

REPORT TO EDUCATION & CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE – 18 MARCH 2021

TEACHER STAFFING

1 Reason for Report/Summary

- 1.1 This is an annual report on teacher staffing in Aberdeenshire Council. It outlines the current staffing numbers and vacancies, the actions taken to date to improve staffing numbers and other actions which are being considered.

2 Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to:

2.1 Acknowledge the position with teacher staffing in Aberdeenshire Council and the actions taken to date; and

2.2 Endorse the ongoing actions, as detailed in Sections 4.21 to 4.25 of this report.

3 Purpose and Decision-Making Route

- 3.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an annual update to the Education & Children's Services Committee. It has not been considered by any other committee.

4 Discussion

- 4.1 The underlying teacher staffing position has stabilised although there continues to be challenges within Aberdeenshire.
- 4.2 The areas where some shortages are still being experienced are in primary schools in north Aberdeenshire (Banff, Huntly, Fraserburgh and Peterhead) and in secondary schools across Aberdeenshire for certain subjects such as science, technical, maths and home economics.
- 4.3 This report covers ongoing actions to address challenges and further options under consideration.
- 4.4 It should also be noted that additional pressure on Education and Children's Services from the COVID-19 Pandemic and aspects of this have had an impact on teacher staffing.
- 4.5 The impact of lockdown and schools working remotely from March 2020 until the end of the 2019/20 academic year was that the movement of Teachers from one local authority to another became stagnant and impacted on recruitment to vacancies.

- 4.6 The teaching staff numbers recorded at the annual census of teaching staff in September each year were as follows: -

	2018	2019	2020
Primary	1,356	1,405	1,403
Secondary	1,206	1,211	1,234
Special	48	42	46
Employed centrally in ECS	40	35	37
Total	2,650	2,693	2,720

This gave a pupil to teacher ratio (PTR) of 13.4 in September 2020 which is a slight decrease on the 13.3 achieved in September 2019.

- 4.7 Scottish Government has allocated additional funding to local authorities for additional staffing to support the recovery of education following the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Within Aberdeenshire this money has been used to create an additional sixty full-time equivalent temporary teaching posts for academic session 2020/21 to provide targeted support at both school and cluster level.
- 4.8 At the time of the census in September 2020, recruitment was ongoing using this additional funding and this did not therefore impact on the teacher numbers and PTR.
- 4.9 Vacancies can either be unpromoted i.e. class teachers, promoted (which is Principal Teacher, Depute Head Teacher or Head Teacher), or Additional Support for Learning Teachers.

The vacancy rate fluctuates however as an indication of the level of vacancies the advertised vacancies as of 31st January 2021 were:

	Number of Adverts	Number Filled
Promoted	12	0 to date
Primary Unpromoted (exc ASL)	21	0 to date
Secondary Unpromoted	16	1 to date
ASL	5	0 to date

- 4.10 For the previous 3 months the vacancy details were:

October 2020 – Teaching Adverts -

	Number of Adverts	Number Filled
Promoted	9	6
Primary Unpromoted (exc ASL)	11	10
Secondary Unpromoted	12	4
ASL	6	5

November 2020 – Teaching Adverts -

	Number of Adverts	Number Filled
Promoted	24	17
Primary Unpromoted (exc ASL)	17	7
Secondary Unpromoted	26	4
ASL	13	9

December 2020 – Teaching Adverts -

	Number of Adverts	Number Filled
Promoted	2	2
Primary Unpromoted (exc ASL)	14	6
Secondary Unpromoted	13	2
ASL	5	0

4.11 All teachers must undertake a probationary period before they can gain full registration. The majority of probationer teachers undertake this through the Teacher Induction Scheme and are placed with local authorities.

4.12 In 2020 similar actions to previous years were taken to ensure the service retained as many of the current year probationer teachers as possible. As a result, the service again retained a much higher number of probationers than the previous year.

	Primary Probationers	Retained	%	Secondary Probationers	Retained	%
2017/18	98	81	83%	48	33	69%
2018/19	96	70	73%	61	31	51%
2019/20	96	81	84%	31	23	74%

4.13 This was partly due to the marketplace being stagnant with Teachers not having the opportunity to apply or relocate to other posts. However, a further consequence of this was that a small number of probationers were unable to secure a place for their first year of being fully registered.

4.14 For the 2020/21 session the probationer numbers are:

	Starting Total	Placed	Withdrawn
Primary	102	89	13
Secondary	48	36	12

4.15 The probationer placement process for 2020/21 was challenging and this was further exacerbated by COVID-19. The numbers for secondary were lower than requested and there was a subsequent high withdrawal rate. For primary probationers, out of the 102 allocated to Aberdeenshire there were 20 who were resident in Aberdeen City, this is slight increase from last year and makes the placing of probationers more complex as the higher percentage of vacancies are in the north of Aberdeenshire.

