



IPPN

## SUBSTITUTE TEACHER SHORTAGE

Submission to the Joint Committee on Education & Skills  
February 2018

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

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The Irish Primary Principals' Network (IPPN) is the officially-recognised professional body for the leaders of Irish primary schools. It is an independent, not-for-profit voluntary association with a local, regional and national presence. Recognised by the Minister for Education as an official Education Partner, IPPN works with the DES, the National Parents' Council, management bodies, unions, education agencies, academic institutions and children's charities towards the advancement of primary education. IPPN articulates the collective knowledge and professional experience of over 6,500 Principals and Deputy Principals.

In 2002, IPPN developed EducationPosts.ie – a website dedicated to education recruitment. This site was initially set up to alleviate the burdens of excessive advertising costs that schools incurred to advertise job posts in newspapers. EducationPosts.ie has since become the longest-established and most widely-used website for education recruitment. It was recognised by the Department of Education & Skills in Circular 0020/2012 as a legitimate means of advertising for both primary and post-primary job posts – replacing the need for newspaper advertising. There are now nearly 17,000 education-related post advertised annually on EducationPosts.ie.

In 2005, IPPN established TextaSub - an online service that enables schools to send free text alerts to primary-qualified teachers who are available for subbing work in a selected county. All teachers are fully-qualified primary school teachers, registered with the Teaching Council. There are over 450,000 text messages issued annually via this service (on average 37,000 issued monthly). See Appendix I for more information about these services.

In early February 2018, IPPN was invited to make a submission and present to the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Education and Skills in relation to 'the apparent shortage of substitute teachers throughout the State, including issues related to the recruitment and retention of teachers'.

IPPN's views are informed by international research, consultations with principal associations around the world and in particular, on-going consultation with our own 6,500 school leaders, who lead and manage the primary education of more than half a million children every day. This document and our presentation to the Joint Oireachtas Committee are the outcome of that process.



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## 2 THE SHORTAGE OF SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS

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This section highlights some of the key issues relating to the shortage of substitute teachers. This is not an exhaustive list, however it sets out the most critical issues that need to be addressed.

In Irish primary education, substitute teachers are needed to cover for a variety of teacher absences, including maternity and paternity leave, some sick leave, principals' leadership days, as well as certain types of school business and personal leave that are classified as 'substitutable'. These are explained more fully in IPPN's Absences and Leave Resource Bundle, provided as a separate document, which is described in Appendix II.

In recent years, despite the overall number of students entering teacher training remaining high, there has been a notable decline in the availability of substitute teachers. A number of recent IPPN surveys of school leaders have highlighted this.

### 2.1 WHY IS THERE A SHORTAGE OF SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS?

There are many possible explanations for the reduced number of substitute teachers, including the following factors:

- **Population growth**, with consequent pupil enrolment growth peaking in the next few years, before tapering off over time – the growth in student teachers hasn't kept pace with the increase in population. See Appendix III – DES Statistical Report - Projections of full time enrolment Primary and Second Level 2017-2035
- **Regulation of substitute teachers**, including through the Teaching Council and Departmental circular, which sets out the required qualifications, registration and other factors that schools must take into account when hiring a 'sub'. This regulation can restrict the availability of partially and fully-qualified teachers.
- **A new fourth year in the B.Ed. degree**, which caused a severe shortage of newly-qualified teachers in 2015
- **Economic factors**, including significant increases in rents and house prices, leading to young teachers emigrating in higher numbers to avail of tax-free salaries
- **Pupil/Teacher ratio improvements** in recent years have resulted in an increased number of permanent teaching posts, 'absorbing' the number of available teachers



- **Retirement trends**, particularly when retirement was incentivised financially. See Appendix IV – DES Report – Teacher Retirement Statistics 2016:
  - ❖ There were 465 primary teacher retirements in 2013, 794 in 2014, 654 in 2015 and 538 in 2016
  - ❖ 14% of schools in 2016 had more than one retirement
  - ❖ 29% of retirements at primary level in 2016 were Principals – compared with only 7% at second level
  - ❖ 82% of teacher retirements were ‘voluntary’; 5% took ‘cost-neutral early retirement’ - CNER); 4% retired on medical grounds; 9% were ‘compulsory’ (reached maximum age)
  - ❖ 52% of primary teachers who retired were between 55 and 59 retired, compared with 41% at post-primary. Why are primary teachers retiring early in such numbers?
- Certain school types have significant difficulty accessing suitably-qualified substitute teachers, including Gaelscoileanna and schools in Gaeltacht areas, special schools, island schools and schools situated in remote locations. Principals of one-teacher schools have also reported that substitute teachers are not attracted to their schools, given the onerous responsibilities attached to the role.

