

Meeting of the Teacher Supply Steering Group

27 February 2020 @ 2.00 pm

Tyrone House, DES, Marlborough St

Minutes

Attendees:

- Seán Ó Foghlú, Secretary General, DES (Chairperson)
- Aoife Conduit, Asst Secretary General, DES
- Harold Hislop, Chief Inspector, DES
- Deirdre Shanley, Asst Secretary General, DES
- Tomás Ó Ruairc, Director, Teaching Council
- Lewis Purser, Director Academic Affairs, Irish Universities Association
- Seamus Mulconry, CPSMA
- Antoinette Nic Gearailt, ACCS
- Louise Callinan, HEA (for Alan Wall)
- Anthony Finn, University of Glasgow
- Kathy Hall, UCC (for John O'Halloran)

Also in attendance:

- Chris Kelly, PO, Teacher Education Policy, DES
- Conor McCourt, APO, Teacher Education Policy, DES

Apologies

- Ruth Carmody, Asst. Secretary General, DES
- Eithne Guilfoyle, Vice President Academic Affairs (Registrar), DCU
- William Beausang, Asst. Secretary General, DES
- Mark O'Doherty, Minister's Advisor
- John O'Halloran, Deputy President and Registrar, UCC
- Alan Wall, CEO, HEA

1. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 4th December 2020 were agreed.

2. Update on recent developments

(a) Data to support teacher supply planning

Technical Report

The Group considered the latest developments following the publication of the DES Technical Report: *Developing a Teacher Supply and Demand Model for Ireland*.

The following points were noted:

- Following publication, feedback was received from stakeholders on the Report, its findings and assumptions.
- A workshop for stakeholders to consider the report and its findings and assumptions took place on 30 January 2020.
- The report is being revised having regard to feedback received and the outcomes of the workshop, with the view to its finalisation by end March 2020.
- It is intended that an updated version of the report will be published at regular intervals, and that a proposal will be developed by the Data Working Group in this regard.
- Further work is required in order to support the development of post primary projections of teacher demand on a per subject basis
- Following from the stakeholder workshop, it has been agreed to convene a small focus group of relevant stakeholders to further explore subject level projections and inform the best approach to be taken.

Survey of demand for post primary subject teachers

The following points were noted:

- Teacher Allocations Section are conducting a survey of school principals to determine the unmet demand for post primary subject teachers.
- The survey is being administered at the Allocations Seminars being held at the end February and early March 2020.

Potential use of the Teaching Council register to hold additional data to support teacher supply planning.

It was noted that the Teaching Council is exploring the possibility of using the Registration Database to provide additional teacher / subject data to support teacher supply planning.

(b) Communications & promotion of the teaching profession

Promotion campaign update

The Group was updated on the latest developments in relation to the campaign to promote the teaching profession.

The following points were noted:

- The most recent phase of the campaign, coinciding with the CAO and PME application closing dates, took place on digital, radio and print media in December 2019/ January 2020.
- Options for further phases of the campaign in 2020 are being considered.

It was agreed that creating awareness of new routes to teaching should be included in the promotion campaign.

Development of a teacher employment portal

The following points were noted:

- Approximately 1600 teachers (1200 primary and 400 post primary) have registered with *Sub Seeker*, the new sub teacher recruitment portal developed by IPPN in cooperation with NAPD.
- The Department is meeting with IPPN on 5 March 2020 for an update the operation of *Sub Seeker* and to discuss the potential for the development of a portal to recruit teachers to fill long term vacancies.

It was agreed that the specification for a long term portal should provide for the clear identification of long term vacancies that schools have not been able to fill.

Engagement with careers advisors and guidance counsellors

The following points were noted:

- The Teaching Council and the Department met with AHECS, IGC and NCGE on 31 January 2020 to consider how school and third level students can best be informed of pathways to teaching.
- Further engagement with AHECS, IGC and NCGE is planned for later in the year.

Plans for regional focus groups

It was noted that focus groups for principals, teachers and parents are planned in 5 regional locations in March and April 2020.

Engagements with primary and post primary school students.

It was noted that the report on the engagements with primary and post primary school students is being revised by the independent report writer, having regard to feedback from Teaching Council and the Department.

(c) Higher Education

HEA proposal for upskilling programmes

The following points were noted:

- The HEA call for upskilling programmes in mathematics, physics and Spanish issued on 19 December 2019.
- Expressions of interest have been received for all three subjects.
- The closing date for the receipt of proposals is 2 March 2020.
- The Communications WG will consider the promotion of new upskilling programmes.

