

REPORT TO: Education Committee

MEETING DATE: 12 March 2013

BY: Executive Director (Services for People)

SUBJECT: Supply Teaching Staff Shortage

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To ask the Committee to note and support the proposal that we write to all permanent part time teachers in the authority and offer them the opportunity to join the supply list by completing a change of contract form accompanied by a supporting statement from their Head Teacher.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the Committee, under Standing Orders, approve the proposal to ensure adequate and efficient provision of school education and boost the number of supply teachers on both the primary and secondary supply list, alleviating the issue of being unable to find cover for absent teachers.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 In the past 6 months, HR have been struggling to source supply staff to cover vacancies in the primary schools. This has resulted in 36% of requests for supply being unfilled. (A similar situation is reflected nationally).
- 3.2 We have 225 staff on the supply list with only 72 who are currently active. From those 72 many are unable to attend on certain days, some have short term commitments, many refuse to travel certain distances and accept short term placements and some are only willing to teach in certain schools/at certain stages. These teachers will be on a number of supply lists and we will also be competing for these workers with neighbouring local authorities.
- 3.3 Education and HR colleagues have established a short term working group with Head Teachers. A suggestion, by Head Teachers, was to

source additional supply workers by approaching our existing part time primary teachers and offering them the opportunity to join our list.

- 3.4 The current process for an existing teacher to join the supply list would be that they complete fully a new application form and undergo an interview, with a primary Head Teacher. The working group advised however that this process was too onerous and was putting teachers off applying. They are already employees and the Head Teachers requested that, to join the supply list in addition to their substantive post, they merely complete a change of circumstances form and are provided with a supporting statement from their current Head Teacher. This would then result in them having a contract for their substantive post and to be on the casual supply register. Being placed on the casual register places no obligation on the authority to offer work or on the supply teacher to accept work, in other words they are not an employee when they are not engaged on work with the Council.
- 3.5 The retrospective PVG programme is underway, and the schedules can be amended to reflect the need for part time teachers, wishing to join the supply list, to be PVG checked.
- 3.6 These proposed changes attempt to limit the barriers for existing part time teachers to join the supply list and so boost our primary supply teacher numbers. The shortage of supply staff is also however becoming a problem within our secondary schools. The Committee are therefore asked to approve the provisions requested within this report for both primary supply and secondary supply staff.
- 3.7 This in turn, it is hoped, will help ensure there are fewer requests for supply cover that we are unable to fulfil.
- 3.8 HR colleagues have no objection to these proposals. Teaching staff have already gone through a thorough recruitment and selection process. As a result we also have staff member details and any changes will be noted on the change of circumstances form. A supporting statement from the Head Teacher substitutes an interview by the Head Teacher.
- 3.9 Edinburgh Council have adopted a similar approach to the proposals above. Existing employees are invited to complete an application, but are not required to attend interview. Pre-employment checks will be carried out i.e. a medical questionnaire completed, written reference, and PVG check. Their Recruitment and Selection Policy does not give this as an option.
- 3.10 The Trade Union is happy to support offering part time teaching staff in the authority the opportunity to join the supply list.
- 3.11 On checking this proposed change of practice with Internal Audit their view was that any changes to existing policies and procedures should be formalised.

3.12 Given Internal Audit's view confirmation that it is acceptable to the Education Committee, to proceed on the basis outlined above is required.

4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 No Policy implications

5 EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT

5.1 This report is not applicable to the well being of equalities groups and an Equalities Impact Assessment is not required.

6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Financial - There are no financial implications

6.2 Personnel - Education and HR will write to all part time teachers and process the appropriate paperwork

6.3 Other -

7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 None.

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