

Meeting of the Teacher Supply Implementation Group

Venue: Marlborough St (video link to DES Athlone)

Tuesday 25th June 2020, 2.00pm

Minutes

In attendance:

Seán Ó Foghlú, Secretary General (Chair)
Harold Hislop, Chief Inspector
Chris Kelly, PO, Teacher Education Policy (Teacher Supply)
John McDermott, APO, Higher Education
Tomás Ó Ruairc, Director, Teaching Council
Louise Callinan, Senior Manager, Teacher Education, HEA
Deirdre Cullen, PO, Statistics
Martin McLoughlin, PO, Teacher Education Policy (ITE)
Aisling Curley, PO, Pensions
Majella O'Dea, APO, Teacher Terms and Conditions (for Alfie Barrett)
Margaret Dunning, Divisional Inspector (for Brendan Doody)

Also in attendance:

Conor McCourt, Teacher Supply Secretariat

Apologies:

Aoife Conduit, Assistant Secretary General
Deirdre Shanley, Assistant Secretary General
William Beausang, Assistant Secretary General
Padraig Maloney, PO, Teacher Payroll
Orla Nugent, Deputy CEO, HEA
Brendan Doody, Assistant Chief Inspector
Paraic Joyce, PO, School Governance
Alfie Barrett, PO, Teacher Terms & Conditions
Tara Carton, PO, External Staff Relations

1. Minutes of previous meeting and matters arising:

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

2. Update on recent developments and next steps

(a) Data to support teacher supply planning

(i) Statistics Section Technical Report

The Group noted that the Technical Report has been updated following feedback from stakeholders and further analysis by Statistics Section.

It was agreed that the updated Technical Report, with the agreement of the Minister, should be published as soon as possible.

It was also noted that Statistics Section is currently working on new projections of student enrolments.

- (ii) Analysis of post primary subject teacher demand/
- (iii) Survey of unmet demand for post primary subject specific teachers

The Group was updated on the work of Statistics Section to project the demand for post primary subject teachers.

It was noted that the survey of school principals/ ETB Directors of Schools, facilitated by Allocations Section had provided useful data on the unmet demand for teachers at a subject level and that this data could be used to inform the development of projections of subject teacher demand.

It was agreed to engage with stakeholders concerning the development of post primary subject demand projections.

- (iv) *Potential use of the Teaching Council register to hold additional data to support teacher supply planning.*

The Group noted the potential for the Teaching Council register to hold additional data to support teacher workforce planning, and that the Teaching Council have been asked by the Data Group to examine this.

The Teaching Council indicated that it would be open to considering the potential of the register to hold such data.

b) Communications and promotion of the teaching profession

- (i) *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 latest phase of the campaign, coinciding with CAO change of mind closing date, is ongoing on radio and social media.
- Options for further phases of the campaign in 2020 are being considered, including promoting new ITE programmes, new upskilling programmes, PATH 1 programmes and diversity in the teaching profession

- (ii) *Development of a teacher employment portal*

The following points were noted:

- IPPN has commenced the development of a portal for the recruitment of primary and post-primary teachers to fill long term vacancies.
- The target is for the portal to be operational is September 2020
- IPPN intends to engage with the school management bodies in the coming weeks in regard the development of the portal
- *Turasabhaile.com*, the recruitment portal developed by the post primary school management bodies targeting Irish teachers overseas, will again operate in 2020

(iii) *Potential for virtual communications with stakeholders*

The Group was updated in the potential for virtual communications with students and other stakeholders in the context of the Covid-19 emergency, including virtual participation in careers fairs, open days, events for guidance counsellors and engagement via webinars

It was noted that this issue is being considered by the Communications Working Group.

(c) Higher Education

(i) *ITE programme application numbers 2020*

CAO programmes

It was noted that, as of February 2020 and in comparison to 2019:

- Overall applications to level 8 programmes have fallen by 1.5% approx.
- First preference applications to level 8 primary ITE programmes have fallen by 1% approx.
- First preference applications to level 8 post primary ITE programmes have increased by 10% approx.
- There are low application numbers for some post primary subjects (e.g. computer science and some MFLs)

It was agreed that the targeted promotion of some of the post primary programmes in priority subjects should be explored.

PME programmes

It was noted that applications for the post primary PME through the PAC have increased by 3% approx. in comparison to 2019.

(ii) *HEA proposal for upskilling programmes*

The following points were noted:

- Proposals for upskilling programmes in mathematics, physics and Spanish have been recommended for funding by the independent HEA expert panel, with certain conditions.
- The HEA is currently facilitating a dialogue with the relevant HEIs in regard to these conditions and a number of issues identified by the Department.
- The HEIs involved have been asked to resubmit their proposals by 30 June, taking account of the various issues raised

- It is expected that a decision on funding will be made by the Department in July 2020
- Potential start dates for the programmes are under consideration, in the context of the Covid-19 emergency.

(iii) Supports for ITE student

The following points were noted:

- There is a significant additional demand generally for supports for students as a result of Covid-19
- It is currently proposed to ring fence €1m for SAF for PME students in 2020/21

It was agreed to explore targeted supports for PME students as a matter of urgency.

(iv) School placements

SPWG report

The Group noted that a plan is currently being drafted for the implementation of the recommendations of the School Placement Working Group report, with a target of commencing in September 2020

School placement arrangements 2020/21

The following points were noted:

- The Teaching Council and the Department are working closely together in regard to school placement arrangements for 2020/21
- The Teaching Council has recently issued a statement regarding school placement 2020-2021
- The Council is meeting with stakeholders to consider this issue on 26 June
- Guidance is due to be approved by the Council and then referred to the Department
- It is intended that school placement guidelines will be in place for September 2020.

