

Meeting of the Teacher Supply Implementation Group

Via WebEx

2 December 2021 @ 2.00 pm

Minutes

In attendance:

Seán Ó Foghlú, Secretary General (Chair)
Deirdre Shanley, Assistant Secretary General
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)
Terry Reynolds, APO, Payroll
Gabriel Martin, APO, Teacher Allocations
Edel Harte, A/APO, Pensions (for Aisling Curley)
Deirdre Cullen, PO, Statistics
Mark Bohan, PO, External Staff Relations
Brendan Doody, Assistant Chief Inspector
Clare Butler, PO, Teacher Terms and Conditions

Also in attendance:

Phil Fox, Deputy Director, Teaching Council
Conor McCourt, APO, Teacher Supply Secretariat

Apologies:

Harold Hislop, Chief Inspector
Fiona O'Byrne, PO, Higher Education, D/FHERIS
Aisling Curley, PO, Pensions
Sinéad Keenaghan, PO, Payroll
Paraic Joyce, PO, School Governance/ Teacher Allocations

1. Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting of 21stOctober 2021 were agreed.

2. Covid-19 emergency and teacher supply

The Group was updated on the measures put in place to address teacher supply challenges in the context of the Covid-19 emergency, including:

- HEIs have introduced increased flexibility in ITE programme delivery in order to enhance the availability of 3rd and 4th year B Ed students for substitute work.

- Retired teachers returning to classrooms until the end of the current school term will not have their pension abated.
- Changes have been made to the career break and job sharing schemes to remove limits on substitute work.
- Postponement of CPD provided by the Department's teacher support services.
- Treoraí (formerly co-operating teachers) are available for substitute cover in certain circumstances.
- Post primary teachers can now work more than 22 hours per week, working extra hours to provide sub cover, up to a total of 35 additional hours (to end February 2022).
- NQTs who secure posts on supply panels may complete Droichead (Teaching Council measure).
- An additional 200 posts have been allocated to the primary substitute teacher supply panels in areas where significant challenges in sourcing substitution has continued.
- Qualified primary and post primary teachers on secondment to the Department's teacher education support services have been asked to make themselves available to provide substitute cover in schools.

The following points were noted:

- A number of communications (circulars and information notes) have issued to schools informing them of recent teacher supply measures.
- The Department continues to engage with the HEIs and the Teaching Council with regard to arrangements for 3rd and 4th year B Ed student teachers
- Teacher supply will remain a priority issue in January 2022 and the Department will continue to engage with stakeholders on this issue

The Group noted with appreciation the work that has been undertaken by the various Department sections and the Teaching Council in response to the current teacher supply challenges.

3. Data to support teacher supply planning

(i) Post primary teacher demand and supply report

Survey of unmet demand for teachers in post primary schools

The following points were noted:

- At this point in time, 465 post primary schools (64% of all PP schools)) have completed the unmet demand survey.
- Schools which have not yet made a return are now being contacted by telephone

(ii) Options for data from HEIs

Data sharing agreement with HEA

The following points were noted:

- The data sharing agreement with the HEA for the transfer of SRS data has been agreed and signed.
- It is expected that the first data file will be transferred to the Department in the near future.
- Data on certain post primary ITE programmes is generic in nature and does not identify the subject(s) being followed.
- Engagement with the HEIs will be necessary to ensure that data is recorded on the SRS in the detail required.

(iii) Potential for data from Sub Seeker

The following points were noted:

- The potential for data from Sub Seeker was discussed at the most recent Data WG meeting
- Teacher Supply Secretariat is contacting IPPN for a list of data items, for consideration by the working group
- The intention is to develop standardised reports from *Sub Seeker* which will inform analysis of sub teacher vacancies, including on a geographical basis.

(iv) Payroll data on teacher absences

The following points were noted:

- Payroll data is being used to analyse reasons for teacher absences and unfilled substitute teacher vacancies
- The OLCS does not record where sub vacancies are filled by teachers employed by the primary school supply panels or filled through the supervision and substitution scheme (at post primary level).
- Statistics Section, Payroll Section and Teacher Supply Secretariat are considering how this gap in the data can best be addressed.
- The Group noted the ongoing work and the importance to the model of improved SRS data and of addressing the gaps in data on substitutable vacancies.

