

Meeting of the Teacher Supply Implementation Group

Via WebEx

29 April 2021 @ 2.00 pm

Minutes

In attendance:

Seán Ó Foghlú, Secretary General (Chair)
Aoife Conduit, Assistant Secretary General
Tomás Ó Ruairc, Director, Teaching Council
Chris Kelly, PO, Teacher Education Policy (Teacher Supply)
Martin McLoughlin, PO, Teacher Education Policy (ITE)
Paraic Joyce, PO, School Governance
Clare Butler PO, Teacher Terms and Conditions
Brendan Doody, Assistant Chief Inspector
Caroline Galvin, APO, Pensions (for Aisling Curley)
Mark Bohan, PO, External Staff Relations
John McDermott, APO, Higher Education, D/FHERIS (for Fiona O'Byrne)
Steven Lucas, Statistics Section (for Deirdre Cullen)

Also in attendance:

Conor McCourt, APO, Teacher Supply Secretariat

Apologies:

Padraig Maloney, PO, Teacher Payroll
Harold Hislop, Chief Inspector
Tim Conlon, HEA
Deirdre Shanley, Assistant Secretary General
Fiona O'Byrne, PO, Higher Education, D/FHERIS
Aisling Curley, PO, Pensions
Deirdre Cullen, PO, Statistics

1. Minutes of previous meeting and matters arising:

The minutes of the meeting of 25 March 2021 were agreed.

2. Covid-19 emergency: teacher supply issues

(i) Recent measures taken by the Teaching Council

The following points were noted:

- The Teaching Council has engaged with the HEIs to maximise the availability of PME students to undertake substitute work in the period to the end of the current school year. HEIs are acting as liaison between the Council and PME students.
- The Council will also contact teachers whose registrations are due to lapse requesting them to remain registered.
- The Council has engaged with IPPN with regard to *Sub Seeker* and teachers registered under Route Three (Further Education).
- The number of teachers registering with *Sub Seeker* has increased significantly in recent weeks

(ii) 2021 registration arrangements for NQTs qualified outside Ireland

The following points were noted:

- The Teaching Council, in the context of the challenges arising from the Covid-19 emergency, will put in place arrangements in 2021/22 for teachers who qualify outside Ireland to complete their induction in Ireland, on an exceptional basis. Similar arrangements were made in 2020/21.
- It is intended that NQTs applying before 31 October 2021 can avail of these arrangements
- The Teaching Council estimates that it will incur an additional cost of €60k approximately implementing these arrangements.

(iii) Primary sub teacher supply panels

The following points were noted:

- The potential to expand the supply panels to include an additional 40 schools and the addition of one teacher to each panel is being explored.
- The Department is engaging with DPER with regard to the operation of the supply panels in 2021/22.
- Allocations Section intends to review the operation of the supply panels at the end of the current school year.

(iv) Retired teachers and substitute work

It was noted that D/PER has not agreed an extension beyond 50 days of the waiver on abatement, which was sought by the Department as an emergency measure in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic.

It was agreed to continue to engage with DPER on this issue.

(v) Other potential emergency measures to support teacher supply

Then following points were noted:

Potential suspension of the “5-day rule”

- The Department is considering the suspension of the “5-day rule” as an emergency measure.
- Preparatory work has been completed pending a final decision in the matter

Primary management bodies

- Primary management bodies have indicated significant challenges in the system (e.g. 60% of schools reporting significant difficulty in sourcing a sub teacher and 36% currently carrying a vacancy (1,219 schools surveyed)).
- The management bodies are seeking a number of emergency measures to support the supply of teachers, including the registration of final year undergraduate student teachers and, as a last resort, the suspension of the “5-day rule”
- A meeting with the primary management bodies is being scheduled to explore these proposals.

Teacher unions

- Engagement with the teacher unions will be required if it is decided to suspend the “5-day rule”.

Pregnant teachers

- The Department is waiting for further guidance on the attendance of pregnant teachers in the classroom. In the meantime these teachers are working remotely.

It was agreed that the Department and the Teaching Council will continue to engage on possible suspension of the “5-day rule”.

3. Data to support teacher supply planning

(i) Technical Report

The following points were noted:

- The updated Technical Report has been finalised and circulated to the TSIG for information.
- It is intended that the updated report will be a key agenda item at the next national consultative forum.

The Group noted with thanks the work undertaken by Statistics Section in preparing the updated technical report

(ii) Analysis of post primary subject teacher demand

It was noted that Statistics Section will proceed with the development of a post primary subject teacher demand and supply model when data from the 2020/21 DTR returns is received.

