

## Meeting of the Teacher Supply Implementation Group

Via WebEx

24 June 2021 @ 2.00 pm

### Minutes

#### *In attendance:*

Seán Ó Foghlú, Secretary General (Chair)  
Aoife Conduit, Assistant Secretary General  
Deirdre Shanley, Assistant Secretary General  
Harold Hislop, Chief Inspector  
Fiona O'Byrne, PO, Higher Education, D/FHERIS  
Tomás Ó Ruairc, Director, Teaching Council  
Chris Kelly, PO, Teacher Education Policy (Teacher Supply)  
Sinéad Middleton, APO, Teacher Education Policy (ITE) (for Martin McLoughlin)  
Niamh Mannion, APO, Payroll (for Sinéad Keenaghan)  
Ray Murphy APO, Payroll (for Sinéad Keenaghan)  
Paraic Joyce, PO, School Governance  
Majella O'Dea, APO, Teacher Terms and Conditions (for Clare Butler)  
Brendan Doody, Assistant Chief Inspector  
Mark Bohan, PO, External Staff Relations  
Steven Lucas, Statistics Section (for Deirdre Cullen)

#### *Also in attendance:*

Conor McCourt, APO, Teacher Supply Secretariat

#### ***Apologies:***

Martin McLoughlin, PO, Teacher Education Policy (ITE)  
Tim Conlon, HEA  
Aisling Curley, PO, Pensions  
Deirdre Cullen, PO, Statistics  
Clare Butler PO, Teacher Terms and Conditions  
Sinéad Keenaghan, PO, Payroll

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

The minutes of the meeting of 29 April were agreed.

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

##### ***(i) Recent measures taken by the Teaching Council***

*Campaign to register PME students*

*Communications with registered teachers*

The following points were noted:

- The Teaching Council had engaged with the HEIs to encourage PME students to register with the Council and make themselves available to undertake substitute work in the period to the end of the current school year.
- A significant number of PME students were already registered with the Council prior to this recent engagement.

- The Council has contacted all registered teachers, including those not actively teaching, asking them to make themselves available to undertake substitute work.

### ***(ii) Measures for 2021/22***

#### *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, has made regulations allowing teachers who qualify outside Ireland to complete their induction in Ireland, on a time bound, exceptional basis.
- The Council is engaging with HEIs in the UK to create awareness amongst NQTs of this arrangement.
- A small number of applications for induction under the amended process have already been received by the Council.

#### *Primary sub teacher supply panels*

The following points were noted:

- Teacher Allocations Section is reviewing the operation of the supply panels in 2020/21.
- The potential to expand the number of supply panels in 2021/22 as well as the addition of one teacher to each existing panel is being explored.

#### *Other potential measures*

The Group considered potential challenges to teacher supply in the context of the Covid-19 emergency and possible measures to address these, including:

- Suspending the limits that teachers on career break can teach.
- Allowing job sharing teachers to work on their week off
- Flexible school placement arrangements to enhance the availability of post primary student teachers to fill short term vacancies
- An awareness raising campaign by the Teaching Council to encourage PME students to register under route 3 (Further Ed)
- Continuing the campaign by the Council targeting registered teachers not currently employed to make themselves available for short term sub positions through *Sub Seeker*
- A campaign by the Council to encourage retired teachers to maintain registration and make themselves available for sub work through *Sub Seeker*.

The following points were noted:

- DPER has not agreed to allow the waiver on pension abatement to extend beyond 50 days in a calendar year.
- Pensions Section intends to appeal the DPer decision
- Given the challenges to teacher supply that may arise from the Covid-19 emergency in 21/22, all measures need to be explored fully, including the extending the waiver of pension abatement beyond 50 days.
- The scale of the challenges for teacher supply that may arise in the next school in the context of the Covid-19 emergency are not yet clear.
- A collaborative, strategic approach is key to meeting these challenges.

It was agreed that the range of measures considered by the Group will be implemented in the 2021/22 school year.

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

#### ***(i) Recent Data Working Group meeting***

The following points were noted:

- The Data WG met on 16 June and considered a number of potential additional areas for analysis, including:
  - Regional analysis of demand
  - Teacher demand and supply in special ed. settings
  - Teacher demand and supply in Irish medium settings
  - Potential for data on diversity amongst student teachers and registered teachers, including in regard to gender.
- It was decided that priority should be given to finalising the analysis of post primary subject teacher demand and regional analysis of teacher demand.
- It is intended that a survey of unmet demand in post primary schools will be undertaken early in the next school year, to support the overall determination of teacher demand at a post primary subject level.

#### **(ii) Technical Report**

It was noted that the updated Technical Report, *Developing a Teacher Demand and Supply Model for Ireland 2021-2038*, was published in May 2021.

#### **(iii) Analysis of post-primary subject teacher demand**

It was noted that work on the analysis of post-primary subject teacher demand is well advanced. However, given the lower than anticipated level of DTR returns for 2020/21, the Data WG Group has agreed to use data from the 2021/22 DTR returns in the analysis of teacher demand and also to conduct a survey of unmet demand in schools in the 2021/22 school year.