## 2.2 WHAT IS THE EVIDENCE?

### 2.2.1 Evidence from CPSMA and IPPN Surveys

There are few sources of information in relation to this. The DES does not compile or retain such statistics. Management body the CPSMA reports that 90% of their schools have had difficulty, since September, in finding substitutes. IPPN member consultation surveys in 2015, 2016 and 2018 have shown that the situation has become increasingly challenging, and seems to be getting worse over time. See Appendix V - IPPN Surveys on the Availability of Substitute Teachers.

### 2.2.2 Striking the Balance

The Teaching Council report *Striking the Balance* noted significant issues in relation to primary education. The report was largely compiled in 2014, was published in December 2015 and launched in 2017. Some of its data is out of date and the report pre-dated the current crisis in the recruitment of substitute teachers. Nonetheless, some of its conclusions and recommendations are worth looking at.

Section 4.8.3 of the report highlighted that maternity leave, short-term and long-term illness, career breaks, principal leadership days and secondments leads to a need for an estimated 915,000 substitute teaching days per annum in primary schools, resulting in the need for approximately 5,000 substitute teachers (WTEs).



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It further estimates, from OLCS data, than an annual average of 540,000 substitutable absences were claimed for, which is only 64% of the amount needed. This data also indicates the level of the problem. Schools, particularly principals, are dealing with the shortfall. It should be noted that the report's figures in relation to this may give a distorted picture as they include career breaks and secondment leave, which are covered by fixed-term, year-long contracts, which are far easier to fill than shorter-term substitute cover.

## Conclusions

The Technical Working Group's conclusions in section 4 - Projecting teacher supply needs for the primary sector that particularly resonated with IPPN include the following (emphasis is ours):

- *A valid and effective model for projecting teacher demand and supply at primary level can be developed.*
- *The supply of newly registered teachers can continue to meet the demand for teachers over the next five years providing that any policy changes which reduce the ratio of pupils to teachers is undertaken in a planned, incremental manner.*
- ***The TWG has significant concerns regarding the efficiency and effectiveness of the current substitute teacher system. The demand in schools for substitute teachers does not appear to be met in a significant number of cases; and, in addition, the level of substitute employment available to many teachers may not provide a sustainable income. Most importantly, there is a risk that this dysfunction can have a negative impact on the quality of pupil learning.***
- *The review of teachers leaving teaching indicates that there is a modest but steady outflow (in the order of 2%) of permanently employed teachers leaving prior to reaching retirement age. Since this pattern adds significantly to the number of posts that need to be filled each year, it warrants further investigation.*

## Recommendations

IPPN fully supports the key recommendations of the TWG in relation to primary education:

- *Recommendation 8 - It is recommended that the current substitute teacher system be reviewed with a view to improving its efficiency for schools and for teachers.*
- *Recommendation 9 - It is recommended that work to introduce a primary supply model be further developed, with a view to a model being tested in 2016/17 and agreed and implemented in 2017/18.*



- *Recommendation 10 - It is recommended that the Standing Group should seek to ensure that the primary supply and demand data provided in section 4 of this report be subjected to robust and continuing scrutiny before any significant changes are made on account of its findings. In particular, there should be a formal peer review of the final model before its use as a planning tool.*

Clearly then, there is broad agreement that schools are having a lot of difficulty finding substitute teachers, often failing to find a teacher. What are they doing to find a sub, and what do they do when they can't access one?

## **2.3 IMPACT ON SCHOOLS OF THE SUBSTITUTE SHORTAGE**

What do these statistics mean on the ground, in our primary schools? In effect, every time a principal is notified of a substitutable teacher absence, whether of a very short or a longer duration, s/he immediately makes use of every available method to find a suitable teacher for the relevant period. A considerable amount of time can be expended in each case. Where there is a high number of absences in a particular school, this is particularly difficult for the principal, whose time is spent finding teachers instead of leading teaching and learning. See Appendix VI - What measures are schools taking to address the issue?

### **2.3.1 Pupils**

It goes without saying that the biggest impact of the shortage of substitute teachers is on the children and their learning.

### **2.3.2 Teaching Principals**

In the case of the 59% of school leaders who teach full-time, referred to as 'teaching principals', the situation is far worse. Their own pupils end up waiting for the principal to source a substitute teacher for another class before s/he can begin to teach his/her own class. If the search fails, they face having a significant number of pupils from the other class(es) brought into their class, which is, at best, very disruptive to all the pupils involved, as well as the teacher.

### **2.3.3 Workload**

Finding a suitable substitute teacher may require a significant number of phone calls, where s/he has a list of substitute teachers the school has availed of in the past. It may require responding to a number of queries from available substitute teachers who contact the school having received a message from the IPPN TextaSub service. Many schools collaborate with other schools in the local area and share lists of substitute teachers, helping each other to find teachers. In every case of teacher absence, there is a workload impact on the principal, which means their attention is drawn away from leading teaching and learning, which should be their primary focus, and is acknowledged as being critically important.



