

Education, Children & Families Committee

10.00am, Tuesday 5 March, 2019

Teacher Recruitment Update

Item number 7.3
Executive/routine
Wards
Council Commitments

1. Recommendations

1.1 The Education, Children and Families Committee is asked to:

- 1.1.1 note the contents of this report in responding to queries raised about the recruitment of newly-qualified teachers and to reports of issues being raised by schools around recruitment barriers, and the measures taken to address these.

Alistair Gaw

Executive Director, Communities & Families

Contact: J M Simpson, Senior Education Officer

E-mail: Jack.Simpson@edinburgh.gov.uk | Tel: 0131 469 3137

Teacher Recruitment Update

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 The report summarises the steps taken up to August 2018 to improve recruitment processes for teachers within the Council to address difficulties engendered by the national teacher shortage. It also refers to issues that arose in the processes at the start of session 2018-19 and the measures taken to address and alleviate these going forward.

3. Background

- 3.1 A motion, tabled by Cllr Jim Campbell on 20 September 2018, posed a series of questions related to recruitment. The motion noted the efforts Officers had made in the year 2017-18 to recruit newly qualified teachers earlier than in previous years, and is interested to understand how successful this was. A report to the Education, Children & Families Committee was requested within two cycles to include the answers to a series of questions which form the body of the main report below:

4. Main report

- 4.1 *The number of teaching and teaching assistant posts which were (a) taken up and (b) still vacant as schools and nurseries returned for this new academic year, providing a comparison with the previous five years.*

Appendix 9.1 contains a table of 'new starts' to, and 'movers' within, the Council for both teachers and Pupil Support Assistants (PSAs) from 2014-18.

In the primary sector, out of the 155 candidates who took part in the main centralised process, all 41 candidates from the first group were matched into permanent posts. From the 39 remaining recommended candidates, 24 of them were offered permanent posts and 15 accepted temporary posts. A further 8 candidates withdrew during the process. This was the third year that this approach had been adopted and the numbers are fairly consistent over the past 3 years.

In the secondary sector, Tranche 2 which ran until Easter 2018 was intended to address vacancies which were left unfilled from Tranche 1 in specific shortage subject areas (e.g. mathematics, business education and CDT) and other posts

which were deemed not appropriate to be included in the year's bid for probationers under the National Induction scheme. Most vacancies were for an August 2018 start although some were more immediate. There was a total of 557 applications for 34 posts highlighted in the campaign.

In terms of probationer allocations for 2018-19, the Council submitted bids for 122 primary teachers and 113 secondary teachers (including GME teachers). In reality, 115 primary and 80 secondary probationers were allocated although ultimately only 101 primary and 60 secondary probationers actually took up post, thereby causing a shortfall that wasn't always fully identified until late in the Summer Term. There was a particular shortfall in some STEM subjects, in GME (where none were allocated in the secondary sector) and in the number of probationers for the denominational primary sector. Nonetheless, a further recruitment drive was held in the Summer Term to address most outstanding vacancies.

The success of the approaches adopted in the first six months of the year was alluded to in the national press when *The Herald* reported, on 4 August 2018, that there were at that time some 670 teacher vacancies at primaries and secondaries across Scotland. The research detailed that "Councils facing some of the most acute shortages include those in the North East such as Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire and Moray which have struggled to recruit in the past few years. Highland and Glasgow also have higher numbers of unfilled vacancies, but Edinburgh, Dundee, Renfrewshire, Dumfries and Galloway and Stirling have hardly any vacancies" (See Background Reading/External References 8.1).

4.2 *A survey of Head Teachers assessing their satisfaction with the end to end recruitment process. Other sources of Head Teachers views should also be included.*

Regular and ongoing feedback from Headteachers and Business Managers has highlighted delays, at the start of session 2018-19, in the time taken between posts being authorised by Communities & Families and their going 'live' on *Myjobscotland*. These delays were largely due to the introduction of enhancements to the Talentlink system (see Appendix 9.2) that would enable recruiting managers (at school level) to have greater sight of the process together with the implementation of a new HR model. The temporary redeployment of additional staff in HR to address the volume of work was an interim measure taken while the new system bedded in.

The enhancements referred to allow managers to see when each stage of the process is underway or complete, for example, whether the vacancy has had the necessary approval to be advertised. This means the number of calls to HR and Communities and Families colleagues to enquire about what stage the process is at should reduce as managers have greater oversight of progress with each recruitment underway.

A further significant enhancement was the streamlining of the authorisation process whereby managers gain approval to advertise a post. This was previously a lengthy paper-based exercise where there were numerous potential points of delay.

Managers are now also able to request references directly from Talentlink where previously this was either done by e-mail from HR or by post, with all its associated time delays. References now go back directly to the manager so they can form a view of suitability within a short timescale.

In part, delays occurred as recruiting managers and colleagues new to the system in HR were learning how to operate the new functionality.

It is also pertinent to highlight that the summer months are necessarily by far the busiest period for recruitment with approximately 40% of all annual recruitment taking place over a 3-4 month period.

There has been significant resource investment on the HR side to upskill colleagues in the new ways of working and to help with clearing backlogs. We should now be in a position to optimise benefit from the enhancements described above for future recruitment and developments such as the BM/HR group are an important part of this approach to continuous improvement.

