

Meeting of the Teacher Supply Implementation Group

2nd February 2023 @ 3.30 pm

Via WebEx

Minutes

In attendance:

Bernie McNally, Secretary General (Chair)
Dalton Tattan, Assistant Secretary General
Tomás Ó Ruairc, Assistant Secretary General
Yvonne Keating, Chief Inspector
Paraic Joyce, PO, School Governance/ Teacher Allocations
Jill Fannin, PO, Teacher Education Policy (ITE and Professional Development)
Mark Bohan, PO, External Staff Relations
Lynn Ramsey, Director, Teaching Council
Phil Fox, Deputy Director, Teaching Council
Sinéad Keenaghan, PO, Payroll
Séamus Keating, PO, Teacher Education Policy (Teacher Supply)
James Walsh, PO, Teacher/SNA Terms & Conditions
Caroline Gavin, APO, Pensions (for Aisling Curley)
Clíodhna O'Neill, PO, Communications Section

Also in attendance:

Conor McCourt, APO, Teacher Education Policy (Teacher Supply)
John Egan, HEO, Teacher Education Policy (Teacher Supply)
Damien O'Neill, APO, Teacher Education Policy (Teacher Supply)
Oliver Brennan, APO, Teacher/SNA Terms & Conditions

Apologies:

Deirdre Naughton, PO, Payroll
Deirdre Cullen, PO, Statistics
Deirdre Shanley, Assistant Secretary General
Martin McLoughlin, PO, Special Education
Aoife Conduit, Assistant Secretary General
Aisling Curley, PO, Pensions

1. Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting of 19th January 2023 were agreed.

2. Priority teacher supply actions

(i) Policies and arrangements for schools and teachers that impact on teacher supply

Release of teachers seconded to the teacher support services

It was noted that demand in the first week of implementation for seconded teachers to fill substitute posts through *Sub Seeker* was low.

It was agreed to keep the arrangement under review and to analyse the uptake on a geographical basis.

Minimise CPD to reduce substitute demand and support schools

It was noted that some essential CPD is proceeding

It was agreed to keep the arrangement under review.

Develop principles, and then a trial, for hybrid/remote teaching

The Group considered options for a pilot of the teacher sharing scheme, including the timing of the scheme and the number of schools that might take part.

The following points were noted:

- The Department has met with the management bodies on several occasions in recent weeks to discuss the implementation of teacher sharing (Circular 15/2019) on a pilot basis as well as options for hybrid/ remote teaching. A further meeting with the management bodies is scheduled for next week.
- It is intended to have a pilot in place for the beginning of the 2023/24 a school year

Increase additional teaching hours that can be undertaken by a post-primary teacher.

The following points were noted:

- Schools and teachers were informed last week of the increase in the number of additional hours a teacher may teach from 20 hours to 35 hours in each of the remaining terms of the current school year.
- Data on uptake of the scheme in the period to Christmas 2022 will be made available.

Explore the option to pay retired teachers at a higher point on the pay scale.

It was agreed that Pensions Section and ESR will liaise to progress this issue.

Allow NQTs qualified abroad to undertake induction in Ireland.

The following points were noted:

- The Teaching Council will accept applications from newly qualified teachers who have qualified outside of Ireland but who have not completed the statutory period of induction in the country in which they qualified.
- Teachers can apply in the period from 22 February 2023 to 1 February 2024.
- It is estimated that up to 250 applications could be received and the Teaching Council will monitor application numbers.
- The Council are creating videos and FAQs to assist teachers applying for registration under these arrangements.
- The Teaching Council will work with the Department's Communications Section to create awareness of this new measure amongst student teachers abroad.

The Group thanked the Teaching Council for their work on this measure.

Issue teacher allocations as early as possible in 2023.

The following points were noted:

- Primary and post-primary teacher allocations 2023/2024 issued in January, which is significantly earlier than last year.
- Reduced class sizes at primary level will lead to approximately 250 additional posts.

(ii) Data to support teacher supply planning

Update on data required for inclusion in data dashboard

Produce regular data dashboard to supplement teacher supply projection model

A draft data dashboard was circulated to the Group for consideration. The following points were noted:

- The draft dashboard includes key statistics on teaching posts filled, teacher absences and substitute cover
- A reliable data dashboard should allow the Department identify substitution and leave trends, and provide for a geographical overview of teacher demand and supply.
- It is intended that the dashboard will be updated regularly, the frequency of which will be given further consideration by the Data WG

Group members were invited to provide observations on the dashboard.

(iii) Higher Education

***Increase availability of undergraduate and PME ITE students through engagement with the HEIs.
Provide for greater flexibility on the deployment of cooperating teachers.***

The following points were noted:

- Following engagement with the Minister, ITE providers have adopted flexible approaches in the delivery of ITE programmes to support the availability of student teachers to substitute
- The Department and the Teaching Council are scheduled to meet to consider further flexibilities with regard to the core role that cooperating teachers play in supporting student teachers and ensuring high quality placements.

The Group acknowledged the cooperation of the HEIs in adopting flexible approaches to support the availability of student teachers.

(iv) Communications and promotion of the teaching profession

Engage with retired teachers to identify motivations for / obstacles to returning to the classroom and key messages for a communications campaign

Update on communications campaign to clarify abatement rules and encourage retirees to return to teaching

The following points were noted:

- Communications Section has issued information notes to schools and principals clarifying abatement rules and encouraging retired teachers to return to teaching. Updated information is also available on gov.ie
- An information note is being finalised for inclusion with the payslips for retired teachers due to issue in early March.
- The development of new communications channels with retired teachers (e.g. via retired teacher associations) and assets (eg posters, retirement packs) will be explored

Explore the communications requirements for priority actions with owners and develop necessary items and actions.

It was noted that Communications Section will continue to support the implementation of the various teacher supply actions as required.

3. Revised Teacher Supply Action Plan

It was noted that a revised Teacher Supply Action Plan, will be circulated to the Group for observations in advance of the next meeting of the TSIG.

It was agreed to use colour coding to clarify the priority actions and the status of each action.

4. Department response to the Ukrainian crisis

The following points were noted:

- Although very few additional mainstream posts have been allocated in respect of Ukrainian pupil enrolments, more than 900 additional EAL posts and 400 SEN posts have been allocated.
- The rate of Ukrainian pupil enrolments has decreased slightly in recent months
- Projecting the future enrolments of Ukrainian pupils and the required provision is challenging.
- 97 Ukrainian teachers have been admitted to date to the Teaching Council register to date.

5. AOB

The Group considered the difficulties currently being faced by schools in recruiting substitute teachers. It was agreed that the Inspectorate would, as a short term measure, collect information on the level of challenges currently facing schools as part of the inspection process.

An information note is being prepared for the Minister to update her on the range of teacher supply measures being implemented in the current school year.

6. Date of next meeting

9th March 2023 @ 3.30pm