

Meeting of the Teacher Supply Implementation Group

01 June 2023 @ 2.00 pm

Via Teams

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
Mark Bohan, PO, External Staff Relations
Lynn Ramsey Director, Teaching Council
Sinéad Keenaghan, PO, Payroll
Séamus Keating, PO, Teacher Education Policy (Teacher Supply)
James Walsh, PO, Teacher/SNA Terms & Conditions
Edel Harte APO, Pensions
Clíodhna O'Neill, PO, Communications Section
Paul Alexander, PO, Statistics
Clare Connolly, APO, Teacher Education Policy (Teaching Council)
Sinéad Middleton, APO, Teacher Education Policy (ITE and Professional Development)
Leona DeKhors, APO, Curriculum and Assessment Policy

Also in attendance:

John Egan, HEO, Teacher Education Policy (Teacher Supply)

Apologies:

Deirdre Shanley, Assistant Secretary General
Aoife Conduit, Assistant Secretary General
Jill Fannin, PO, Teacher Education Policy (ITE and Professional Development)
Caroline Galvin, PO, Pensions
Noreen Finnegan, PO Teacher Education Policy (Teaching Council)

1. Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting of 09 March 2023 were agreed.

2. Updated Draft Teacher Supply Action Plan

The Secretary General again thanked the Group for their work to date and reiterated the need to continue this work and prioritise the tasks that are assigned to their sections.

It was noted that an updated version of the Action Plan was circulated to the Group based on updates from relevant sections. It was agreed that Teacher Supply will hold a cycle of meetings (approximately every 4 weeks) with all the relevant sections starting in the coming weeks in order to ensure that the Action Plan is updated on a regular cyclical basis and that as much progress as possible is being achieved.

3. Update on specific actions:

Research into the motivations of retired teachers

The Group was informed by Communications Section that a research company has been appointed to work on a qualitative research project with retired teachers to get a better understanding of motivations for retired teachers returning to teach as substitutes. The research company is currently working with the Retired Teachers Association of Ireland (RTAI) in identifying potential research candidates.

It was agreed that the Teacher Supply Action Plan will need to be updated should tasks arise from this project.

Teacher sharing scheme pilot

The pilot scheme has been launched with an information note to be issued to the management bodies. The Department will engage with management bodies to promote the pilot. Some schools have indicated an interest in taking part. The experiences of participant schools will be monitored to establish how to expand this pilot.

Enhancements to Turas Abhaile

The Group was informed that the Department has provided funding to the ACCS for the expansion of *Turas Abhaile*. This funding will go towards recruitment and marketing initiatives targeted at Irish post primary teachers abroad. The ACCS will publicise this campaign.

Review of primary teacher supply panels

Teacher Allocations are undertaking a review of the efficiency levels of all panels at the end of the school year. If efficiency levels fall or are too low, adjustment will be made to the size of the relevant panels for the 2023/24 school year.

Upskilling programmes – Irish and other subjects

It was noted that an RFT for the provision of an upskilling programme in Irish for post-primary teachers will be published in the coming days on *eTenders*. The contribution of the National Council for Curriculum Assessment (NCCA), the Inspectorate and the Education Procurement Service (EPS) in drafting the RFT was acknowledged by the Group. It is intended that the programme will be in place in 2024. The Group was also informed that upskilling courses in other subjects are being considered.

Production of data dashboard & Research on Teaching Council register

Work is still ongoing on the creation of a data dashboard and it is planned that it will be available within a reasonable time frame.

It is also intended to conduct a “signs of life” analysis of registered teachers, in cooperation with the CSO.

The Secretary General reiterated the importance of the production of these data streams for the Department.

Development of a recruitment portal for long term teacher vacancies

The Group was informed that officials from the Department met the Irish Primary Principals’ Network (IPPN) this week and it is expected that the portal will be launched in late June. The enhanced portal will allow teachers, including those resident abroad, to apply for teaching positions and facilitate schools to administer the recruitment process.

An information note for schools will be issued by the Department in advance of the portal going live.

4. Other potential actions:

Survey of "unmet demand" in post primary schools

It was noted that Statistics Section intend to carry out another survey of “unmet demand” in late 2023.

Consideration of FET route to ITE

The issue of potentially increasing alternative routes to ITE is being considered, and there is ongoing engagement with D/FHERIS on this issue.

Review the role of various support roles (HSCL, EAL)

It was noted that given the complexity involved in any review of various support roles, outcomes would not be expected in the short or medium term.

Consideration of PME incentives and PMS subsidisation

It was noted that stakeholders have raised the issue of incentivising students to take up PMEs and also subsidising PME cost. It was agreed that further discussion is required on this between relevant sections of the Department.

It was noted also that the Department is engaging with the ITE providers to support the availability of student teachers, including PME students, to take up substitute positions.

Consideration of non-statutory leave arrangements

The Group discussed the issue of some non-statutory leave arrangements for teachers. It was agreed that further discussion was needed on this.

Implementation of 2022/23 actions in 2023/24:

- Suspension of restrictions applying to teachers on career break and job sharing teachers
- Additional hours for post primary teachers

It was agreed that decisions on these measures for the school year 2023/24 were needed for schools and stakeholders, that further discussion was needed and a decision made in advance of the next meeting of this group.

5. Communications and promotion of the teaching profession

Teaching Transforms - Plans for the next phase of Teaching Transforms campaign

A communication campaign for the CAO change of mind deadline of July 1 has begun. It is expected that this campaign will peak in mid-June during the latter stages of the Leaving Cert exams.

Plans for regional forums and national consultative forum

It was noted that it is intended to organise regional and national consultative forums towards the end of 2023.

6. Participant reflections on the Solutions Generation Workshop

It was agreed that the recent Solutions Generation Workshop held in Athlone was seen as a positive collaborative discussion by those who attended. It was also agreed that any actions concerning teacher supply arising from this Workshop should be considered for inclusion in the Teacher Supply Action Plan.

7. Department response to the Ukrainian crisis

The Group considered the demand for additional teaching posts in response to the enrolment of Ukrainian students.

It was noted that approximately 1,000 additional EAL posts (primary and post primary) have been created in 2022/23, the majority of which are attributable to the enrolment of Ukrainian students.

The position for 2023/24 is not yet clear.

8. AOB

It was agreed that it was critical to make decisions regarding teacher supply measures for the school year 2023/24 as early as possible.

The Secretary General again reiterated the importance of all activity to enhance teacher supply and emphasised the urgent nature of this work.

9. Date of next meeting

29 June at 3pm

Teacher Education Policy (Teacher Supply)
June 2023