It was agreed to prepare a short text on school placement arrangements for inclusion in the guidelines for the reopening of schools, which are being developed for issue to the system end July 2020.

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

(i) Teacher absences due to State examination employment

The following points were noted:

- The SEC will explore State examination related employment and the requirement for substitute teachers in schools and seek to develop proposals to address this.
- It has not been possible to progress this action to date due to the Covid-19 emergency

(ii) Teacher absences due to CPD

The following points were noted:

- The support services will continue to consider measures to reduce teacher absences from the classroom, including increased in-school supports, amendments to the current associate model and increased on-line CPD.
- CPD will be delivered increasingly online, particularly in the context of the Covid-19 emergency in the first term of the 2020/21 school year.
- In the longer term CPD will increasingly involve school closures, which is considered less disruptive for schools

(iii) Review of summer courses

It was noted that the review of summer courses had resulted in the number of approved courses being reduced from 1800 to 600 approximately

(iv) Impact of EPV days.

The following points were noted:

- The impact of EPV days was discussed at the meeting of the Policies and Arrangements for Schools and Teachers Working Group meeting on 23 June.
- Teacher Terms and Conditions Section will continue to consider the impact of EPV days on teacher presence in the classroom.
- It is a matter for school boards of management to approve the taking of EPV days

(v) Teacher sharing / potential for post primary supply panels

The following points were noted:

- 2 schools enquired with the Department with regard to sharing teachers in accordance with Circular 0015/2019 but ultimately no schools opted to take part in the scheme.
- Data from the survey of schools and teacher sharing, conducted by Allocations Section, is currently being analysed by Statistics Section.
- Work on developing a pilot project to test possible teacher sharing arrangements has not progressed due to focus on COVID related matters.

(vi) Substitute teacher supply panels

The following points were noted:

- Due to the priorities for schools and the Department in the context of the Covid-19 emergency, it is not proposed to expand the pilot scheme from the beginning of the 2020/21 school year.
- It was agreed that consideration will be given to expanding the pilot later in the 2020/21, having regard to the capacity of schools to take on additional functions in the context of Covid-19 emergency.

- It is anticipated that the full cohort of 18 teachers will be recruited by base schools in 2020/21.

(vii) Job sharing teachers and substitute work

The following points were noted:

- The focus for Payroll Section over the last four months has been ensuring that payrolls are operating by remote access and it has not yet been possible to commence work on the payroll development required to support the employment of job-sharing teachers in substitute positions.
- Payroll Section is considering how to progress future priority developments including job sharing for substitutes.
- Payroll Section is engaging with ETBI regarding the employment of job sharing teachers in ETB schools in substitute positions.

(viii) Retired teachers and substitute work

The following points were noted:

- DPER has approved a waiver of abatement under Section 52 (4) of the Public Service Pensions (Single Scheme and Other Provisions Act) 2012 subject to certain conditions and limited to an aggregate of 50 days or less in an academic year.
- The Department continues to engage with DPER regarding the employment of retired teachers in substitute positions.
- It is anticipated that a DPER circular on abatement will issue in September 2020

(ix) Streamlining of registration processes for out of State applicants/ professional orientation model for schools to support out of state teachers

The following points were noted:

- Due to the Covid-19 emergency, it is not possible for the Teaching Council to provide an update to the Group on processing times for teachers seeking registration who qualified abroad.
- An update will be provided by the Teaching Council for the next meeting of the Group

(x) Review of the system for the allocation of teachers (timing and duration) – timeframes, redeployment scheme rules etc.

The following points were noted:

- At post-primary level just over 30 teachers have been redeployed, with 11 redeployed into Dublin from the voluntary scheme.
- Post primary schools continued to advertise their posts during the redeployment process.
- The main primary redeployment panels were 3 weeks delayed due to the late submission of panel forms and it is expected that they will be cleared in the coming days.
- As an exceptional measure with the agreement from management bodies and unions, primary schools were allowed to commence the process for the recruitment of fixed-term vacancies last Friday.

(xi) Fixed term/ part-time employment - effect of implementation of the Ward Report.

The following points were noted:

- The number of CIDs granted at primary level is 1000 approx. compared to 500 approx. in 2019.
- The increased number of CIDs will reduce the number of permanent teaching vacancies available in the system

(xii) Review of the refund of fees scheme: potential for the prioritisation of upskilling programmes.

The following points were noted:

- The review of the refund of fees scheme has been completed
- Consideration will be given to ring-fencing funding for registered teachers who are upskilling to meet the Teaching Council's subject criteria in an additional priority subject.
- Teacher Ed Policy (ITE and CPD) will liaise with Teacher Ed Policy (Teacher Supply) to progress this issue.

(xiii) Development of more user-friendly teacher recruitment processes.

The Group noted that the revised primary recruitment arrangements provide for the use of digital technology in teacher recruitment

The following points were noted:

- A paper concerning the potential for primary teachers to be deployed in SEN settings at post primary has been drafted
- It is proposed that a small working group will be established to progress this issue

The following points were agreed:

- Terms of Reference for the Working Group should be drawn up as a matter of urgency.
- The Terms of Reference should be reviewed by the Inspectorate.

3. Revised Action Plan

Item not discussed

4. AOB

The following points were agreed:

- To explore the effect on teacher number projections at primary level of an amended PTR in a number of scenarios, using the model developed by Statistics Section in the Technical Report.
- Teacher Supply Secretariat will liaise with Allocations regarding potential scenarios for testing.
- The Higher Education Coordination Group will give consideration to the numbers of teachers entering primary ITE programmes in future years

4. Next meeting

To be determined.

Teacher Supply Secretariat
July 2020