Longitudinal study of outcomes for graduates of ITE programmes

It was noted that the HEA's longitudinal study of outcomes for graduates of ITE programmes is progressing through the CSO.

Applications to ITE programmes

The following points were noted:

- The closing date for applications to the PME programmes in the NUI universities was extended to 21 February 2020
- Applications to the UL PME programme remain open.
- Data is being sought from the CAO on applications to undergraduate ITE programmes for 2020/21

It was noted that ETBI are engaging with NUIG regarding the establishment of a programme to upskill teachers to teach through Irish.

Supports for ITE student

It was noted that Higher Ed Equity of Access is considering the treatment of the PME under the grant scheme, given that graduates from these programmes are meeting a particular skills requirement and graduation from an ITE programme, such as the PME, is a prerequisite to entering employment as a teacher.

Flexible ITE programme

The following points were noted:

- A number of flexible ITE programmes are already in place.
- HEA and Teacher Ed Policy (Teacher Supply) are considering a potential revised action for inclusion in the Action Plan.

Supports for returning teachers

The following points were noted:

- Data to indicate the potential demand for a return to teach programme is not readily available.
- The Teaching Council is considering whether information to indicate potential demand can be obtained from the register of teachers.

School placements

The Group considered the challenges to HEIs, schools and students with regard to school placements and how the recent report of the School Placement Working Group proposes to address these. The Group had regard to school placement arrangements in Scotland in its consideration.

The following points were noted:

- The Teaching Council is liaising with the Department to finalise the terms of reference of the working groups, as recommended by the SPWG report, and it is intended that these groups will be established in the near future.
- The Report proposes the development of a centralised system for placements, to be hosted by the Teaching Council.
- High quality school placements are vital to the experience of the student teacher

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

Teacher absences due to State examination employment

The Group noted that the SEC is reviewing State examination related employment with a view to maximising classroom contact time and addressing challenges for schools in recruiting substitute teachers.

Teacher absences due to CPD

It was noted that a CPD Working Group has been established and measures are being considered to reduce teacher absences, including increased in-school supports and increased on-line CPD.

Review of summer courses

It was noted that Teacher Ed Policy (ITE and CPD) and Teacher Terms and Conditions Section are jointly undertaking a scoping exercise to inform a review of brief absence arrangements, with a view to maximising classroom contact time and addressing challenges for schools in recruiting substitute teachers.

Primary Teacher Supply Panels

The following points were noted:

- Substitute teacher supply panels have been operating in 6 locations on a pilot basis since mid-November 2019.
- There were issues in recruiting teachers to fill posts in some panels.
- Initial feedback is that teachers appointed to the panels are being fully employed to fill substitutable vacancies.
- It is planned to expand the pilot supply panel scheme to a limited number of areas of particular need in 2020/21

- Data on absences is being put together to identify potential schools for inclusion in the expanded scheme.

It was agreed to amend the draft revised Action Plan to include an action to expand the pilot primary teacher supply scheme for 2020/21.

Post primary supply panels/ teacher sharing scheme

The Group considered teacher sharing and supply panel schemes at post primary level. The following points were noted:

- No schools are implementing the teacher sharing scheme in 2019/20.
- A small working group of experienced former school principals was convened to discuss ideas and possible practical arrangements.
- The working group was of the view that it will be difficult to recruit teachers to supply panel posts when there are fulltime vacancies in many schools that are not being filled.
- School principals are also currently being surveyed to determine what steps might be taken to increase the uptake of the sharing scheme.
- Post primary supply panels and the post primary teacher sharing scheme are similar concepts
- Further options for supply panels/ teacher sharing are being explored by Teacher Allocations Section.

Employment of retired teachers

It was noted that Pensions Section met recently with DPER to consider issues concerning the employment of retired teachers.

Fixed term/ part-time employment; effect of implementation of the Ward Report.

It was noted that this issue is being considered by Teacher Terms and Conditions, External HR and Teacher Allocations and that a briefing note has been prepared by External HR.

It was agreed to circulate the briefing note to the members of the Steering Group.

3. Teacher Supply Action Plan

The Group considered the most recent draft of the revised Teacher Supply Action Plan and discussed arrangements for its finalisation and publication.

It was noted that the Department is meeting with the teacher unions on 28 February 2020 to brief them on the draft Action Plan and to seek feedback.

4. AOB

It was agreed that the Teacher Supply Secretariat will prepare a report on teacher supply developments/ outcomes in 2019.

5. Next meeting

The date of the next meeting (21 May 2020) was noted.

**Teacher Supply Secretariat
March 2020**