

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

**Via WebEx**

**25 March 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)  
Paraic Joyce, PO, School Governance  
Aisling Curley, PO, Pensions  
Clare Butler PO, Teacher Terms and Conditions  
Fiona O'Byrne, PO, Higher Education, D/FHERIS  
Brendan Doody, Assistant Chief Inspector

### *Also in attendance:*

Conor McCourt, APO, Teacher Supply Secretariat

### *Apologies:*

Padraig Maloney, PO, Teacher Payroll  
Mark Bohan, PO, External Staff Relations  
Harold Hislop, Chief Inspector  
John McDermott, APO, Higher Education, D/FHERIS  
Tim Conlon, HEA

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

The minutes of the meeting of 4 February 2021 were agreed.

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

#### ***(i) New demand pressures***

The Group considered new demand and supply challenges emerging in the context of the Covid-19 emergency and possible measures to address these.

It was noted that the Teaching Council is engaging with IPPN with regard to *Sub Seeker* and teachers registered under Route Three (Further Education).

The following points were noted:

- The Teaching Council will engage with the ITE providers to maximise the availability of PME students to undertake substitute work in the period to the end of the current school year.
- The Teaching Council will consider requesting teachers whose registrations are due to lapse to remain registered.
- The Teaching Council will explore the potential for a streamlined process for PME students seeking registration under Route 3 (Further Education).
- The Teaching Council will engage further with IPPN with regard to *Sub Seeker* and teachers registered under Route Three (Further Education).
- Schools need to be made aware that the five-day rule does not apply to teachers registered under Route 3 (Further Education).
- A note for the information of the Minister on new measures being undertaken to meet demand and supply challenges will be prepared.

The Group discussed the possible suspension of the “5-day rule” for the employment of unqualified persons on a temporary, emergency basis. The Department advised of its intention to explore the suspension of the “5-day rule” on a temporary basis and to ensure that all preparations are made should it be decided to proceed with this option in an emergency situation. The Teaching Council raised significant objections to the suspension of the “5-day rule” and was of the view that such a course of action should not be followed. It confirmed its willingness to follow through on the other actions noted above.

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

The following points were noted:

- Supply panel teachers are being deployed to fill short terms substitutable vacancies in excess of 90% of their available time.
- During school closures arising from the Covid-19 emergency, teachers on supply panels are expected to continue to contribute to teaching and learning
- The Department will be engaging with D/PER with regard to the operation of the panels in 2021/22.

The following points were agreed:

- The potential to increase the number of teachers on existing supply panels as a temporary measure in the context of the Covid-19 emergency will be explored.
- The use of supply panels for the redeployment of teachers will be considered.

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

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

The Group was updated on the updated Technical Report, including the use in the report of revised pupil projections and PTRs

The following points were noted:

- The updated Technical Report has been finalised and a draft sent to the Data WG for final observations.
- The Report now projects an undersupply of teachers at primary level from 2036.
- The Report will be circulated to the TSIG for final sign off

It was agreed that the Technical Report should be published in the near future.

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

It was noted that Statistics Section will now focus 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:

- The Department has given further consideration to categories of employment to be captured on the Teaching Council's registration database, including information on employment in places of education not recognised under the Education Act.
- The Department is engaging with the Teaching Council regarding the amendments to the Council's registration database to support the teacher demand/ supply model.

### **4. Communications and promotion of the teaching profession**

#### ***(i) Development of a recruitment portal for long term teaching vacancies***

The following points were noted:

- Teacher Supply Secretariat and the Teaching Council met with IPPN on 24 March in relation to the development of a portal for long term teaching vacancies.
- Development work has been completed and the portal is ready to go live.
- Meetings to update stakeholders and to address any concerns are being scheduled in advance of the commencement of the portal.

It was agreed that the portal needs to be in operation and available to schools for the recruitment of teachers over the coming months.

**(iii) Feedback from bilateral with the teacher unions**

The following points were noted:

- Teacher Supply Secretariat and ESR met with the teacher unions on 23 February to update them on teacher supply developments and to consider the draft revised Teacher Supply Action Plan.
- The teacher unions have provided written observations on the draft plan, including some positive feedback as well as issues of concern.
- Many Issues raised by the unions are outside the scope of the work on teacher supply and have been brought to the attention of the POs of the relevant line sections for follow up as appropriate.

**(iv) Teacher supply newsletter**

It was noted that the next edition of the newsletter is currently being drafted and it is intended that it will be issued after Easter.

**(i) National Consultative Forum**

The following points were noted:

- It is intended to hold a national consultative forum, most likely in late May 2021.
- Consideration is being given to the agenda for the forum, which may include latest teacher supply developments, the updated Technical Report and/ or the revised Teacher Supply Action Plan.

