

Meeting of the Teacher Supply Implementation Group

Via WebEx

26 August 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)
Martin McLoughlin, PO, Teacher Education Policy (ITE)
Sinéad Keenaghan, PO, Payroll
Paraic Joyce, PO, School Governance
Brendan Doody, Assistant Chief Inspector
Mark Bohan, PO, External Staff Relations
Aisling Curley, PO, Pensions
Deirdre Cullen, PO, Statistics

Also in attendance:

Conor McCourt, APO, Teacher Supply Secretariat

Apologies:

Tim Conlon, HEA
Clare Butler, PO, Teacher Terms and Conditions

1. Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting of 24 June 2021 were agreed.

2. Covid-19 emergency: teacher supply measures

The following points were noted:

Teaching Council measures

- As in 2020/21, flexible school placement arrangements are being put in place to enhance the availability of post primary student teachers to fill short term vacancies.
- The Teaching Council will shortly be contacting all registered teachers not currently employed encouraging them to make themselves available for short term substitute positions through *Sub Seeker*.
- Approximately 53 NQTs qualified outside Ireland have applied to complete their induction in Ireland, under the new regulations made by the Council, and which apply on a time bound, exceptional basis. It is anticipated that the number of applicants will increase in the coming period.

Primary sub teacher supply panels

- An additional 16 primary sub teacher supply panels have been set up for 2021, most of which are in the Dublin area.
- There are now 131 panels covering 80% of schools (approximately 2,550 schools) and employing 376 teachers.
- It was decided not to increase the number of teachers on each panel.
- The operation of the panels will remain under review

Waiver on abatement of pensions:

- DPER has not agreed to allow the waiver on pension abatement in principle to be extended beyond 50 days in a calendar year.
- Pensions Section has appealed the DPER decision without success
- Abatement of pensions will apply from September 2021 to retired teachers with more than 50 days service
- DPER has agreed to consider a waiver of abatement on an individual, case-by-case basis.

It was agreed that Pensions Section will examine whether there is a regional aspect to the demand for retired teachers to fill short term vacancies and whether it is more predominant in certain subjects.

General position

- It is hoped that teacher supply pressures may be less in 2021/22 due to the high level of vaccination uptake, and the adoption of other Covid-19 alleviation measures.
- The situation remains uncertain and additional measures therefore will continue to be applied to support teacher supply.

3. Data to support teacher supply planning

(i) Survey of unmet demand in schools

The Group was updated on plans to conduct an online survey of unmet demand for subject teachers in post primary schools

The following points were noted:

- The survey is being developed by Statistics Section and the Teacher Supply Secretariat with the involvement of the post primary management bodies
- The survey is designed to capture data on posts/ subjects not filled, the use of out of field teachers and adjustments to timetables arising from teacher supply issues
- Survey results will be used by Statistics Section to inform projections of post primary subject teacher demand and supply
- Survey results will be shared with the management bodies, as appropriate

- The timing of the survey is being finalised, but it is intended that it will issue at some point in late September / October 2021.

It was agreed to consider the inclusion in the survey of questions relating to the use of retired teachers to fill vacancies.

(ii) Post primary teacher demand and supply report

The following points were noted:

- Work on the post primary teacher demand and supply report is well advanced
- The Data WG Group has agreed that data from the 2021/22 DTR returns should be used in the analysis of teacher demand.
- The report is being updated to reflect the latest projections in pupil enrolments, which assume a faster reduction in fertility rates than had been previously anticipated

4. Communications and promotion of the teaching profession

(i) Update on teaching transforms campaign

The following points were noted:

- The latest phase of the teaching transforms campaign ran in late June 2021 to coincide with the CAO change of mind process
- The next phase will coincide with the lead in to the CAO and PME application closing dates (December 2021/ January 2022)
- The *Teaching Transforms* campaign has been nominated for a Civil Service Excellence Award, highlighting innovative approaches and the development of in-house skills.

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

The following points were noted:

- A Data Protection Impact Statement (DPIA) is being developed by the IPPN which it is intended will be circulated in the coming weeks to all relevant partners for feedback or questions to inform a final version.
- Once all parties are happy with the DPIA, it is intended that the portal will go live.

Sub Seeker

- Numbers of teachers registering with Sub Seeker should be boosted in the coming weeks by targeted Teaching Council campaign to coincide with school reopening
- IPPN have created a number of new reports on Sub Seeker (including county breakdowns, route of Teaching Council registration)

(iii) Turasabhaile

The following points were noted:

- Turasabhaile 2021 focussed on recruiting teachers of priority subjects.