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#### ***2.3.4 School Policies***

As schools have had such difficulty, many Boards of Management will have to consider reviewing their school policies in relation to career breaks, Extra Personal Vacation (EPV) days, secondments and job-sharing so as to minimise the number of teachers concurrently availing of such facilities, and thus the number of substitute teachers required at any one time. Schools would prefer to allow teachers to avail of these arrangements, given the opportunities for up-skilling involved, however the needs of pupils must come first.

#### ***2.3.5 Unappetising implications***

It is also very challenging for principals to ask resource teachers to side-line their responsibilities to vulnerable children and teach classes to cover for absences. Similarly, principals who don't have full-time teaching responsibilities often find themselves teaching classes themselves when they can't find a substitute teacher. In extreme cases, principals find themselves asking unqualified and partially-qualified people to teach pupils.

All of these examples are far from ideal. Parents understandably ask challenging questions of principals, and there are no easy answers. However, there are some potential solutions that would at least alleviate the critical shortage of substitute teachers over the next few years, while the factors affecting the crisis are at their worst. These are outlined in Section 3 - IPPN Recommendations.



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## 3 RECOMMENDATIONS

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In light of the issues described above, IPPN believes that implementing the following recommendations will go a long way towards addressing them and to meeting the requirements of the various Acts of legislation that underpin the work of Irish primary schools. Given increasing enrolments in schools over the coming years, at least up to 2022 according to DES reports – See Appendix III, the likelihood is that availability of substitute teachers will decrease further. It is crucial that steps are taken to support schools in finding substitute teachers quickly and easily.

In seeking to resolve this difficulty, IPPN has taken into account the methods available to schools in searching for substitute teachers. In our discussions with the Department, the Teaching Council and other education partners, we recommend the following:

### 3.1 SUPPLY TEACHER PANELS

Supply Panels should be established in each county, possibly based in education centres. Primarily, supply panels would also ensure trained subs are available regionally. These would also offer security to new graduates and may offset the lure of the Middle East. These panels should also be used to provide cover for the leadership days of the sixty percent of our principals who have full-time teaching duties. This would provide continuity for their classes as the same trained teacher would be available.

### 3.2 4<sup>TH</sup> YEAR B.ED STUDENTS

IPPN strongly believes that the teaching practice element of the fourth year B. Ed. degree should be considered as an internship. This would allow for greater flexibility in the redeployment of host teachers to take up other work, including to cover for their colleagues' absences.

### 3.3 CAREER BREAKS & JOB SHARING

With regard to teachers on career break, we know that many are willing to work more than the ninety days permitted. We welcome Minister Bruton's announcement in January that the cap is to be lifted temporarily.

While the current substitute crisis persists, we are also calling on the minister to allow all teachers who are job-sharing to provide substitute cover outside of their existing contracted hours, should they so wish, as they are currently prohibited from doing so if their contract is in their school.



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### **3.4 NEW TEACHERS' PAY**

Restoring pay equality for new entrants to the profession would help retain newly-qualified teachers in Ireland and dis-incentivise overseas travel for economic reasons. In this regard, IPPN fully supports the INTO's call for pay equality.

### **3.5 REDEPLOYMENT PANELS**

Despite improved procedures and timelines in recent years, to our young graduates it seems that it takes an eternity for redeployment panels to clear. Many of them are unwilling to wait around living off short-term subbing when there is an abundance of opportunities available to them overseas. The supplementary panel, an invention of recent years, is particularly unhelpful in this regard. Is there a case for reimagining the redeployment panels so as to pull the dates back much earlier and ensure that all panels are clear by the end of May?

### **3.6 TEACHERS QUALIFIED IN OTHER JURISDICTIONS**

Recruiting surplus teachers from Northern Ireland is an attractive option, particularly for our border counties, as is recruiting teachers trained in other countries whose first language is English. While it is very difficult to gauge the numbers, it is likely that there is a significant number of foreign-trained teachers who are not currently teaching, as they cannot fulfil the Irish language qualification requirement.

While the substitute scarcity continues, these teachers should, on a temporary basis and provided they have conditional Teaching Council recognition, be allowed to teach in short-term mainstream positions.

### **3.7 RETIRED TEACHERS**

Encouraging recently-retired teachers to make themselves available is another option. IPPN was, and continues to be, fully supportive of the DES directive that newly-qualified teachers be prioritised over retired teachers when filling substitute positions.

### **3.8 STUDENT TEACHER NUMBERS**

Ultimately, robust forward planning is key. A starting point would be to ascertain annually the exact number of teachers required, the number of newly-qualified teachers (NQTs) available to the system in any given year, data regarding NQTs' career progression post qualification and approximate numbers of teachers required to cover long-term/short-term absence.



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We know from the register of births exactly how many children are born in the country each year. The DES' own statistical projections provide (historically) very accurate and reliable figures as to the likely number of new enrolments we are going to have coming into our primary schools. They take into account both migration patterns and fertility rates. Allowing that it takes four years to train teachers and that there is a five-year lead-in, it would seem reasonable to expect that sufficient teachers are trained to guarantee adequate supply. Providing for primary school staffing would seem a good deal easier than for our secondary school counterparts as primary teachers' skills are not subject-specific. Encouraging and incentivising more school leavers to undertake primary teaching studies is one approach worth prioritising.

