At 17 October, Falkirk had the following vacancies:

- **Primary Sector** – 2 x Headteachers, 2 x Depute Headteachers & 5 teachers.
- **Secondary Sector** - 5 teachers.
- **Special Sector** - 4 teachers.

We are hopeful all of these vacancies will be filled in short to medium term. We have however had to readvertise posts in specialised areas such as Enhanced Provision and Additional Support Needs (ASN) due to lack of applicants. In the interim we continue to utilise supply cover where and when available.

**b) the reduction in teaching posts and other support staff in schools and the reasons for these reductions.**

Over the last 4 years teacher numbers overall have increased to meet rising rolls and over the same period Falkirk has maintained our pupil: teacher ratio of 13.5.

There has, over the last few years been a reduction in Support for Learning Assistants as a result of the Council having to make budget savings. Since 2012/13 Falkirk has reduced the weekly hours available for this group of support staff from 13,500 hours/week to 10,500 hours/week.

**c) the extent that subjects or services that were previously offered are not being offered as a direct result of teacher shortages (including an inability to find supply teachers);**

Falkirk like all Councils have encountered difficulties in recruiting supply teachers overall. Recruiting to STEM subject areas as well as Home Economics within the secondary sector is particular challenging. Recruitment within specialist SEN areas is also a challenge across all school sectors. Such shortages impact on schools management teams as they need to provide cover for classes which in turn negatively impacts on other school work.

Within Falkirk overall no subjects that are currently being offered are being considered for withdrawal as a result of not being able to recruit teachers. There is however some concern that this position may need to be re-considered in the future particularly in relation to “subject shortfall” areas of the curriculum that have been identified above.
Falkirk Council already have appointed joint headships across a number of our primary schools. This was necessary to address the failure in being able to attract headteachers to small schools. Difficulties have also been experienced in being able to recruit primary school headteachers overall with significant challenges around recruitment to denominational and smaller primary schools.

To help alleviate some of the shortages and to improve teacher retention Falkirk introduced a voluntary transfer scheme in 2016. Its main purpose was to improve teacher retention and give mainstream teachers an opportunity to work in different schools and environments including the special sector.

Falkirk has also recently entered into partnership with Dundee University to “grow our own” teachers and have had applications from 32 employees looking to re-train and qualify as primary teachers.

Composite classes are used within our primary schools and are an integral part of our primary classroom planning process that determines the most efficient model of class configuration within our primary schools. Falkirk currently has 502 primary classes and of these 80 are composite classes. This includes our smaller schools which wholly operate with composite classes.

e) the incidence of ad-hoc cover including the number of lessons that are either cancelled or provided by another member of staff from senior management or a teacher where the subject is not their specialism.

Although we recognise this is a challenging area Falkirk Council does not hold the data or information to be able to quantify this. We do however have an expectation that headteachers will find ways to offer pragmatic and flexible solutions to address these challenges as they arise.

Within Falkirk we on average are currently able to only fill 50% of requests for short term supply teachers within our primary sector.

Assessment of the Impact of teacher shortages or re-organisation (including responding to budget pressures) on the quality of education in their area.

Shortage of teachers does have a direct impact on both the continuity and quality of education and curriculum delivery. There is no doubt that the impact of teacher shortages has the biggest negative effect in specific secondary curriculum areas such as STEM subjects and Home Economics. However it does also directly affect pupils across all school sectors where the continuity of providing the same teacher(s) is disrupted.

Teacher shortages particularly within the primary sector often mean Headteachers and other school management staff are also having to spend more time covering classes which in turn can mean management tasks and duties having to be undertaken out-with the normal school day or delayed. This also adversely affects smaller primary schools where they have a smaller management resource.