Dear Sir/Madam

Migration Advisory Committee Partial Review of the Shortage Occupation List: Teacher

1. What are the factors affecting the recruitment of teachers in Scotland generally?

Young people leaving school are choosing different pathways. At this stage not many are considering a career in teaching when they have just left school.

There is also a reduction in the number of graduates selecting teaching as a career path/profession. Graduates are entering other professions which perhaps have better terms and conditions in respect to salaries and opportunities. Salaries have reduced in real terms due to limited pay increases. There is a perception that teaching is a challenging profession and perhaps makes it less attractive to graduates in comparison to other professions.

There was a period of time when there was a surplus of teachers and too few vacancies. Many of these teachers have found other jobs/careers and not returned to teaching.

Initial Teacher Education (ITE) places have been increased latterly from 30FTE to 40FTE. It requires a period of time and planning for Universities to recruit appropriate staff and subject specialists to facilitate the ITE.
Given limited potential pool of teachers we need to consider identifying other groups to target and encourage into teaching as we have done with Oil and Gas workers and is described below.

- **Do some areas of Scotland experience a shortage of teachers while others do not? If so, what are these differences and why do they occur?**

The recruitment and retention of teaching staff across the City and the North East of Scotland continues to be a challenge and remains a priority in our workforce planning strategy and with our Northern Alliance partner authorities.

The recruitment of teachers continues to be very competitive and demand exceeds supply. Those teachers available with the relevant skills and experience are in the position where they can pick and choose posts which they are most attracted to. Many of these posts which teachers are applying for are not in the North-east of Scotland.

Geographically it would appear that the North-east of Scotland is not as attractive to prospective applicants in comparison to the schools in the central belt such as Edinburgh and Glasgow. Therefore Aberdeen City would have a reduced number of applicants to recruit from.

The North-east can be viewed as not having the level of communications or links associated with other major Cities. Some potential recruits perceive the North-east of Scotland as ‘remote’.

Many Post Graduates come from central belt locations and wish to return to jobs in the area where their families and friends are based.

Aberdeen City is perceived as an expensive City to live in. The cost of living is higher in Aberdeen. This would be true of property prices and rental costs which can be substantially higher than other cities and areas in Scotland. It can be difficult therefore for newly qualified teachers to get on the property market or afford the rents which would be a factor in a teacher deciding on where to accept a post.

The Oil Industry is unique to Aberdeen and has had an impact on teacher shortages. The comparative wealth that this has brought is largely the cause of the higher costs of living. The downturn in the industry has resulted in redundancies and families moving out of the area and others not moving into the area. Some of these families included teachers and this pool is no longer available.

- **How does supply and demand for teachers vary by subject taught? What steps have been taken to increase secondary teachers in STEM subjects?**

The vacancy position across subjects and Faculties varies from school to school. A school may have a full staffing compliment in for example Modern Languages but a vacancy in English. However there are subjects which are more in demand than others. Currently across our 12 Secondary schools there are 28.50 FTE vacant positions. These are identified as:
Modern Studies 1, History 2, Biology 1, Maths 5, English 4, RME 2, Music 1, Computing 1, Business Studies 1, Physics 1, Art + Design 2, SFL 2, Design + Technology 2, Gaelic 1, modern languages 2.5FTE and 2 substantive DHT posts.

STEM Subjects

There have been a number of strategies to attract secondary teachers into STEM subjects. There is increasing collaborative work taking place between local authorities in the North East of Scotland. The Northern Alliance has created an opportunity for these authorities to come together and seek solutions to mutual challenges and in particular staffing.

Aberdeen City and our Northern alliance partner Aberdeenshire have both engaged in the Transition into Education Scheme. This has attracted 19 former employees from the Oil and Gas Sector who will participate in a 4 year internship. The aim is that they will graduate from the PGDE and qualify as STEM teachers to be employed across our schools. This is an exciting programme and one that offers opportunity to tap into skills and experiences gained from the Oil sector.