Section 4 – 'Projecting teacher supply needs for the primary sector' of *Striking the Balance*, a 2015 report by the Teaching Council outlined primary teacher supply and demand patterns up to 2020. It determined that supply would outstrip demand by approximately

Despite the DES data being relatively robust, it is worth noting the concerns raised in relation to other data by the Technical Group who wrote in the Executive Summary of the Teaching Council report *Striking the Balance*:

'due to the inherent volatility of some elements of data, the lack of historically robust information collected over a number of years and an ongoing difficulty in accessing data held in different parts of the system, it would be premature to present its current findings as completely reliable. It is therefore important that this work be further developed over the next few years, in order that reliability might become more fully established.'

Terms and conditions of employment for new entrants to the profession, including pension provision and minimum retirement age, are significantly worse than those who are in the profession for some time. This will need to be addressed so that the public sector, and particularly primary teaching, continues to attract the highest-calibre graduates.

### **3.9 REGISTERING AVAILABILITY**

It is essential that every teacher who is seeking employment creates a profile on [EducationPosts.ie](https://www.educationposts.ie), where they can create email alerts for specific positions in their chosen counties.

They should also register with 'TextaSub', free service offered within [EducationPosts.ie](https://www.educationposts.ie). TextaSub is an online service that enables schools to send free text alerts to fully-qualified primary school teachers who are available for subbing work in a selected county. Job-seekers register for these text alerts every 7 days on [EducationPosts.ie](https://www.educationposts.ie) and they can subscribe for alerts in up to two counties. Their Teaching Council number is validated at the time of registration. IPPN raises awareness of these tools among 4th year student teachers, and via other channels. It is important that other parties also encourage teachers to avail of them, and similar tools provided by other organisations. See Appendix I for more information about these services.



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## 4 CONCLUSION

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The Department of Education and Skills has taken a number of measures to address the issues relating to the shortage of substitute teachers in the short term. However, more needs to be done if schools are to see an improvement in the challenges they face in this regard, particularly in the longer term. This would require collaboration between the DES, the Teaching Council and the teacher training colleges to ensure an adequate supply of trained teachers in the future. The recommendations outlined are pragmatic and can be implemented without undue cost.

IPPN is committed to continuing to support schools in relation to the shortage of substitute teachers, through the redevelopment of EducationPosts.ie and TextaSub services and is happy to discuss this submission in further detail.

## **APPENDIX I - EDUCATIONPOSTS.IE AND TEXTASUB**

### **EducationPosts.ie**

EducationPosts.ie was developed in 2002 by IPPN to alleviate the burden of excessive advertising costs that schools incurred to advertise job posts in newspapers. It was recognised by the Department of Education & Skills in Circular



0020/2012 as a legitimate means of advertising recruitment for both primary and post-primary teaching related job posts. It has since become Ireland's longest established and most widely used website dedicated to education recruitment. It serves Pre-school, Primary, Post-Primary, Third & Higher level and International & Other job posts.

In the last four years alone, the number of job posts advertised on the site has more than doubled, resulting in the advertising of 17,000 job posts in 2017. Every advert on the site is reviewed and manually activated by dedicated IPPN staff members. It is a time sensitive service with adverts activated every 3-4 hours during working hours. All emails and queries are all responded to via email within a specific timeframe all year round. Of the 17,000 job adverts activated in 2017, 42% were at primary level and 54% at post-primary level. The remaining adverts being at Pre-school, third & higher level and within the expansive International & Other section.

There are in excess of 100,000 registered active account holders on the site. There are between 50,000 and 120,000 email alerts issued on a daily basis to registered job seekers at all levels. There are more than 17 million pages views generated annually and over 3 million online sessions logged every year.

To date EducationPosts.ie has been a free service provided to all Department of Education schools, with the majority of costs being absorbed by IPPN. However, in order to maintain the extensive service provided and to support necessary development costs, a nominal administrative charge will need to be introduced during 2018. Aligning this, we will be introducing a number of valuable and requested development changes resulting in a more efficient and effective site. We have identified these necessary changes in consultation the site users, with management bodies and with other stakeholders.

### **Recommendation**

Support is provided to IPPN in the redevelopment of EducationPosts.ie to ensure that the most effective and relevant service is offered to all schools.

During a recent Teacher Council Teacher Supply Forum, a recommendation was made that a single online portal for advertising of all education related teaching posts in Ireland was identified. We propose that the advertising of all teaching posts at both primary and post-primary level is made mandatory on EducationPosts.ie. This would create a definite single online platform for all job seekers in Ireland and abroad to search and seek education relation job posts in Ireland.

