

# Meeting of the Teacher Supply Implementation Group

Via WebEx

4 February 2021 @ 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  
Mark Bohan, PO, External Staff Relations  
Gabriel Martin, APO, Teacher Allocations (for Paraic Joyce)  
Aisling Curley, PO, Pensions  
Clare Butler PO, Teacher Terms and Conditions  
Fiona O'Byrne, PO, Higher Education, D/FHERIS  
John McDermott, APO, Higher Education, D/FHERIS

### *Also in attendance:*

Conor McCourt, APO, Teacher Supply Secretariat

### *Apologies:*

Harold Hislop, Chief Inspector  
Brendan Doody, Assistant Chief Inspector  
Paraic Joyce, PO, School Governance

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

The minutes of the meeting of 16<sup>th</sup> December 2020 were agreed.

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

#### ***(i) Primary substitute teacher supply panels***

The following points were noted:

- It is intended that the supply panels will be used to support the reopening of special schools and special classes.
- The inclusion of the 22 special schools not currently in the supply panel scheme is being explored.

It was agreed that the effective utilisation of supply panel teachers, in the current circumstances where schools are closed and classes are being delivered remotely, needs to be considered.

### ***(ii) PME students and substitute vacancies***

The following points were noted:

- Given that schools are delivering classes on-line, the availability of student teachers to fill substitutable vacancies is less critical to the system currently.
- The most recent guidance note on school placement arrangements issued this week.
- The Teaching Council is engaging on an ongoing basis with the ITE providers regarding school placement arrangements.

### ***(iii) Job sharing teachers***

The following points were noted:

- Approximately 170 post primary teachers (excluding teachers in ETB schools) and 500 primary teachers have undertaken teaching hours outside their usual job-sharing pattern in the current school year, equivalent to over 5,500 teaching days.
- There are approximately 1,290 post primary teachers (excluding teachers in ETB schools) and 3,000 primary teachers job-sharing in the current school year.

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

### ***(i) Technical Report***

The following points were noted:

- The Technical Report will be updated to take account of revised primary enrolment and teacher allocation figures, once these are finalised.
- The timing of the publication of the updated report will require further consideration.
- The increased places on undergraduate ITE programmes in 2020/21 as part of the response to the Covid-19 emergency will have an effect on the supply of teachers.

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

It was noted that work is continuing on the development of a post primary subject teacher demand and supply model.

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

The following points were noted:

- A request has issued to the Teaching Council for the registration process to be amended such that a record of the teacher's employing school is made mandatory on first registration and updated annually by the teacher on renewal of registration.
- It is proposed that teachers who are not in employment on the date of registration/ renewal of registration will be prompted to update their records when they take up employment during the school year.
- It is intended that this data will support the matching of subjects which post primary teachers are registered to teach with the subjects they are deployed to teach in schools, as recorded in 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 most recent phase of the campaign, to coincide with the closing date for CAO applications (1 February 2021), has just ended.
- The campaign incorporated the promotion of diversity in the teaching professions (e.g. highlighting a teacher from a minority ethnic community)
- A selection of assets from the campaign was shared with the Group for information.

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

The following points were noted:

**Recruitment Portal:**

- The development of the recruitment portal is at an advanced stage. However necessary *Sub Seeker* updates have taken priority and the "go live" date for the portal has been delayed to March 2021.
- IPPN proposes to meet with the second level stakeholders later in February.
- A workshop with ESBS, ETBs, IPPN, Core and Teacher Supply Secretariat took place on 22 January 2021 to consider the *EducationPosts* and ESBS developments.

- It is intended to explore further with ESBS and IPPN how the portal and the ETB eRecruitment module can operate in an integrated fashion and to develop an agreed approach to have ETB teaching posts advertised on both platforms.

The Group agreed the importance of having one location for all teaching posts to be advertised, from the perspective of teachers looking for employment and for access to comprehensive data on teacher demand data.

### ***Turasabhaile***

It was agreed to engage with the post primary management bodies to request that *Turasabhaile* operates again in 2021.

### ***IPPN noticeboards***

The Group noted that IPPN has developed a supplementary support noticeboard where teachers and SNAs can indicate their availability to provide home support and a noticeboard for SNAs to indicate their availability for substitute work.

### ***Sub Seeker***

The following points were noted:

- There are currently over 5,400 teachers registered with *Sub Seeker*.
- New features are being developed, including:
  - Allowing schools to contact multiple teachers for one job.
  - Allowing schools to contact multiple teachers for multiple jobs.