#### **(iv) Other potential areas for data analysis**

The Group was updated by Statistics Section on the challenges to further analysis in a number of the areas under consideration, including in relation to the lack of availability of certain key data.

It was agreed to explore how the required data might be obtained.

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

#### **(i) National Consultative Forum**

The following points were noted:

- There was strong stakeholder consensus welcoming the work that is being done in regard to teacher supply.
- There was an acknowledgement that challenges remain but that we are working from a strong position in terms of progress to date and stakeholder collaboration.
- 2 particular themes emerged at the forum::
  - Diversity in the teaching profession
  - Teacher supply challenges for Irish-medium education, particularly at post-primary
- To achieve diversity in the teaching workforce is not a matter solely for the teacher supply working groups and addressing it will likely require a broad approach and the need for cooperation of relevant sections of the Department, DFHERIS and the HEA.
- A range of actions to support the supply of teachers to Irish medium schools is already underway under the Policy on Gaeltacht Education.

The following points were agreed:

- To explore a joint approach between the Department, DFHERIS, the HEA and stakeholders towards achieving a diverse teaching profession.

- To explore a joint approach across relevant Department sections and stakeholders towards meeting the needs of Irish medium schools

***(ii) Update on teaching transforms campaign***

The following points were noted:

- The latest phase of campaign began last week leading up to the CAO change of mind date (1 July) using social media, radio and newspaper.
- Social media assets have been developed to encourage applications to post primary ITE programmes in specific subjects (STEM, Irish, modern foreign languages, computer science)

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

The following points were noted:

- IPPN has engaged external expertise in order to conduct a Data Protection Impact Analysis (DPIA)
- IPPN intends that the draft DPIA will be circulated to stakeholders in July for observations before finalisation
- A meeting was scheduled by the Department with Management Bodies but had to be postponed and will take place in the coming week to address areas of concern the management bodies have with regard to the long-term portal.

***Sub seeker portal***

The Group was updated on the operation of *Sub Seeker*.

The following points were noted:

- There are currently 6,655 teachers registered with Sub Seeker (4,544 primary, 2,324 post primary, with 1,050 active teachers across both sectors)
- On 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2021 there were 395 teachers available on Sub Seeker (including 99 PME students)

***(iv) Turasabhaile***

The Group was updated on the operation of *Turasabhaile*

The following points were noted

- The operation of *Turasabhaile* began at the end of March 2021
- To date over 200 teachers in key subject areas seeking a return to Ireland have registered.
- Schools are asked to only register vacant and close to full time positions on the *Turasabhaile* portal.
- ACCS reports that mathematics and Irish are the most challenging subjects in terms of teacher recruitment this year.

## **5. Higher Education**

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

The following points were noted:

- Presentations by the HEIs on the upskilling programmes at the recent national consultative forum were very positively received.
- An RFT is being prepared for an evaluation of the upskilling programmes
- The HEA has been requested to manage a funding call for an Irish upskilling programme to begin in 2021/22.

It was agreed that, given the challenging subject areas at post primary level, it is essential that the programme to upskill post primary teachers in Irish begins in 2021/22.

***(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. It is intended to hold the first meeting of this group shortly.
- Teaching Council and Department will be meeting HEIs on the operation of school placement Covid-19 guidelines and protocols, to inform planning for the year ahead.

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

It was noted that the Teaching Council and the Department are engaging on the review of the impact of the reconfigured ITE programmes on an ongoing basis.

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

***(i) Development of user-friendly teacher recruitment processes***

The following points were noted:

- Teacher Terms and Conditions Section is revising the information notes for the primary sector on the use of video technology in interviewing.
- Work on a post primary recruitment circular is ongoing.
- The development by the IPPN of a recruitment portal for long term vacancies should contribute significantly to enhanced user-friendly recruitment processes.

***(ii) Building Momentum Action Plan***

The Group was updated on the publication in June 2021 of the Action Plan linked to Building momentum, the New Public Service Agreement.

The following points were noted:

- A number of actions in the Teacher Supply Action Plan have been amended to ensure consistency with the Building Momentum Action Plan.
- Unions are required to cooperatively engage with the Building Momentum process.

***(iii) Review of Policies and Arrangements Working Group***

The following points were noted.

- ESR met recently with Teacher Supply Secretariat to review the operation of the Working Group.
- It has been decided to focus on priority items, in sequence on a thematic basis and the next step is to determine priority areas for consideration.
- Engagement with the teacher unions on a number of teacher supply actions will also take place in the context of the Building Momentum process.

**7. Teacher Supply Action Plan**

The Group considered options for the publication of the revised Teacher Supply Action Plan. It was noted that observations have been sought from the HEA on the higher education actions.

## **8. AOB**

### *Innovation in school placement practices*

The following points were noted.

- The Teaching Council has engaged an external party to undertake a review of innovative school placement practices developed by HEIs and schools during the Covid-19 emergency.
- The findings of the review will be useful to inform best practice in school placements.
- It is intended to launch a report of the review at the end of August 2021.

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

26<sup>th</sup> August 2021.

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Teacher Supply Secretariat  
June 2021