(v) Priority post primary subjects

The Group considered an information note on priority post primary subjects, including the ongoing unmet demand survey and an estimate of places on ITE programmes/upskilling programmes in 2022.

4. Communications and promotion of the teaching profession

(i) Teaching Transforms campaign: next phase

The following points were noted:

- The media plan for promotional campaign to coincide with CAO and PME closing dates is currently being finalised.
- It is intended to have two streams in the campaign; one for the CAO and one for the PME.
- The campaign will run across a number of channels including online video, social media, radio and a partnership with LadBible (a social media publisher)
- The CAO campaign will feature on TikTok for the first time to engage with the target demographic.
- The PME campaign will highlight team teaching and collaboration within the teaching profession and will be promoted predominantly on Instagram.
- Diversity in the teaching profession will continue to be promoted as part of the campaign.

(ii) Plans for engagement with guidance counsellors

The following points were noted:

- The Teaching Council has had positive engagement with AHECS in regard to teaching as a career.
- The Council is planning to meet with the IGC and the NCGE in the near future

(iii) Thematic focus groups

It was noted that it is intended that a number of focus groups will be held in the spring of 2022, in advance of the National Consultative Forum, and possible topics are being considered.

It was agreed that the focus groups agendas should not be restricted to a single theme.

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

The following points were noted:

- IPPN is finalising a Data Protection Impact Statement and is engaging with an external GDPR expert in relation to certain specific issues.
- IPPN will engage with stakeholders once this process is complete.

5. Higher Education

(i) Post primary teacher upskilling programmes

The following points were noted:

- Up to approximately 170 additional places on the three existing programmes (maths, physics and Spanish) will be provided in 2022.
- Early indications from the HEIs are that not all places on the Spanish and physics programmes commencing in 2022 will be filled.
- The HEA have agreed to run a call for an Irish upskilling programme, to commence in 2022. Given the timescale, this programme is unlikely to commence before September 2022
- An RFT for an evaluation of the upskilling programmes is being finalised

The following points were agreed:

- Where not all places on a programme due to commence in 2022 are filled, consideration will be given to increasing the number of places on alternative programmes.
- To explore the potential for a call for upskilling programmes in additional subjects.

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

The following points were noted:

- Consideration is being given to arrangements for primary student teacher placements in January 2022 in order to support the supply of substitute teachers.
- The working group to oversee the development of a student placement system has been established.
- It is intended that the Treoraithe Professional Learning Programme Working Group will have its initial meeting in January 2022.
- Not all HEIs may be fully aware of the ongoing work on school placement.

(iii) Diversity in the teaching profession

The following points were noted:

Draft Higher Education National Access Plan (NAP)

- DFHERIS and HEA are currently reviewing observations received from the NAP Steering Group.
- It is hoped to have a third draft of the NAP ready shortly, at which point it is intended that it will be shared with the Department of Education.

The following points were agreed:

- To engage at a senior level with DFHERIS in regard to how diversity is addressed in the new NAP.
- To explore how access to teaching posts for graduates of the Migrant Teacher Project Bridging Programme in MIE can be supported.

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

The following points were noted:

- Further consideration has been given as to which cohorts of ITE graduates to include in the review and it has been agreed that the 2014 graduate cohort will be included.
- It is envisaged that an RFT will issue for the review and a market sounding exercise is currently underway to inform the RFT process. The closing date for this exercise is 10 December 2021.

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

(i) Update from meeting of the Policies and Arrangements Working Group, 1 December 2021.

The following points were noted:

- The Policies and Arrangements Working Group met on 1 December 2021 to consider the draft ToRs for the working groups on CPD/ EPV leave and the employment of primary teachers in post primary special education settings.
- It is intended that the working groups will meet in the near future.
- The areas under consideration by the working groups are aligned with actions in the Building Momentum Action Plan.

6. Irish medium schools

(i) Development of a policy for Irish medium education outside the Gaeltacht

The following points were noted:

- The Working Group on Policy on Irish-medium education outside of Gaeltacht areas has been meeting regularly
- A request for information for a post primary postgraduate ITE programme through the medium of Irish was issued to the HEI sector. Four HEIs responded
- It is intended to issue an RFT in 2022 for the provision of the ITE programme, to commence in 2023.

7. Teacher Supply Action Plan

Agenda item not taken.

8. AOB

9. Date of next meeting

To be confirmed

**Teacher Supply Secretariat
December 2021**