

Meeting of the Teacher Supply Steering Group

Via WebEx

16 December 2021 @ 2.00 pm

Minutes

In attendance:

Seán Ó Foghlú, Secretary General, Department of Education
Deirdre Shanley, Asst Secretary General, Department of Education (Chairperson)
Aoife Conduit, Asst Secretary General, Department of Education
Harold Hislop, Chief Inspector, Department of Education
Tomás Ó Ruairc, Director, Teaching Council
Antoinette Nic Gearailt, ACCS
Anthony Finn, University of Glasgow
Declan Kennedy, School of Education, UCC (for Fiona Chambers)
Anne Looney, Executive Dean, Institute of Education, DCU
Seamus Mulconry, General Secretary, CPSMA
Chris Kelly, PO, Department of Education

Also in attendance:

Conor McCourt, APO, Department of Education

Apologies

Fiona Chambers, Head of the School of Education, UCC
Áine Doyle, Minister's Adviser
Fiona O'Byrne, PO, DFHERIS
Lewis Purser, Director of Learning & Teaching and Academic Affairs, IUA

1. Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting of 7 September 2021 were agreed.

2. Covid-19 emergency: teacher supply measures

The Group considered an information note on teacher supply measures recently introduced in the context of the Covid-19 public health emergency, including: an additional allocation of posts to the primary sub teacher supply panels; measures to support the availability of student teachers for substitute cover; temporary emergency substitution arrangements for post primary teachers; postponement of CPD; allowing post primary teachers work more than 22 hours per week up to a total of 35 additional hours (to end February).

The following points were noted:

- The Minister had positive direct engagement with the ITE providers on the recent Covid-19 teacher supply measures.
- In the context of the Covid-19 emergency, the Department will continue to focus on measures to support teacher supply from January 2022 onwards.

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 Group considered the online survey of unmet demand for subject teachers in post primary schools currently underway and the challenges of interpreting the data (e.g. in relation to multiple subject and SET posts).

The following points were noted:

- The survey issued to all post primary schools in late October 2021
- 618 post primary schools (85% of all PP schools) have completed the survey to date.
- It is important that as many schools as possible respond to the survey and schools which have not yet made a return are being contacted by telephone.
- Survey data will be used in the post primary subject teacher demand and supply model being developed by Statistics Section
- Early indications confirm that subjects of shortage include maths, Irish and home economics, and also challenges with guidance counsellor and SET recruitment.
- It is intended to have an initial analysis of the survey data for the next meeting of the TSSG.

New ITE graduates

The Group noted the potential for future ITE graduates to choose to work in other jurisdictions and that it would be useful for feedback from ITE providers on this issue.

It was agreed to explore options for engagement with student teachers with regard to their employment intentions post-graduation, including the potential use of focus groups.

(i) 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 student record system (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.

- SRS data on certain post primary ITE programmes is generic in nature and does not necessarily identify the subject(s) being followed.
- Engagement with the HEIs will be necessary to ensure that data is in future recorded on the SRS in the detail required.

4. Communications and promotion of the teaching profession

(i) Latest phase of Teaching Transforms campaign

The following points were noted:

- The latest phase of the Teaching Transforms campaign is due to commence shortly.
- There are two distinct strands to the campaign; one focussing on CAO applicants and one targeting potential PME students.
- The campaign will run across a number of channels including online video, social media, radio (traditional and digital) and a new partnership with LadBible.
- 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 will continue to be promoted as part of the campaign; campaign assets will feature students from diverse backgrounds, including students of African heritage and from a Muslim background.

(ii) 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.
- Engagement with primary and post primary stakeholders is planned once this process is complete.
- It is essential that the portal is operational for the next cycle of teacher recruitment.

(iii) 2022 focus groups plans

The following points were noted:

- 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.
- The TSIG has agreed that the groups should focus on thematic rather than geographic issues and that focus groups should not be restricted to a single theme.
- The Teaching Council will engage with the Department early in 2022 to consider arrangements for the focus groups.

5. Higher Education

(i) Post primary teacher upskilling programmes

The following points were noted:

- Up to approximately 170 additional places on the three existing upskilling programmes (maths, physics and Spanish) are being provided in the 2022 intake.
- Early indications from the HEIs are that not all places on the Spanish or physics programmes will be filled. Acceptance figures will be confirmed shortly.
- Current figures (offers made): maths 200 (full take up of available places, an increase of 85 on the 2021 intake), Spanish 46 (an increase of 11 on the 2021 intake), physics 70 (an increase of 48 on the 2021 intake).
- The TSIG at its most recent meeting agreed that:
 - 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.
- The HEA has 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.

(ii) National Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education

The following points were noted:

- A widespread consultation process was carried out to inform the development by DFHERIS of a new national access plan.
- Consultations included: a public consultation process; consultation with students; an NAP forum; one-to-one stakeholder meetings around the specific target groups to be supported in the next NAP.
- It is hoped that a draft of the new NAP will be completed by end December and shared with the Department for observations early in the New Year.

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

The following points were noted:

- The working group to oversee the development of a student placement system has met on a number of occasions and work is well advanced.
- Membership of the Treoraithe Professional Learning Programme Working Group is being finalised and it is intended that this Group will have an initial meeting in January 2022.
- Details of the ongoing work on school placement will be communicated to all HEIs to ensure that they are aware of developments in this area.

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

The following points were noted:

- Following further consideration, it has been agreed to include the 2014 graduate cohort in the review.
- A market sounding exercise to inform an RFT process recently concluded.
- It is intended that the RFT will issue early in the New Year.

6. 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 WG has decided to focus on two priority areas: CPD/ EPV leave and the employment of primary teachers in post primary special education settings.
- These issues are aligned with actions in the Building Momentum Action Plan.
- The terms of reference for 2 subgroups to consider these priority areas have been drawn up and were considered by the Working Group at its last meeting.
- Work underway to review arrangements for the Department's teacher support services will be relevant to the work of the subgroup on CPD/ EPV leave.
- The HEIs play an important role in the provision of CPD for teachers outside of class time.

7. Irish medium schools

(i) New post primary IM ITE programme

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.
- It is intended to issue an RFT in 2022 for the provision of the ITE programme, to commence in September 2023.

8. AOB

(i) Proposal to remove Action 17 (Funding for capital grants to support teacher supply to be made available to HEIs via the HEA for 2021) from the draft Teacher Supply Action Plan

The following points were noted.

- A devolved grant is now available to HEIs for minor capital expenditure, including to support teacher supply (e.g. infrastructural improvement works).
- The devolved capital grant was not in place when the TS Action Plan was published in 2018 and the draft Action Plan contains an action regarding funding for capital expenditure to support teacher supply.
- In that context, the Teacher Supply Higher Ed Coordination Group is proposing that action 27 is omitted from the draft revised Teacher Supply Action Plan, given the development of the new funding stream under the devolved capital grant.

- The proposed amendment to the draft Action Plan has been noted by the TSIG.

The Group agreed to the removal of Action 17 from the draft Teacher Supply Action Plan

(ii) Responses to the Covid-19 pandemic

The following points were noted.

- The structures put in place in recent years to address teacher supply issue have been key to addressing teacher supply challenges arising from the Covid-19 pandemic.
- The education stakeholders have had a major role in responding to the challenges arising from the pandemic.

9. Date of next meeting

To be confirmed.

**Teacher Supply Secretariat
December 2021**