- Approximately 250 teachers registered with the portal. The majority (50% - 60%) were teachers of STEM subjects, with fewer language teachers (approximately 10 – 15 total number).
- Approximately 75 schools and a number of ETBs used Turasabhaile
- There was a significant number of late applications to register with the portal
- Approximately 100 teachers were employed directly from Turasabhaile, mainly maths and science. However, Turasabhaile are not informed of the all successful appointments, and, as 50 teachers remain on the site, it is assumed that another 100 teachers found employment.

The Group discussed the roles of the recruitment portal and Turasabhaile, noting that the development of the portal is a key strategic action under the action plan. It was agreed that Turasabhaile has played an important role in matching teachers of priority subjects with vacancies and that it should continue to operate in tandem with the recruitment portal, once this is operational.

5. Higher Education

(i) Post primary teacher upskilling programmes

The following points were noted:

New Irish upskilling programme

- The Department is working with the HEA on the development of a call for a new programme to upskill teachers in Irish to commence in 2022
- The timescale is challenging if the programme is to be in place for January 2022

Evaluation of programmes

- An RFT for the evaluation of the upskilling programmes has been drafted and is being finalised

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

The following points were noted:

- The working group established to oversee the development of a student placement system is due to meet next week.
- A report on the innovative school placement practices adopted by ITE providers/ schools during the Covid-19 emergency is being finalised by the Teaching Council
- Updated guidance has issued from the Department to schools and ITE providers regarding school placement arrangements in 2021/22, including allowing for the recognition of all sites of practice as appropriate.

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

The following points were noted:

- Once agreement between the Department and the Teaching Council has been reached, the review proposal will be brought to the Education Committee of the Council for sign off.
- It is proposed to conduct a market sounding exercise before proceeding to full procurement
- Department has included a request for funding for the research project in the 2022 Estimates. Proposal will need to be approved internally within the Department also.
- An information note on the review will be prepared for the next meeting of the TSIG.

6. Diversity in the teaching profession

The following points were noted:

- Diversity in the teaching profession emerged as an issue at the Teacher Supply Consultative Forum in May 2021
- As clear definition of diversity in this context will be required.
- The Department needs to take a strategic position on diversity and the coordinated efforts of various sections of the Department as well as DFHERIS, the HEA and relevant stakeholders (e.g. management bodies) will be required
- It is intended that diversity in the teaching workforce will be included on the agenda of a meeting on PATH 1 being chaired by DFHERIS next week.

7. Irish medium schools

The following points were noted:

- A discussion paper on the development of a policy for Irish-medium schools outside of the Gaeltacht has recently been approved by the management board and sign off from the Minister is awaited
- The Gaeltacht Unit are leading on this issue. The next step will be to establish an intradepartmental group, to include Teacher Ed Policy (ITE), Teacher Supply Secretariat and other relevant Department sections.

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

Update on new approach to the Policies and Arrangements WG.

The following points were noted.

- The Policies and Arrangements WG met recently and it has been decided to focus on three priority areas: CPD, the employment of primary teachers in post primary special education settings and EPV leave.
- These issues overlap with actions in the Building Momentum Action Plan and DPER will require regular progress reports on their implementation
- Two subgroups are being put together to progress these issues.
- The issue of teacher absences due to State examination employment will be considered at the next meeting of the Policies and Arrangements WG

9. Teacher Supply Action Plan

The following points were noted.

- The latest version of the Action Plan has been circulated to the TSIG for information purposes.
- The plan been updated to take account of corresponding actions in the Building Momentum Action Plan (policies and arrangements actions 20, 21, 22 and 24).
- This version will be circulated in the coming days to all teacher supply working groups for information and observations on timelines.

- It is intended to run the plan subsequently past the teacher unions for info purposes prior to its publication.

The Group considered the timing of publication of the plan, including the option of publishing the plan for the 2021/22 school year.

10. AOB

Engagement with Australian teaching regulators

It was noted that there is significant interest in Ireland's experience in addressing teacher supply challenges among Australian teaching regulators and that the Teaching Council is due to meet with a number of these regulators in the coming weeks.

11. Date of next meeting

21st October 2021.

**Teacher Supply Secretariat
September 2021**