## **TextaSub**

In 2005, IPPN established TextaSub - an online service that enables schools to send free text alerts to fully qualified primary school teachers that are available for subbing work in a selected county. Job seekers register for these text alerts every 7 days on



EducationPosts.ie and they can subscribe for alerts in up to two counties. Their Teaching Council number is validated at the time of registration. Job seekers that have registered for short term substitute work receive SMS messages direct to their mobile phone. On average there are 316 fully qualified primary teachers subscribed to this service on a daily basis. There are over 450,000 text messages issued annually (on average 37,000 messages sent monthly). All costs for this service are currently absorbed by IPPN.

### **Recommendation**

IPPN would like to review the current TextaSub service offering. This will most likely result in the introduction of new and improved features. We would ask for the support of the DES and other education stakeholders in the review of this service and its possible redevelopment.

Due to the large technical and monitoring costs, in addition, to the costs of the SMS messages, IPPN has not been in a position to extend this service to include further education or college students. We also believe there would be a huge demand for this service at primary level if it were to support connecting substitute Special Needs Assistants with schools through a similar means. We would hope to look at this as a possibility during any further redevelopment and we would ask for the support of the Department of Education and Skills in doing so.

We would also seek the support of the Department, teacher training colleges and other education stakeholders to ensure that every primary school teacher available to sub at primary level is subscribed to TextaSub.

## **APPENDIX II - IPPN ABSENCES AND LEAVE RESOURCE BUNDLE**

*See separate document – IPPN\_Absences&Leave\_ResourceBundle\_2017.pdf*

The IPPN Resource Bundle provides the following information to school leaders:

1. Absences for Primary Teachers - General Principles
2. Statutory Entitlement regarding the various categories of leave and the sub-categories in each case:
  - a. Sick Leave
  - b. Maternity Leave
  - c. Adoptive Leave
  - d. Paternity Leave
  - e. Parental Leave
  - f. Personal Leave
  - g. School Business
  - h. Career Break
  - i. Carer's Leave
  - j. Job-sharing
  - k. Secondment
3. Other personal paid leave - no substitution paid by DES

Information provided in relation to the above types of leave:

4. Nature of Absence
5. No. of days
6. Substitution (whether and in what circumstances, substitution is paid by the DES)
7. Relevant Circulars/Manuals etc. (links provided to source information)
8. Comments
9. Logging on OLCS (instructions)

## **Appendix III – DES Statistical Report - *Projections of full time enrolment Primary and Second Level 2017-2035***

### **Projected Enrolments for 2017-2019**

The following table shows the final enrolments at first and second level for 2016, based on the annual returns of primary and post-primary schools, that are recorded in POD/P-POD (Primary/Post-Primary Online Database) [2] and the projected enrolments at first and second level for the following three academic years under scenario M2F1.

It should be noted that each year refers to the beginning of a school year when enrolment is recorded in September of that year. Hence, the year 2016 refers to enrolment in September 2016 of the school year 2016/17.

**Table 1: Overview of Enrolment Trends, 2016-2019**

<b>Year Beginning</b>	<b>First Level</b>	<b>Second Level</b>
<b>2016 (final)</b>	558,402	352,257
<b>2017</b>	563,716	356,412
<b>2018</b>	<b>567,369</b>	360,966
<b>2019</b>	565,696	367,768

As can be seen from Table 1, a continuing increase in enrolments is expected at both first and second level. At first level, the increase in births in recent years is reflected in the corresponding continuing increase in the levels of enrolment up to a peak in 2018, before beginning to decrease slightly from 2019 on.

## Appendix IV – DES REPORT – *TEACHER RETIREMENT STATISTICS 2016*

### Primary Teachers Retired from 1 January to 31 December 2016

#### Summary of points from Tables and Charts

1. There were a total of 538 Primary retirements in 2016.
2. The highest percentage of Primary retirements in 2016 were at Principal Level (29%).
3. The vast majority of Primary retirements during 2016 took place in August (73.6%).
4. 82.7% of Primary retirements during 2016 were voluntary retirements.
5. There were 465 Primary schools with retirees in 2016 – 401 (86%) of these schools had one retiree.
6. Retirees in schools in Dublin (140) and Cork (63) accounted for 37.7% of all retirements.
7. The most common ages of Retirement for Primary teachers in 2016 were ages 60 (13.38%/72 retirees) and 55 (13.2%/71 retirees).