### ***(iv) Options for engagement with partners on teacher supply***

The Group considered options for engagement with partners on teacher supply.

It was noted that it is intended to include teacher supply on the agenda of a meeting with the education partners later in 2021.

It was agreed to meet with the teacher unions to update them on teacher supply developments.

### ***(v) Teacher supply newsletter***

It was noted that the next edition of the newsletter is currently being drafted and it is intended that this is issued in Q1 2021.

## **5. Higher Education**

### ***(i) ITE programme application numbers 2020***

It was noted that comprehensive data on the take-up of places on ITE programmes in 2020/21 is being collected by the HEA and will be available later in the year.

It was agreed to contact the HEA for an indication of the take-up of the additional ITE undergraduate places put in place in response to the Covid-19 emergency.

### ***(ii) Post primary teacher upskilling programmes***

#### ***Update on programmes already approved***

The following points were noted:

- Three programmes commenced in January 2021 (UL maths, UCC Spanish, DCU physics).
- There was strong interest amongst teachers and application numbers were significantly in excess of available places.

It was agreed, given the very strong level of interest amongst teachers, to explore the option of increasing places on the three programmes for the next intake in 2022.

#### ***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.

It was noted that post primary management bodies have consistently reported difficulties in recruiting teachers of Irish in recent years.

It was agreed to ask the HEA to issue a call for a programme to upskill registered post primary teachers in Irish, with a targeted commencement date of September/ October 2021.

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

The following points were noted:

- 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 to consider this option.
- The Teaching Council and Teacher Ed Policy (ITE and Professional Development) met to progress this issue.

- It is intended to publish the School Placement Working Group report and a revised timeline for the implementation of the report's recommendations at end Q1/beginning Q2 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 is now in place and a circular to this effect issued on 29 January.
- Pensions Section are engaging with Payroll and IT regarding the management of the waiver on the retired teacher payroll.
- A request to DPER for an extension to the waiver in the current school year, if there was to be significant increase in demand for substitute teachers, would need to be made in the near future.

### ***(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:

- Data on the processing of applications for registration with the Teaching Council in Q4 2020 will be available shortly.
- Applications for registration are being processed on average in less than 12 weeks.
- It is intended that by June 2021, all applications for registration will be processed through the new database currently under development in the Teaching Council.
- The Teaching Council are available to engage with Teacher Ed Policy (ITE and Professional Development) and the NIPT in order to progress the professional orientation model.

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

The following points were noted:

- CPD leading to registration in a post primary subject has been included as one of the priority categories for funding in the draft refund of fees circular, which is currently being considered by stakeholders.
- It is hoped to publish the circular in Q1 2021.

### ***(iv) Teacher absences due to CPD***

The following points were noted:

- In the context of the Covid-19 emergency, the significant majority of CPD provided by the Department's support services and the education centres is being provided remotely and outside of classroom contact time
- It is intended to compare data on teacher absences during equivalent periods in the current and previous school years in order to quantify this.

The Group considered the potential for the future delivery of CPD remotely and outside of school time.

## ***7. Teacher Supply Action Plan***

The following points were noted:

- The draft Action Plan circulated for today's meeting has been amended to reflect feedback from the members of the various working groups and the TSIG.
- There is still scope for amendments to the plan, including to timelines, though at this stage only minor changes are anticipated.
- Careful consideration will be given to the timing of the publication of the revised Plan and to consultations around its launch.

## ***8. AOB***

### ***Teachers qualified outside of Ireland***

It was noted that, in the context of the challenges arising from the Covid-19 emergency, teachers who had qualified outside of Ireland but who had not completed the required period of induction in the country in which they had qualified were allowed to complete their induction in Ireland on an exceptional basis in 2020/21.

It was agreed to request the Council to put the same arrangements in place for the 2021/22 school year and to create awareness of this amongst student teachers, NQTs and schools at the earliest opportunity.

### ***Covid-19 emergency***

The Group noted the changes of practice (e.g. use by schools of recruitment portals, on-line interviewing) as well as the challenges to the system that have arisen during the Covid-19 emergency.

## ***9. Date of next meeting***

It was noted that a schedule of dates for 2021 has been circulated to Group members and that the date of the next meeting is 25 March 2021.

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**Teacher Supply Secretariat**  
**February 2021**