This group, comprising Business Managers from primary, secondary and special sectors together with senior representatives from HR has been established to monitor and continually refine processes and to address further issues as they arise. The group meets monthly to consider the ongoing log of issues that is populated by Business Managers in schools on a regular basis in order to address and respond to identified issues and areas of concern. There is a growing recognition that the changes to the system have ultimately been beneficial to schools, as discussed at a meeting of interested parties on 22 January 2019.

It should be noted that PSAs are recruited using the same method as teaching staff via *Myjobscotland*/Talentlink and are required to undergo the same checks as teachers. An advert for the PSA supply list (primary, secondary, special) in late February is intended to help build up this reserve and contribute to reducing pressures in schools.

4.3 *Data covering the last five years obtained from Education or HR records, indicating the average number of days between:*

(a) *Head Teachers advising of a vacancy (or the need to re-advertise a vacancy) and an advert being placed*

This information is not held centrally. New Talentlink processes might allow for this level of analysis in the future. Currently there is a 24-hour turnaround in this particular process.

(b) *Head Teachers advising of a vacancy and the last interview being held*

This information is not held centrally. Head Teachers have the devolved authority to determine interview dates and the time between initial advertising and the last interview will vary in individual cases for individual reasons.

- (c) *A successful candidate first being interviewed and an offer being made to that candidate*

This information is not held centrally and is linked to (b). Verbal offers are generally made on the same day as the interview.

- (d) *A candidate accepting an offer and the Council gaining PVG clearance*

This information is not held centrally. Much will often depend on a candidate's post-interview availability to complete paperwork, etc. Disclosure Scotland aims for a maximum of 4 weeks to turn around a new application and 2 weeks for an update. In practice, times are often much quicker although, at times of high volume (e.g. at the beginning of an academic year) there is a national pressure.

- (e) *A Head Teacher advising of a vacancy and a new appointment taking up that role*

This information is not held centrally. This will frequently depend on a candidate's period of notice, etc.

- 4.4 *An analysis of any candidates that were made offers but chose not to take up any role with this Council.*

This information is not held centrally.

- 4.5 *Reviews any benchmark reporting of end to end recruitment performance for similar vacancies within the Council, with other Councils, or with other organisations.*

No such reviews have been undertaken.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 The regular working group will continue to monitor, identify areas for improvement and recommend accordingly. This approach will promote a more open dialogue between HR and schools.
- 5.2 HR have, since August 2018, attended a number of Business Manager meetings in all sectors in order to get direct feedback and to advise of developments.
- 5.3 PVG counter signatories are in the process of being delegated to Business Managers in schools, at their request. It is estimated that this changed approach, whereby schools will deal direct with Disclosure Scotland rather than through the offices of HR, will save a minimum of 9 days in the PVG process. This approach will not contribute to any additional workload for Business Managers.
- 5.4 HR is currently working to a six-week turnaround from the point of nomination of a successful candidate to the point of their taking up the appointment, with a view to streamlining yet further.
- 5.5 GDPR has necessitated changes in the process of collecting data from preferred candidates. No information (e.g. for PVG purposes) can be requested nor

references pursued until the candidate has formally accepted – electronically through Talentlink – the conditional offer issued, in relation to terms and conditions, salary, contractual arrangements, etc. The conditional offer will be issued within 48 hours of the school alerting HR of its preferred candidate.

6. Financial impact

- 6.1 There is no financial impact arising out of this update.

7. Stakeholder/Community Impact

- 7.1 Head Teachers and Business Managers have been consulted on an ongoing basis re developments in recruitment procedures.
- 7.2 There are no health and safety, governance, compliance or regulatory implications arising out of this update.
- 7.3 There are no impacts relating to carbon impacts, adaptation to climate change and sustainable development arising out of this update.

8. Background reading/external references

- 8.1 <https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/16397818.teacher-recruitment-crisis-scottish-schools-facing-nearly-700-vacancies/>

9. Appendices

- 9.1 Appendix 1 Recruitment Figures
- 9.2 Appendix 2 Talentlink Description

Appendix 1 Recruitment Figures

Pupil Support Assistants					
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
New starts	61	52	67	101	107
Movers between CEC Establishments	25	22	39	-	71

Teaching Staff					
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
New starts	273	299	297	347	317
Movers between CEC Establishments	242	273	302	-	263

(We are unable to provide data for movers for Summer 2017, as a new HR system was implemented and every member of staff was moved over and therefore we are unable to identify how many Communities and Families staff moved location.)

Appendix 2 Talentlink description

Talentlink is the operating system behind *Myjobscotland* (MJS) and is used by local authorities across Scotland as the platform used to attract candidates for roles across all council services.

Applicants use the front end of the system with its *Myjobscotland* branding but both recruiting managers and HR colleagues would refer to the system they use as Talentlink rather than *Myjobscotland*.

The software is used to create adverts and publish vacancies, as well as managing candidates through each stage of the process. These stages include initial application, conditional offers (where we offer the successful candidate the role subject to pre-employment checks), references and all relevant candidate correspondence through to unconditional offers (where we have all the pre-employment checks and are happy for the individual to commence working with us).