Table A: Teachers retired per post held

County	Retirees	Principal	Deputy Principal	Asst. Principal	Special Duties	Class Teacher	Total	% of total
Carlow	3	1	1	0	0	1	3	0.6%
Cavan	13	4	1	0	4	4	13	2.4%
Clare	12	1	3	1	6	1	12	2.2%
Cork	63	12	18	5	15	13	63	11.7%
Donegal	21	8	2	1	6	4	21	3.9%
Dublin	140	28	36	14	33	29	140	26.0%
Galway	26	12	7	1	4	2	26	4.8%
Kerry	24	12	5	0	2	5	24	4.5%
Kildare	25	9	4	2	6	4	25	4.6%
Kilkenny	14	2	4	0	4	4	14	2.6%
Laois	13	4	4	1	1	3	13	2.4%
Leitrim	2	2	0	0	0	0	2	0.4%
Limerick	18	10	4	2	0	2	18	3.3%
Longford	8	2	3	0	3	0	8	1.5%
Louth	18	8	3	0	4	3	18	3.3%
Mayo	14	7	2	1	2	2	14	2.6%
Meath	19	6	8	0	2	3	19	3.5%
Monaghan	8	2	2	0	2	2	8	1.5%
Offaly	9	3	3	1	2	0	9	1.7%
Roscommon	8	4	1	0	2	1	8	1.5%
Sligo	7	3	0	0	2	2	7	1.3%
Tipperary	15	5	6	0	0	4	15	2.8%
Waterford	11	1	5	1	2	2	11	2.0%
Westmeath	10	6	0	1	3	0	10	1.9%
Wexford	21	4	6	4	4	3	21	3.9%
Wicklow	16	1	4	0	7	4	16	3.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>538</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>538</b>	
% of total		29.2%	24.5%	6.5%	21.6%	18.2%	100%	
Total number of schools								3,250
% of total schools		4.8%	4.1%					

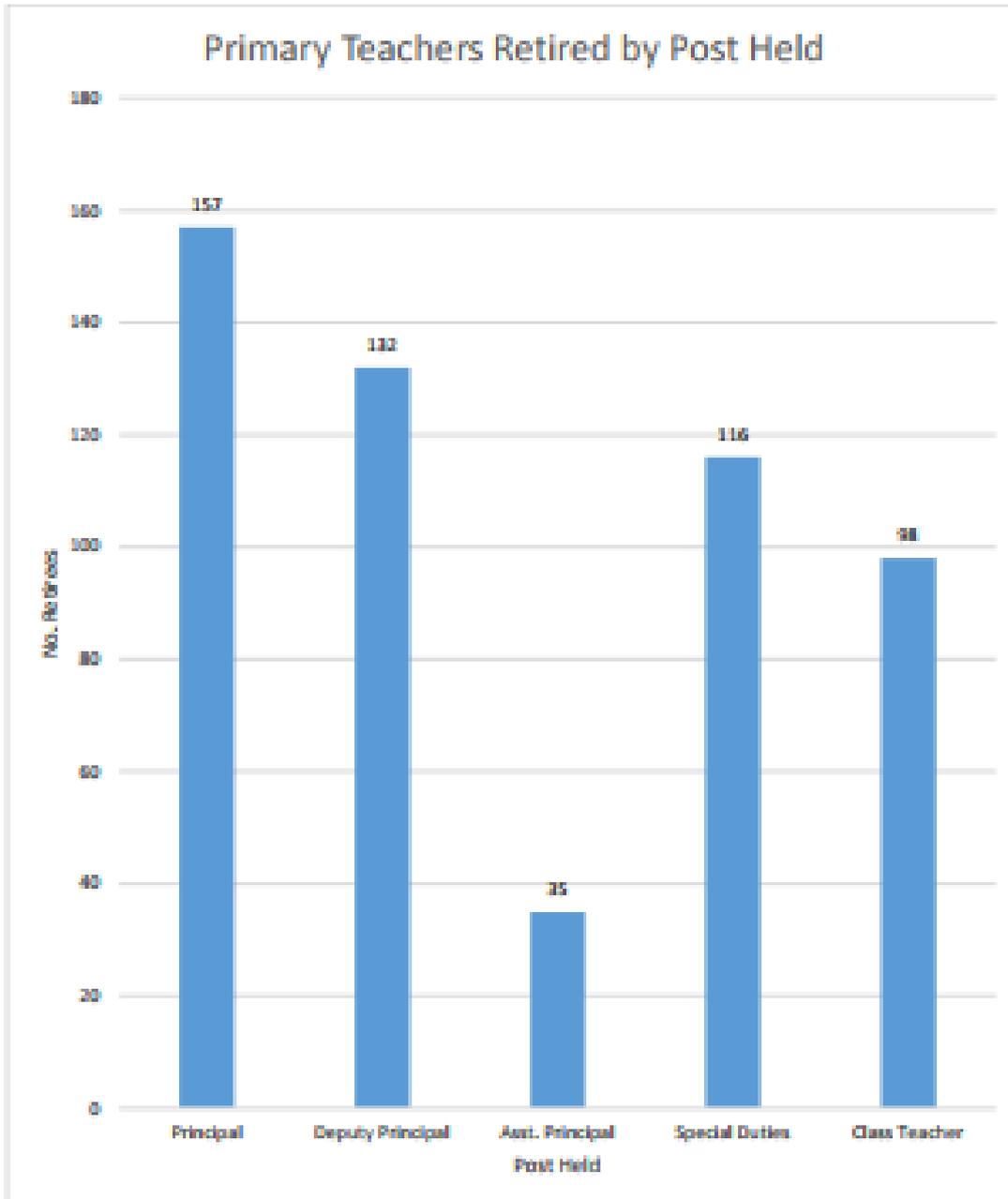
As shown in the table above, 29.2% of Primary retirements in 2016 were at Principal level, while the principal retired in 4.8% of all Primary schools

