

Minutes of the meeting of the Teacher Supply Steering Group

**Venue: Department of Education & Skills, Marlborough St
10 September 2018 @ 2.00 pm**

In attendance:

- Richard Bruton TD, Minister for Education and Skills
- Seán Ó Foghlú, Secretary General, DES (Chairperson)
- William Beausang, Asst. Secretary General, DES
- Ned Costello, Asst. Secretary General, DES
- Deirdre McDonnell, Asst. Secretary General, DES
- Jenny McCormack, Parliamentary Advisor (for Patrick Cluskey, Minister's Advisor)
- Tomás Ó Ruairc, Director, Teaching Council (*via video link*)
- Aidan Mulkeen, Vice President & Registrar, NUIM (Eithne Guilfoyle)
- Fiona Chambers, Head of the School of Education, UCC (for John O'Halloran)
- Lewis Purser, Director Academic Affairs, Irish Universities Association
- Seamus Mulconry, CPSMA (representing primary management bodies)
- Antoinette Nic Gearailt, ACCS (representing post- primary management bodies)
- Graham Love, CEO, HEA
- Anthony Finn, University of Glasgow (independent expert)

Also in attendance:

- Valerie Harvey, Head of Performance Evaluation, HEA
- Chris Kelly, PO, Teacher Supply, DES
- Conor McCourt, APO, Teacher Supply, DES

Apologies

- Ruth Carmody, Asst. Secretary General, DES
- Harold Hislop, Chief Inspector, DES
- Patrick Cluskey, Minister's Advisor
- Eithne Guilfoyle, Vice President Academic Affairs (Registrar), DCU
- John O'Halloran, Deputy President and Registrar, UCC

1. Minutes of meeting of 29 June 2018 and matters arising

Minutes of 29 June 2018 were agreed.

2. Update on recent developments

Communications and promotion of the profession

The following points were noted:

- A stand is being organised at the Higher Options exhibition (12-14 September 2018) to promote the teaching profession. It will be attended by the Teaching Council, the primary and post primary management bodies and practising teachers.
- A draft specification for an online recruitment portal is being drawn up by the Department and the Teaching Council, for consideration by the Communications WG at its next meeting. The specification will provide for substitute as well as longer term vacancies and, as a longer term measure, support school placements. A meeting with a number of the existing providers of teacher recruitment portals is under consideration to follow after the finalisation of the specification.
- A webpage is being developed to include information on becoming a teacher and the teaching profession generally with links to relevant sites (e.g. individual HEIs, CAO, Postgraduate applications Centre (PAC)). It was agreed that there should be links from the target sites to the home webpage.
- The Government Information Services (GIS) held a workshop with the Communications WG on 28th August. Following from this, the GIS has produced a draft Communications Brief to be considered by the Communications WG.
- The Consultative Forum is planned for late October / early November 2018.
- Engagement with the teacher unions on teacher supply issues is important. In that regard, the Department is planning to meet the teacher unions in the coming weeks to update them on developments in this area. It was further noted that teacher supply is not an IR issue.

Higher Education

The following points were noted:

- The HEA has contacted the HEIs seeking their plans for the provision of 4-year undergraduate and postgraduate ITE programmes in priority subject areas over the next three years. Responses are due by 14 September after which time the HEA will follow up with the Department.
- Discussions involving the Department, the Teaching Council, the HEIs and the IUA relating to the higher education actions have been held.
- The Postgrad Applications Centre (PAC) has restructured its processes to allow HEIs manage the provision of places in specific subject areas. It was agreed that this development should be highlighted in the promotions campaign. It was also noted that UL and TCD do not use the PAC to process ITE applications

Update from the management bodies on the 2018 teacher recruitment situation

The following points were noted:

- At post primary level, recruitment in the Dublin area appears to be most problematic and Connacht least problematic
- Subject areas of most difficulty appear to be Irish, foreign languages and Guidance. Recruitment to Maths and STEM posts may not be as difficult as in recent years.

- PP Management bodies will be surveying their schools to confirm the position.
- At primary level the situation will not become clear until end September

3. Teacher Supply Action Plan

Actions 1 and 2 (Data collection and analysis):

The following points were noted:

- Work in this area is ongoing in conjunction with the Department's Statistics Section.
- Figures indicates a small, but higher than anticipated, increase in teacher retirements in 2018.

Action 8a (Review of school placement guidelines):

- Terms of reference for a high level working group are under consideration in the Department and are due to go to the Teaching Council for approval in early October. It was agreed that the terms of reference should also include the identification of short term measures to support the school placement process.

Action 8b (Communication with management bodies re school placements):

- A general discussion took place on school placement issues
- It was noted that the letter to the management bodies is due to issue later in the week following the Steering Group meeting.

Action 9 (Review of ITE programmes):

- It was noted that the review would identify the range of structure and duration of ITE programmes currently in place.

Actions 10 and 11 (Additional ITE places/ programmes):

- Developments under consideration in the HEIs with regard to subjects and programme structures were considered.

The following points were noted:

- The importance to the system of a correctly functioning school placement process
- Any developments in this area must have regard to maintaining existing standards
- It was agreed to explore further the need for post-qualification CPD programmes to support graduates from revised programmes

Actions 12 and 13 (flexible ITE programme options and upskilling):

The following points were noted:

- These actions have not been prioritised
- The work of the Teaching Council to revise and rationalise the post primary curricular subject requirements is ongoing and that the outcome from this work should be completed for consideration by the Council in May 2019.

Action 14 (Capital grants):

- It was noted that capital funding is being made available to HEIs for costs associated with specialised equipment and/ or refurbishment of class space to accommodate provision of new ITE programmes.

Action 15 (Bursaries):

- A general discussion took place on financial supports for ITE students

The following points were noted:

- Options in this area are under consideration in the Department, including the use of PATH funding for groups identified in the *National Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education 2015-2019*.
- Supports for ITE students would be included in the broader consideration of supports for third level students generally.

Action 16: (Development of a more streamlined teacher registration process).

- It was noted that work in this area is underway in the Teaching Council and that it is hoped to have this completed by end 2018.
- It was agreed that developments in this area should be reflected in the promotions campaign.

Action 17 (Removal of the restriction on job-sharers undertaking sub work)

- It was noted that technical issues on the Department's payroll are being resolved to allow this action to proceed

Action 18 (Employment of teachers on career break):

- It was agreed that the arrangements for the 2018/19 school year should be communicated schools as soon as possible.

Action 19 (Other actions)

The following items were considered:

- Clustering of schools to employ teachers
- Issues around the employment of retired teachers
- The use of supply panels. It was noted that the Department would engage with the INTO regarding the use of supply panels and that alternative options to the supply panel model previously in place would have to be considered.

4. AOB

The following new action was agreed:

- DENI to be contacted regarding opportunities to recruit surplus teachers from Northern Ireland as part of ongoing North/South dialogue

The following items were discussed

- The supply of teachers to teach the new Computer Science subject specification in 2019.
- The restriction on the number of days an unregistered person can be paid in State funded teaching post

5. Date of next meeting

8 November 2018