## **5. Higher Education**

**(i) CAO application numbers 2021**

The following points were noted:

- First preference applications through the CAO for post primary ITE undergraduate programmes have decreased by 8% and but total mentions have increased by 2%.
- First preference applications through the CAO for primary ITE undergraduate programmes have decreased by 1% but total mentions have increased by 5%.
- Initial feedback from the HEIs indicates an increase in post primary PME applications for 2021.
- Data on CAO ITE programmes does not include applications to general entry programmes during the course of which a student can choose to follow an ITE pathway in order to qualify as a teacher.

- CAO application data needs to be considered in the context of an overall increase in applicant numbers in 2021, including a high proportion of mature applicants and applicants from outside Ireland.

***(i) Post primary teacher upskilling programmes***

***Update on programmes already approved***

The following points were noted:

- The first tranche of funding for the upskilling programmes (half year 1 cost) has issued to the HEIs through the HEA.
- The Department has agreed to fund places on the programmes in 2021 as follows:
  - Professional Diploma for Teaching Physics: 22 places
  - Higher Diploma in Spanish for Teaching (Post-Primary): 35 places
  - Professional Diploma in Mathematics for Teaching: 115 places
- A Steering Group for the Upskilling Programmes will be established in the coming weeks.
- UCC is proposing to commence its application process for January 2022 entry shortly
- It is intended to increase places on the three programmes for the next intakes in 2022, subject to the capacity of the HEIs and to the availability of funding.

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

It was noted that the HEA has been requested to issue and manage a call to ITE providers for an upskilling programme for Irish.

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

The following points were noted:

- The School Placement Working Group Report and a revised timeline for the implementation of the report's recommendations were published on 19 March.
- Key recommendations have been prioritised for implementation, focusing initially on the development of a student placement system.

***School placement arrangements 2020/21***

The following points were noted:

- Arrangements for the current school year appear to be operating well in accordance with guidance issued last summer.
- It is intended to issue further guidance after Easter on arrangements for placement supervisors.

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

### ***(i) 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:

- Applications for registration are being processed currently by the Teaching Council within the stated timeline (12 weeks for teachers qualified outside Ireland).
- It is intended that future applications for registration will be processed through the new database currently being developed by the Teaching Council.

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

The following points were noted:

- Undertaking upskilling programmes leading to registration in an additional post primary subject is included as one of the priority categories for funding in the refund of fees circular, which was recently published
- The terms of the circular will apply for teachers undertaking programmes from September 2021. Claims for refund of fees are made after completing a programme or each year of a programme.

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

It was noted that Teacher Ed Policy (ITE and Professional Development) continues to ensure that, in the context of the Covid-19 emergency, the significant majority of CPD is provided by the support services and education centres remotely and outside of classroom contact time.

The Group considered the potential for the future delivery of CPD remotely and outside of school time. It was acknowledged that the use of full day or half day school closures reduces the demand for sub teachers.

TES proposes to meet with the relevant line sections (CAP, ESR and Teachers Terms and Conditions) to discuss the matter further.

### ***(iv) Retired teachers and substitute work***

The following points were noted:

- The numbers of retired teachers engaging in substitute work have decreased significantly in the current school year at both primary and post primary levels.
- The cost attributable to substitute teachers generally has decreased by approximately 20% in the current school year.

The following points were agreed:

- Pensions Section will engage with D/PER to seek an extension beyond 50 days of the waiver on abatement, as an emergency measure in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Consideration will be given to surveying retired teachers to determine reasons for the decrease in their taking up substitute posts.

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

The following points were noted:

- Changes to the data actions in the Teacher Supply Action Plan have been agreed by the Data WG.
- The observations of the teacher unions on the plan are currently being considered.
- The final version of the plan will be circulated to the TSIG.

It was agreed that the publication of the revised Plan should be in advance of the national consultative forum

### ***8. AOB***

The following points were noted:

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

- The Teaching Council, in the context of the challenges arising from the Covid-19 emergency, will, as in 2020/21, put in place arrangements in 2021/22 for teachers who qualify outside Ireland to complete their induction in Ireland on an exceptional basis.

#### ***Turasabhaile***

- *Turasabhaile*, the portal to match registered post primary teachers resident outside Ireland with teaching vacancies, will operate again 2021.

#### ***Future teacher supply challenges***

- New challenges for teacher supply are likely to arise in a post Covid-19 emergency scenario.

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

29<sup>th</sup> April 2021.

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**Teacher Supply Secretariat**  
**March 2021**