**Primary Teachers retired from 1 January to 31 December 2016**

**Table A: Primary Teachers Retired by Post Held (Summary)**

	Principal	Deputy Principal	Asst. Principal	Special Duties	Class Teacher	Total
Number of Retirees	157	132	35	116	98	538
% of Total Retirees	29.2%	24.5%	6.5%	21.6%	18.2%	100%

**Chart A: Primary Teachers Retired by Post Held**



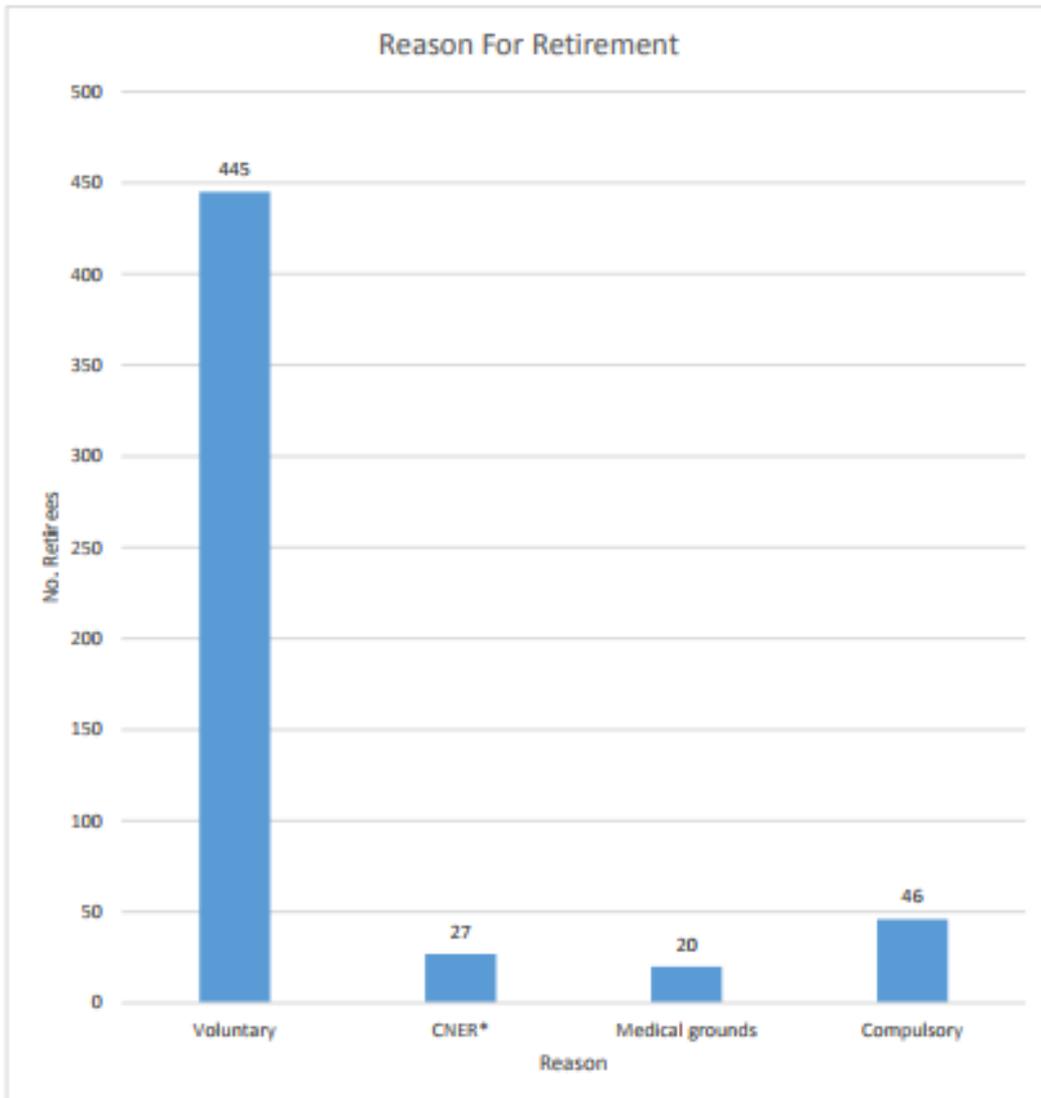
**Table C: Retirees per retirement reason**

	Voluntary	CNER*	Medical grounds	Compulsory	Total
Retirees	445	27	20	46	538
%	82.7%	5.0%	3.7%	8.6%	

\* Cost Neutral Early Retirement (actuarially reduced benefits)

**82.7% of Primary Teacher retirements during 2016 were voluntary retirements**

**Chart C: Primary Retirees by Retirement Reason**



## **APPENDIX V - IPPN SURVEYS ON THE AVAILABILITY OF SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS**

### **May 2015**

In response to anecdotal information about declining availability of substitute teachers in Irish primary schools, IPPN conducted a survey of principals in May 2015. Over a third of all primary principals (1,251) participated in the survey. The results confirm that there is difficulty among schools throughout the country accessing substitute teachers and that the problem is most acute in the third term.