4.16 In addition, this year there was no primary Preference Waiver Payment (PWP) probationers allocated to Aberdeenshire. This is where probationers receive an additional payment in return for agreeing to be placed anywhere. This has been helpful in the past in increasing teaching numbers in north Aberdeenshire. There were also a much higher number coming from areas out with Aberdeenshire this year and this combined with the lack of primary PWPs created additional pressures in where to place probationers across the seventeen clusters.

- 4.17 Aberdeenshire Council has been making use of schemes that offer an alternative route into teaching including Distance Learning Initial Teaching Education (DLITE) for both primary and secondary. Currently, there are eight Probationers in Aberdeenshire schools and a further thirteen due to be placed in August 2021.

There was no intake in January 2021 as the DLITE programme is being paused by Aberdeen University.

- 4.18 Aberdeenshire Council in partnership with Aberdeen University also set up the programme Aberdeenshire Student Incentive Scheme for Teaching (ASIST). The aim of this to attract Students to undergo secondary teacher training through Aberdeen University and continue their employment in Aberdeenshire Council. This is a four-year programme in which they secure a teaching post for two years after their Probationer year. The numbers in the scheme are:

Probationer 20/21	Probationer 21/22
16	18

- 4.19 Aberdeenshire Council has continued to give access to the corporate relocation scheme which allows new teaching staff to reclaim eligible expenses incurred in relocation up to a maximum of £8,000.
- 4.20 Aberdeenshire Council put in place a procurement framework in 2017 to use six specialist recruitment agencies based across the UK to secure teaching staff. A total of fourteen teachers were recruited through the framework from 2018 to date. Nine of the teachers recruited remain employed. Of the five teachers who are no longer employed, agency costs were recouped in line with the conditions within the framework. As Aberdeenshire have had low use of agency teaching staff the framework will not be renewed when it expires in 2021. The future use of agencies will be kept under review.
- 4.21 Advertising of vacancies was previously done via traditional paid for 'print' media sources. These advertising avenues were proving to be less effective, as a result teaching vacancies have been increasingly advertised on social media at no cost other than occasional small costs for 'promotion' to target specific groups. This has resulted in no reduction in applicants whilst achieving savings in advertising costs.
- 4.22 Further to the report to Education & Children's Services Committee on 18 March 2020 and the workshops held with Area Committees, when a Head Teacher vacancy arises the vacancy is reviewed to consider whether there is an option to share a Head Teacher between two schools.

Ongoing Actions

- 4.22 As detailed in the Education & Children's Services Directorate Plan the service will use the Workforce Planning toolkit to understand future requirements for teaching staff and compare this to the demographics of the current teaching complement.
- 4.23 Education & Children's Services will continue to explore ways to 'grow our own teachers' by encouraging local people into the profession.

- 4.24 Education & Children’s Services continues to explore with partners the possibility of developing new courses which will allow a wider cohort to enter teaching.
- 4.25 Education & Children’s Services will continue to promote Aberdeenshire as a good place to live and teach, using targeted recruitment campaigns and social media channels.
- 4.26 Aberdeenshire Council will continue to work with colleagues in the Northern Alliance to share good practice and to lobby for continued teaching course spaces at universities
- 4.27 Education & Children’s Services has an on-going commitment to the delivery of high-quality education in Aberdeenshire schools and will continue to keep Councillors updated regarding progress.

5 Council Priorities, Implications and Risk

- 5.1 This report helps deliver on the Strategic Priorities ‘Education’ and ‘Health & Wellbeing’ within the Pillar ‘Our People’, underpinned by the key principles right people, right places, right time; and responsible finances
- 5.2 The table below shows whether risks and implications apply if the recommendations are agreed.

Subject	Yes	No	N/A
Financial		X	
Staffing	X		
Equalities			X
Fairer Scotland Duty			X
Town Centre First			X
Sustainability			X
Children and Young People’s Rights and Wellbeing			X

- 5.3 An equality impact assessment is not required because this report is to inform the Committee and does not have a differential impact of the protected characteristics.
- 5.4 The staffing implications are detailed in the report, and there are no financial implications arising directly from this report.
- 5.5 The following Risks have been identified as relevant to this matter on a Corporate Level ([Corporate Risk Register](#)):
 - ACORP003 Workforce

The following Risks have been identified as relevant to this matter on a Strategic Level ([Directorate Risk Registers](#)):

- ECSR002 Developing Excellence and Equality

6 Scheme of Governance

- 6.1 The Head of Finance, Head of Legal & People and Monitoring Officer within Business Services have been consulted in the preparation of this report and their comments are incorporated within the report. They are satisfied that the report complies with the [Scheme of Governance](#) and relevant legislation.
- 6.2 The Committee is able to consider and take a decision on this item in terms of Section E3.4 of the List of Committee Powers in Part 2A of the Scheme of Governance as it is a function of the Council under the Education (Scotland) Acts.

Laurence Findlay
Education & Children's Services

Report prepared by Gillian Milne, Business Support & Performance Manager
Date 4 March 2021