

Education and Gaelic Committee: Teacher Workforce Planning Advisory Group and Reduced Class Contact Time

Purpose

1. This paper provides information for the Committee on the role and remit of the Teacher Workforce Planning Advisory Group (TWPAG), how it supports teacher workforce planning in Scotland, and the role it will play in relation to the implementation of reduced class contact time (RCCT). It also clarifies the limits of TWPAG's remit and distinguishes its role from the wider policy, financial and operational decisions required to deliver RCCT.

What is the Teacher Workforce Planning Advisory Group?

2. The Teacher Workforce Planning Advisory Group is a stakeholder group which advises Scottish Ministers on teacher workforce planning, with a particular focus on future workforce requirements and Initial Teacher Education (ITE) intake targets. Membership includes representatives from Scottish Government local authorities, universities, the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS), teacher unions, COSLA and the Scottish Funding Council (SFC).
3. The Group's primary function is to consider evidence on the future supply and demand for teachers and make recommendations to Ministers on the number of student teacher places required across Scotland's ITE programmes. These recommendations are informed by annual workforce planning exercises and statistical modelling undertaken by the Scottish Government's Education Analytical Services, alongside qualitative intelligence from education partners.
4. Following consideration of TWPAG's advice, Ministers provide guidance to the Scottish Funding Council, which is responsible for setting intake targets for individual ITE providers.

How TWPAG Supports Workforce Planning

5. Teacher workforce planning seeks to ensure that Scotland has a sufficient supply of teachers to meet the needs of schools and learners over the medium and long term. The annual workforce planning exercise takes account of a range of factors, including:
 - Projected pupil numbers
 - Teacher workforce turnover, including retirements, maternity leave, etc.
 - Probation and post-probation employment trends
 - ITE retention rates
 - Regional and subject-specific workforce pressures
 - Anticipated policy and demographic changes affecting demand for teachers

6. TWPAG provides a forum through which these issues can be examined collectively by key partners across the education system. Its recommendations are intended to support evidence-based decisions on teacher supply and to promote a sustainable workforce over time.
7. Recent discussions within TWPAG have focused on issues including the oversupply of primary teachers, shortages in some secondary subjects, the viability of ITE provision, and the need to balance workforce requirements with the capacity of universities to deliver teacher education programmes.

TWPAG's Role in Relation to Reduced Class Contact Time

8. The agreement between the Scottish Government, COSLA and the EIS to reduce teacher class contact time represents a significant workforce policy with important implications for teacher demand. Delivering the policy is expected to require additional teaching capacity across the system.
9. TWPAG will have an important role in understanding and responding to the workforce implications of RCCT. In particular, the Group will consider the outputs of workforce modelling currently being undertaken jointly by the Scottish Government and local government and assess the implications for future teacher supply requirements. This includes considering how any agreed changes to class contact time may affect the number of teachers required within the system and what this means for future workforce planning assumptions and ITE intake targets.
10. The Committee may wish to note, however, that TWPAG's role relates specifically to workforce planning consequences arising from RCCT, rather than the design or delivery of the policy itself.
11. While TWPAG brings together significant expertise on teacher workforce planning, it is not responsible for:
 - Negotiating teachers' terms and conditions
 - Determining how RCCT will be implemented operationally within schools or local authorities
 - Assessing contractual arrangements required to deliver RCCT
 - Making decisions on local deployment of staff
 - Determining education budgets
 - Overseeing implementation of the RCCT agreement
12. Nor does TWPAG have a role in considering detailed implementation barriers or operational delivery challenges associated with RCCT. These matters sit more appropriately with local government employers, trade unions and the Scottish Government through the governance arrangements established to oversee implementation of the agreement.

Current Position

13. The agreement on reduced class contact time was reached in March 2026. Since that agreement was concluded, TWPAG has not yet had the opportunity to consider the final workforce modelling associated with implementation of RCCT. At present, detailed modelling work remains ongoing between the Scottish Government and COSLA. Consequently, the Group has not reached any conclusions on the scale of additional workforce required or the implications for future teacher education intake targets.
14. When this modelling work is completed, TWPAG will be asked to consider the findings and advise on the workforce planning consequences. When this modelling work is completed, TWPAG will be asked to consider the findings and advise on the workforce planning consequences. This advice will help inform future decisions on teacher supply, including the number of student teachers entering the profession through ITE routes.

Conclusion

15. TWPAG plays a significant role in supporting long-term teacher workforce planning in Scotland and in providing Ministers with evidence-based advice on teacher supply and ITE intake targets. Its contribution to the RCCT programme will be to assess and advise on the workforce implications arising from implementation of the policy, informed by workforce modelling and wider workforce intelligence.
16. However, TWPAG is not responsible for delivering RCCT and is not the forum through which operational, contractual, financial or implementation issues are considered. Its focus will remain on ensuring that future workforce planning arrangements support delivery of the policy by helping to ensure an adequate supply of teachers is available to meet future demand.