Principals were asked the following key questions:

1. how often they had failed to find a substitute teacher since January 2015
2. whether availability was getting better or worse or staying the same
3. what availability was like in each term – good, scarce or very scarce
4. which methods/tools they use to find substitute teachers.

### **The key findings are as follows:**

- 50% had failed to find a substitute teacher between 1 and 3 times since January; A fifth had failed to find a sub more than 3 times
- Half of respondents consider the situation to be worsening, only 6% stated it's improving
- In general, there is good availability in the first term, scarce availability in the second term and very scarce availability in the third term
- Schools are availing of a range of methods to find substitute teachers. A third use TextaSub, more than four out of five use a written list and three quarters phone personal contacts – schools are using several methods at the same time as no one method is certain.
- Special Schools, Gaelscoileanna and Island Schools have particular difficulty finding subs
- A number also cited the requirement for Garda vetting as a specific challenge.

### **January 2016**

A follow-up survey in **January 2016** had 654 respondents, representing approx. 20% of primary schools. The situation had worsened dramatically since 2015.

- 40% of principals reported that they had failed between one and three times to find a substitute teacher since the start of the school year.
- 23% failed between four and six occasions, 9% failed on seven to nine occasions
- **15% failed on more than ten occasions to find a substitute teacher**
- 86% stated the situation was getting worse.

### **January 2018**

A further survey conducted in **January 2018**, confirmed that the situation has worsened significantly. 494 respondents reporting the following:

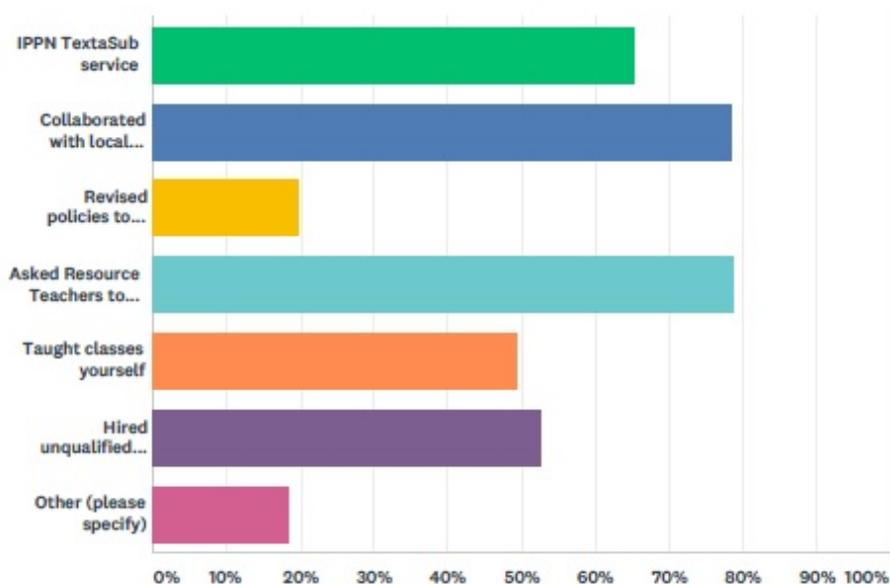
- 24% failed one to three times to find a substitute teacher since the start of the school year
- 25% failed on four to six occasions, 9% failed on seven to nine occasions
- **42% failed on ten or more occasions to find a substitute teacher**
- 90% stated the situation was getting worse, compared with the previous school year.

## APPENDIX VI - WHAT MEASURES ARE SCHOOLS TAKING TO ADDRESS THE ISSUE?

The following schematic shows the various approaches schools are taking to try to ensure that every class has a suitably-qualified teacher to teach the pupils. It shows the lengths principals have to go to in order to manage the situation. It also shows remarkable creativity and flexibility, as well as collaboration between teachers and between schools.

### Q37 What measures have you tried in order to manage the situation? Tick all that apply.

Answered: 495 Skipped: 89



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
IPPN TextaSub service	65.25%	323
Collaborated with local schools	78.38%	388
Revised policies to ensure fewer absences overlap e.g. EPV, career break and job-sharing	19.80%	98
Asked Resource Teachers to teach classes	78.59%	389
Taught classes yourself	49.29%	244
Hired unqualified subs with DES approval	52.53%	260
Other (please specify)	18.38%	91
Total Respondents: 495		