The Scottish Government, in recognition of the staffing challenges faced in the North-east have had an increase in their Initial Teacher Education allocation to 40FTE. This will provide an opportunity for further STEM subject teachers to enrol in the PGDE.

Discussions have taken place and approaches have been made to North East Scotland College and to Dundee and Angus College to support and promote delivery of Design and Technology in schools and to identify flexible routes to the PGDE for shortage STEM subjects who have these skills.

- **What steps have been taken to counteract teacher shortages generally?**

Aberdeen City continues to have a proactive recruitment strategy in what remains a very challenging recruiting environment.

Current vacancies in Aberdeen City are:
- Secondary Teachers 28.50FTE from staffing allocations 670 FTE
- Primary 51.70 FTE from staffing allocations of 886 FTE
- ASN 8.7 FTE from staffing allocation of 118 FTE

Early Years Practitioners: Following successful recruitment all Early Years positions are currently filled.

The total number of vacancies in schools is **86.98**

Recruitment and retention incentives are offered to attract teachers to Aberdeen City.

Key workers benefit from offer of accommodation at competitive rates.

We continue to support the Primary teacher distance Learning DLITE programme in collaboration with Aberdeen University and are extending this to Secondary subject teachers in 2017. Our initial cohorts graduated in June 2016 and have now been placed in schools. The second cohort will graduate in June
2017 and we have another group starting in January 2017, who will complete in June 2018.

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We have developed partnerships with Irish and Canadian Recruitment Agencies. This has been a successful partnership and we have a number of teachers working in our schools from both Ireland and Canada. We hope to build upon this in 2016/2017. We endeavour to provide a rich and diverse workforce who can bring different experiences and culture to the post.

There are challenges within the recruitment of other nationalities. The recruitment and selection process requires that employees have the appropriate and relevant documentation. For foreign nationals this includes appropriate Visa documentation and PVG/Police checks, which can take time to process.

We also need to ensure that applicants are eligible for GTCS registration. Again this can delay appointment significantly as the process for GTCS registration for foreign nationals can be protracted. This includes candidates from elsewhere in the United Kingdom, Perhaps there is an opportunity to look at how this can be supported to be more flexible when processing applicants eligibility for GTCS.

We have a high profile advertising campaign using a variety of media, which ensures that we have coverage across the UK and that the opportunities to teach in Aberdeen are well circulated. There has also been some success in attracting teachers back to the profession who may have retired or have been employed in other industries.

The increasing collaborative work taking place between local authorities through the Northern Alliance will continue both at strategic level and through practical approaches to these staffing issues. There could be opportunities for Consortia arrangements to take place to support delivery of certain courses and subjects which are suffering from staff shortages.

At a local level, schools employ steps to manage staffing shortages within their school. Senior Management (Head teachers and Deputes) may be required to take classes on part-time basis. The Support for learning staff are used flexibly across the school. Visiting specialists such as music and PE staff are also used flexibly and effectively to support and cover if this is required. Schools work effectively within their Associated Schools Groups, which supports staffing shortages, where there are opportunities to share Supply staff and timetable visiting specialists. The result of this however is a compromise on how we schools can support pupils with additional support needs and the extent to which school leaders can drive forward improvement.
Consortia arrangements are in place between groups of schools which support the delivery of subjects which may have not been delivered in individual schools. These arrangements provide an opportunity for schools to collaborate and share resources.

**What are the overall trends in foreign born teachers in recent years?**

There has been considerable media coverage around the teacher shortages in Aberdeen City and the North-east of Scotland.

On review of recent applications we would be aware that there appears to be increasing interest from teachers from other countries.

We regularly receive applications from various Countries and nationalities across the continents.

They include Poland, Spain, Russia, USA, Canada, Republic of Ireland, Nigeria and Japan.

Yours sincerely

**Gayle Gorman**  
Director of Education & Children’s Services