

REPORT TO EDUCATION & CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE - 17 MARCH 2022

TEACHER STAFFING

1 Executive Summary/Recommendations

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. Committee is asked to acknowledge the current position and endorse ongoing actions.

1.2 The Committee is recommended to:

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

1.2.2 Endorse the ongoing actions as detailed within the report.

2 Decision Making Route

2.1 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.

3 Discussion

3.1 The underlying teacher staffing position has stabilised although there continues to be challenges within Aberdeenshire.

3.2 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 with most issues in English, Maths, Science, Technical and Home Economics.

3.3 This report covers ongoing actions to address challenges and further options under consideration.

3.4 The additional pressure on Education and Children's Services from the COVID-19 Pandemic has had an impact on teacher staffing.

3.5 School buildings reopened in mid-March 2021, however during 2021/22 there has been an impact from staff absence either directly due to COVID-19 or due to the need to self-isolate. This has required Head Teachers to re-organise their staffing to cover absence and has occasionally resulted in temporary closures of school buildings to all pupils or some year groups with a move to online learning.

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

	2019	2020	2021
Primary	1,405	1,403	1,377
Secondary	1,212*	1,234	1,269
Special	43*	46	49
Employed centrally in ECS	36*	37	36
Total	2,696*	2,720	2,731

* Please note minor amendments to the 2019 figures to reflect the final published figures.

This gave a pupil to teacher ratio (PTR) of 13.4 in September 2021 which is the same achieved in September 2020.

3.7 The Scottish Government allocated additional temporary 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 additional temporary teaching posts for academic session 2021/22 to provide targeted support at both school and cluster level.

3.8 The Scottish Government provided additional permanent funding to local authorities to secure the employment of additional teachers. Within Aberdeenshire this was allocated to secondary schools as a monetary value pro-rated on roll; to special schools as an FTE uplift; and to primary schools through a revised staffing formula to increase management time in each school.

3.9 At the time of the census in September 2021, recruitment was ongoing using this additional permanent funding and this did not therefore impact on the teacher numbers and PTR.

3.10 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 constantly fluctuates, however as an indication of the level of vacancies the advertised vacancies as of 31st January 2022 were:

January 2022

	Number of Adverts
Promoted	12
Primary Unpromoted	19
Secondary Unpromoted	38
ASL	10

3.11 For the previous 3 months the vacancy details were:

	October 2021		November 2021		December 2021	
	Adverts	Posts Filled	Adverts	Posts Filled	Adverts	Posts Filled
Promoted	11	8	13	11	8	5
Primary Unpromoted	15	14	5	4	21	15
Secondary Unpromoted	26	8	28	8	23	12
ASL	7	3	4	2	4	1

3.12 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 (TIS) and are placed with local authorities.

3.13 In previous years where there were acute shortages, current year probationers could be retained in vacancies for the following year. With an improved staffing position, probationers are now required to apply for vacancies, and it has not been possible to retain probationers in the same numbers. For the 2020/21 probationer cohort 34% of primary probationers were retained on permanent contracts. 51% were transferred onto the supply and a number of these subsequently secured fixed term contracts starting in August 2021 to support the Covid-19 recovery.

Secondary probationers were also required to apply for vacancies. The retention rate also decreased, although this was mainly due to the probationers choosing to take up positions out with Aberdeenshire.

	Primary Probationers	Retained	%	Secondary Probationers	Retained	%
2018/19	96	70	73%	61	31	51%
2019/20	96	81	84%	31	23	74%
2020/21	89	30	34%	37	21	57%

3.14 For the 2021/22 session the probationer numbers are:

	Starting Total	Placed	Withdrawn
Primary	97	84	18
Secondary	44	34	10

3.15 The probationer placement process for 2021/22 was challenging due to the ongoing impact of COVID-19. The number of secondary probationers allocated to Aberdeenshire was lower than requested and there was a subsequent high withdrawal rate. For primary probationers, out of the 97 allocated to Aberdeenshire there were 27 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.

- 3.16 In addition, the Preference Waiver Probationers (PWP), where probationers receive an additional payment in return for agreeing to be placed anywhere, has been helpful in the past in giving complete flexibility in geographical allocation. For 2021/22 there were only three Secondary PWP's. Combined with a higher number of probationers coming from areas outwith Aberdeenshire, this created additional pressures in placing the probationers.
- 3.17 Aberdeenshire Council has been making use of schemes that offer an alternative route into teaching including Distance Learning Initial Teaching Education (DLITE) in primary & secondary. Currently, there are twelve DLITE probationers in Aberdeenshire schools, one in secondary and eleven in primary. As there was no intake at University of Aberdeen in January 2021, there will be no DLITE probationers coming through the TIS for August 2022.
- 3.18 Aberdeenshire Council in partnership with University of Aberdeen also set up the programme Aberdeenshire Student Incentive Scheme for Teaching (ASIST). The aim of this is to attract students to undergo secondary teacher training through University of Aberdeen 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	Probationer 22/23
16	18	0

- 3.19 Aberdeenshire Council has continued to advertise difficult to recruit posts with 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.
- 3.20 There is currently no agency recruitment of teaching staff in Aberdeenshire however the future demand for the use of agencies will be kept under review.
- 3.21 The Scottish Government have proposed to reduce the class contact time of teachers from 22.5 hours per week to 21 hours per week. It is anticipated that this will be introduced during the lifetime of the current Scottish Parliament. Planning is underway to establish the number of additional teachers that will be required in Aberdeenshire.

Ongoing Actions

- 3.22 As detailed in the Education & Children's Services Directorate Plan the service is using the Workforce Planning toolkit to understand future requirements for teaching staff and compare this to the demographics of the current teaching complement.
- 3.23 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.

3.24 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.

4 Council Priorities, Implications and Risk

4.1 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*

4.2 The table below shows whether risks and implications apply if the recommendations are agreed.

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

4.3 The staffing implications are detailed in the report, and there are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

4.4 The screening section as part of Stage One of the Integrated Impact Assessment process has not identified the requirement for any further detailed assessments to be undertaken as the report is sharing information not requesting approval for changes to existing arrangements.

4.5 The following Risks have been identified as relevant to this matter on a Corporate Level:

- ACORP003 Workforce

The following Risks have been identified as relevant to this matter on a Strategic Level:

- ECSR002 Inability to recruit full complement of teachers

5 Scheme of Governance

5.1 The Head of Finance and Monitoring Officer within Business Services have been consulted in the preparation of this report and had no comments to make and are satisfied that the report complies with the Scheme of Governance and relevant legislation.

5.2 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.

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