

ASTI Recommendations on Actions to Improve Teacher Supply

1. Improve the attractiveness of teaching as a profession

Pay:

- Unequal pay scales for post-2010 entrants to the profession be rescinded as a matter of urgency.
- Length of teachers' salary scale needs to be addressed.
- Problem of casualization must be addressed: DES needs to do a national analysis of the factors behind this enduring problem in schools.
- Teachers' remuneration is increasingly perceived as inadequate to compensate for professional work of teachers.

Conditions of work:

- Conditions of work such as class size, quality of resources and facilities in schools, availability of supports for students with special educational needs, workload, etc., collectively impact on the quality of teachers' working lives. Conditions of work have deteriorated due to almost a decade of austerity budgets: improving conditions of work are central to enhancing the attractiveness of teaching as a profession.
- Work intensity is negatively impacting on teachers' wellbeing: specific measures must be undertaken to reduce work intensity, including implementation of the innovative *Integrated Workplace Health Management Initiative*.
- Lack of promotional posts and a progressive career paths for teachers undermines the status of the profession and is demoralising for teachers. Teachers have little or no opportunity for other professional roles such as mentoring, team-teaching, head of subject department, curriculum planning. Measures need to be introduced, in particular reduction in class contact hours, to facilitate teachers to engage in a range of professional work outside of classroom teaching.

2. Increase mobility and flexibility in teaching posts

- Supplementary supply panel, as recommended in the Ward Report, should be implemented.
- A model for shared permanent employment of teachers between schools should be developed, based on the precedent of shared resource and learning support teachers in primary schools.
- In order to address the hours culture, minimum periods of weekly employment should be established for substitute teachers. Teachers need a living wage.

3. Teacher education and mobility

- Incentives for teachers to upskill to address the problem of 'out-of-field' teachers, based on the precedent in Project Maths.
- Research on teachers' CPD needs at different stages of their and ensuring accessibility to quality learning programmes based on teachers' needs.
- Improve teachers' access to EU-mobility programmes to engage in career renewal and learning.
- Restoration of qualifications allowances for teachers to incentivise higher learning.
- Payment of a 'placement grant' and other financial supports to student teachers.
- Increase the number of under-graduate teacher education programmes to address the 'deterrent' impact of the cost of the 2-year PME.
- Widen the range of subject combinations for study at PME level.
- All schools should be required to accept student teachers on placement so that opportunities for learning and mobility are improved for both student and co-operating teachers.

4. Policy at national level

- DES must establish a permanent structure to engage in systematic workforce planning.
- DES must improve data collection from schools in relation to supply problems to assist workforce planning.
- DES must conduct research on why the 'hours culture' remains endemic in schools.
- DES must fully implement the recommendations in the Ward Report.