Survey of unmet demand for teachers in post primary schools

The Group considered the initial draft results of the survey of unmet demand for subject teachers in post primary schools, including the treatment in the survey results of Science teachers, guidance counsellors, the possible effect of the Covid-19 pandemic on unmet demand and the ongoing challenges for schools in recruiting teachers of mathematics.

The following points were noted:

- The survey issued online to all post primary schools in late October 2021 and was completed by approximately 90% of schools.
- The survey's results are broadly consistent with previous surveys undertaken by school management bodies.
- The recruitment of teachers of mathematics appears to be challenging despite the provision of programmes to upskill teachers in mathematics in recent years.
- Although guidance counselling is not a curricular subject, it is included in the survey results.
- Where the survey indicates that an "out of field" teacher is in a post it does not record which subject(s) the teacher is registered to teach.
- Data from the survey will be used in the post primary subject teacher demand and supply model being developed by Statistics Section.
- It is hoped to have projections of post primary teacher demand and supply at a subject level available for consultation in Q4 2022.

The following points were agreed:

- To amend the survey headings to reflect that where the survey indicate a vacancy is filled, it is filled by a registered teacher.
- To explore whether JC Science and LC science subjects (physics, chemistry and biology) should be treated together in the model.
- To explore the option of increasing student numbers on existing undergraduate ITE programmes in targeted subjects where shortages are identified.

4. Communications and promotion of the teaching profession

(i) Teaching Transforms campaign: latest phase

The following points were noted:

- The latest phase of the campaign coincided with CAO and PME closing dates (mid December 2021 to late January 2022).
- The campaign used TikTok and Instagram as well as radio and newspaper.
- The campaign focused on key post primary subject areas and featured teachers/ student teachers from diverse backgrounds.
- A link to the campaign assets had previously been shared with the group.
- CAO figures indicate:
 - Post primary teaching, a 10% increase in mentions and a 2% increase in first preferences.
 - Primary teaching, a 10% decrease in mentions and a 7% decrease in first preferences
- Planning is underway for the next phase of the campaign, to coincide with the CAO change of mind closing date (1 July 2022)

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

The following points were noted:

- The portal is fully developed and ready to launch as part of the *educationposts.ie* platform
- IPPN has finalised a Data Protection Impact Statement and the portal is fully data compliant.
- IPPN are meeting on 26th May with the primary management bodies to demonstrate the model. The Department will also be in attendance.
- A meeting with the post primary management bodies will also be scheduled
- It is intended to launch the portal following these engagements.

(iii) Engagement with guidance counsellors

The following points were noted:

- The Teaching Council and the Department met in March 2022 with the IGC, NCGE and AGA to consider how to cooperate to promote teaching as a career.
- Some potential channels of communication and opportunities for cooperation were identified.
- It was agreed that the Council, the Department and the guidance bodies will continue to meet on a biannual basis, beginning in September 2022

(iv) Engagement with stakeholders

The following points were noted:

National Consultative Forum

- The Communications Working Group decided to postpone the national consultative forum, originally scheduled for late May 2022, until later in the year, so that the projections of post primary teacher demand and supply at a subject level, currently being developed, can be included on the agenda.
- The Communications Working Group is considering the option of holding focus groups in the 2022/23 school year.

5. Higher Education

(i) Post primary teacher upskilling programmes

- Additional places were made available on the post primary teacher upskilling programmes for the second entry cohort in January 2022, as follows:
 - Physics 65 enrolments (22 in 2021)
 - Spanish 45 enrolments (35 in 2021)
 - Maths 200 enrolments (115 in 2021)
- An RFT for the evaluation of the upskilling programmes has been drafted and which it is intended to issue over the coming period.
- The HEA has agreed to issue a funding call for a programme to upskill teachers in Irish and the Department is engaging with DFHERIS in order to progress this.

(ii) Diversity in the teaching profession

Draft National Access Plan

- Teacher Education Policy (ITE and Professional Development) and Teacher Education Policy (Digital and Teacher Supply) recently met with DFHERIS re the development of the draft national access plan for higher education.
- The draft plan includes a wide range of priority groups.
- Work on finalising the NAP is at an advanced stage and DFHERIS intends to publish the new plan in the coming months.

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

The Group was updated by the Teaching Council on the work of its School Placement Working Group and considered school placement issues, including the participation of schools in the school placement system and whether their participation should be mandatory.

The following points were noted:

- The School Placement Working Group (SPWG) is finalising its report on the development of a student placement system. The SPWG has considered whether a centralised system is required, having regard to existing relationships between ITE providers and schools and the experience of centralised systems in other jurisdictions.
- The use of a noticeboard on *educationposts.ie* to support the matching of student teachers seeking placement with schools is being explored with IPPN.

- High quality school placements, supported by partnership between ITE providers and schools, are fundamental to ITE and ensuring that there is a sufficient number of such placements to match demand is essential. This was acknowledged from the outset by the Teacher Supply Steering Group but remains challenging.
- External factors appear to have encouraged more schools to provide school placements in recent years, including the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic and opportunities for student teachers to register with the Teaching Council
- It appears that many schools do not provide school placements although there is an absence of comprehensive data on school participation. The availability of such data is considered important to the understanding of the challenges of ensuring sufficient provision of high quality school placements.

(iv) Teaching Council review of the impact of the reconfigured ITE programmes

The following points were noted:

- There has been ongoing engagement between the Teaching Council and the Department regarding the review.
- An RFT is being finalised and will be considered by the Teaching Council's Education Committee in the near future.
- It is hoped to issue the RFT in Q3 2022

(iii) Department engagement with DFHERIS

It was noted that the Department recently met with DFHERIS to consider teacher supply and ITE issues of mutual interest. It is intended that such engagements will continue on a regular basis.

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

Item not taken

7. Irish medium schools

The following points were noted:

(i) New post primary Irish medium ITE programme

- The Working Group on Policy on Irish-medium Education outside of the Gaeltacht continues to meet regularly.
- A request for information for a new post primary postgraduate ITE programme through the medium of Irish was issued to the HEI sector before Christmas.
- The specification for an RFT for a new post primary postgraduate ITE programme is being developed. The aim of the new programme will be to increase the supply of subject teachers with the capacity to teach in an Irish medium setting

8. AOB

The Department extended its thanks to the education stakeholders in the Group (the HEIs, the school management bodies and the Teaching Council) each of which played a significant role in responding to teacher supply and other challenges during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The following points were noted:

- It was not possible to hold the last meeting of the TSSG as scheduled on 7th April 2022 due to an unforeseen technical problem and a note with updates on teacher supply issues had been issued to the Group pending today's meeting.
- It is intended that the TSSG will be chaired, from today's meeting onwards, by Dalton Tattan, Asst. Secretary General, who will keep the Secretary General informed of developments in this area.

9. Date of next meeting

8 September 2022

Teacher Supply Secretariat
June 2022