4. Communications and promotion of the teaching profession

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

The following points were noted:

- Development has been completed and the portal is ready to be launched
- A number of concerns have been raised by the primary management bodies (e.g. GDPR, potential amendments to Department recruitment circulars)
- Primary management bodies withdrew from a meeting scheduled recently on these issues.
- IPPN and Teacher Ed Policy (Teacher Supply) are coordinating responses to the management bodies and will then arrange to meet with them.
- A meeting with post primary management bodies has been scheduled

(ii) Teacher supply newsletter

The following points were noted:

- The latest teacher supply newsletter has been published on the *Teaching Transforms* website and circulated to education partners and relevant teacher supply groups.
- The newsletter provides updates on developments in the four policy areas and also features the Migrant Teacher Project in MIE
- Teacher Ed Policy (Teacher Supply) will engage with the Communications Unit to explore means of broadening the circulation of the newsletter to stakeholders

(iii) Turasabhaile

It was noted that *Turasabhaile*, the portal operated by the management bodies to match registered post primary teachers resident outside Ireland with teaching vacancies, has commenced operating for 2021.

(iv) National Consultative Forum

The following points were noted:

- Arrangements are being made for a national consultative forum at the end of May 2021.
- It is intended that the agenda for the forum will include updates on teacher supply actions (including from stakeholders as appropriate) and the updated Technical Report
- A pre-recorded speech from the Minister is being considered
- Teacher Supply Secretariat and Teaching Council will finalise arrangements shortly

The Group considered options for the management of feedback from forum participants and, given that it will be a virtual event, the possibility of broadening the range of attendees.

(v) Enhancement to Teaching Transforms website

The following points were noted:

- The *Teaching Transforms* landing page is being updated with new cover page with links to (i) upskilling programmes and (ii) assets created for the promotion campaign.
- It is anticipated that the update will be completed shortly

5. Higher Education

(i) Post primary teacher upskilling programmes

The following points were noted:

Establishment of Steering Group

- A Steering Group consisting of the members from the Teacher Supply Secretariat, the Inspectorate, the Teaching Council, TES and DFHERIS met for the first time recently.
- The Steering Group is overseeing the implementation of the upskilling programmes, the collection of data from the HEIs and the evaluation of the programmes

Expansion of programme places

- The three currently operating programmes were heavily oversubscribed and the Minister recently announced increased places on these programmes in 2022, subject to the capacity of the HEIs and available funding.
- Teacher Supply Secretariat will meet with each of the 3 lead HEIs in the coming weeks to explore their capacity to increase places.

New Irish upskilling programme

- The Minister recently announced the intention to issue a call for a programme to upskill teachers to teach Irish, to begin in the 2021/22 school year.
- The Department has requested the HEA to manage the funding call.

It was agreed to engage with the HEA regarding the request to manage the call.

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

The following points were noted:

- A project team is progressing the implementation of the recommendations of the School Placement Working Group Report.
- A working group is being established to oversee the development of a student placement system.

- Work in this area is being informed by school placement developments in other jurisdictions, including Wales.

School placement arrangements 2020/21

It was noted that further guidance issued after Easter on arrangements for placement supervisors to visit schools safely. There have been no issues raised in relation to this guidance since it issued.

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

The following points were noted:

- The Department and the Teaching Council have been engaging on the review and progress has been made in identifying key deliverables.
- A further meeting between the Department and the Council is scheduled shortly
- It is intended to seek the observations of the TSIG on the review proposal at a later date

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

It was noted that a schedule of meetings for the Policies and Arrangements Working Group for 2021 is being drawn up, having regard to the meeting dates of the TSIG and the TSSG

(i) Streamlining of registration processes for out of State applicants/ professional orientation model for schools to support out of state teachers.

It was noted that the Teaching Council will provide its next report on the processing of registrations for out of State applicants after the end of the next quarter

7. Teacher Supply Action Plan

The following points were noted:

- Teacher Supply Secretariat is waiting on confirmation/ observations from the HEA on higher education actions
- The final version of the revised action plan will be circulated to the TSIG

The following points were agreed

- The revised plan should be consistent with relevant actions in “Building for the Future”.
- The revised Action Plan will be submitted to the Minister for her consideration in the coming weeks.

8. AOB

None

9. Date of next meeting

24th June 2021.

Teacher Supply Secretariat
May 2021