

This document contains three separate INTO FAQ documents on the main redeployment panel.

The three documents are:

1. Redeployment Panels – More Things you should know
 - *11 April 2011*

2. FAQs on Redeployment Panels
 - *16 March 2011*

3. Redeployment Panels - More Things You Should Know
 - *11 March 2011*

Q1 As a permanent teacher what does deferring my panel rights mean?

Deferring panel rights means postponing your redeployment. You can defer your panel rights in the following circumstances:

- To take up a temporary/fixed-term position which is vacant in your school. The temporary/fixed-term position must be for a minimum period of one school year, i.e. replacing a teacher on career break, secondment etc.
- To take up a temporary/fixed term post in another school as per circular 19/2011.
- To avail of a career break.
- To avail of a job-sharing arrangement.
- To take up a secondment arrangement.

It is not an option to defer panel rights if you have not first signed and submitted the panel form to the Department.

Q2 As a permanent teacher on the Main panel for how long can I defer my panel rights?

The maximum period of time that you can defer your panel rights is 5 years (you can defer on an annual basis for up to 5 consecutive years).

Q3 Can I defer panel rights on medical grounds?

No. You cannot defer panel rights on medical grounds.

Q4 If, as a permanent teacher, I defer my panel rights to take up a temporary/fixed-term position in my own school, to take a career break, to job-share, to avail of a secondment arrangement and subsequently a permanent post arises in my school, should this post be offered to me?

Yes, you are automatically reinstated to the permanent post. If you do not accept the post you will lose your panel rights.

Q5 If, as a permanent teacher, I cannot defer my panel rights and subsequently a permanent post arises in my school before or on the first day of the new school year, should this post be offered to me?

Yes, you are automatically reinstated to the permanent post. If you do not accept the post you will lose your panel rights. However, if you have already accepted a post in another school it is a matter for both Boards of Management (your former and your new Board of Management) to come to an agreement regarding which position you will take up.

Q6 Are there any exemptions to the panel regulations?

Yes, you can get an exemption from the panel on maternity/adoption grounds.

In the case of a maternity exemption you may be exempt from the panel for 6 months prior to the birth of a baby and 9 months after the birth.

In the case of an adoption exemption you may be exempt from the panel for 9 months after the placement of the child. During this period of exemption you remain on the panel. You can only apply for an exemption from the panel on maternity/adoption grounds at the time of receiving your panel offer. During the period of your exemption you remain in your former school in a supernumerary capacity pending your re-deployment. You must not be allocated a mainstream class. You must act as a replacement teacher for absences of other teachers on maternity leave, parental leave, sick leave etc. i.e. where a substitute or temporary/fixed-term teacher would normally have been employed. During your period of maternity/adoption leave (paid and unpaid) the Department will not pay the cost of a replacement teacher. If a permanent post arises in your own school during your exemption period, you are automatically reinstated to the permanent post. If a permanent post arises in another school during your exemption the Board of Management may offer the post to you but it is not obliged to do so. Likewise you are not obliged to accept the offer. Refusal of such an offer will not cause you to forfeit your panel rights.

Q7 Can I claim exemptions from the panel on parental leave grounds?

No. The only exemption is on maternity/adoption grounds.

Q1 When will we see the lists of teachers who are on panels?

- A. The DES is to issue, to diocesan secretaries, in the week beginning 28th March a list of teachers on the various panels throughout the country. The INTO will also be posting the numbers on panels throughout the country on its website as soon as it becomes available.

Q2 Why do we not know where all the vacancies throughout the country are at this point?

- A. There are a range of dates by which teachers have to inform schools of their intentions for the coming school year. For example, career breaks and applications for teacher exchange must be made to Boards of Management by March 1st and must be notified to the DES by May 1st. However, teachers intending to retire have to give three months notice and therefore any teacher retiring from the beginning of the new school year does not have to give notice of intention to retire until June 1st. This means that a full list of jobs throughout the country will not be known until after June 1st.

Q3 If I have not received a panel notice and believe I am entitled to it, what should I do?

- A. Any permanent teacher or any teacher with three, four or five years temporary service who believes they are entitled to panel rights and have not received a letter from the DES at this point should immediately contact the Teacher Allocation Section of the DES and ask for the panel notice to be issued to them.

Q4 Does a teacher who had 5 years temporary service automatically get a permanent post under the terms of the Circular?

- A. A teacher with five years temporary service will be offered any permanent posts available after permanent teachers have been deployed from the main panel list.

Q5 When do temporary teachers have to defer their panel rights?

- A. Temporary teachers can defer their panel rights if there is a temporary vacancy in the school and permanent teachers on deployment panels have been deployed to appropriate positions.

Q6 What is the situation in relation to special school staffing for the coming school year?

- A. The staffing of special schools is under consideration in a working group comprising of representatives from the DES, NCSE, CPSMA, NABMSE, NPC and INTO. The INTO has been pressing for a conclusion to this work so that certainty can be brought to the staffing situation of special schools in the coming school year. It is now expected that this issue will be resolved shortly. Further updates will be posted on the INTO website as they become available.

Q7 How do you voluntarily transfer between panels?

- A. Teachers can apply to change to a different panel area and, providing the panel authorities agree, this can be arranged. Individual teachers who are looking to avail of this exchange facility should contact the relevant management authority.

Q8 Are there changes to the pupil/teacher ratio for the coming school year?

- A. The main staffing schedule has not been changed for the coming year, nor has the schedule for Gaelteacht schools, nor the criteria under developing school status by which schools with an increasing school population can apply for additional teachers. However, there has been a change to the schedule of Gaelscoileanna whereby the mainstream schedule is applied to these schools. This will result in a number of posts being lost in the Gaelscoil sector.

Q9 If I am short of temporary service for panel rights can I count substitute service that I previously gave in schools?

- A. The INTO has been in detailed discussion with the DES in relation to the counting of substitute service for panel rights. However, given the significant number of both permanent and temporary teachers who will be placed on redeployment panels this year, the DES will not be in a position to calculate entitlements to panel rights for teachers with a mix of temporary and substitute service until after main panel lists and supplementary panel lists have been compiled. Teachers wishing to claim substitute service towards panel rights are advised to contact the DES Teacher Allocation Section directly. The INTO is actively pursuing this issue and updates will be posted on the INTO website.

Q10 What is the position of teachers in schools under a patronage that do not have panel rights?

- A. The Circular confirms that teachers who are not assigned to a diocesan or sectoral panel will be required to apply for access to the relevant diocesan or other national panel that covers schools in their location. The patron or panel operator will consider such applications on the same basis as applies to a volunteer transfer request. Under the terms of the Croke Park Agreement, there can be no compulsory redundancies and teachers in a sector that traditionally had no panel rights will be fully protected. However, the exact details of this remain to be clarified.

Q11 Why is there such a problem this year?

- A. The problem arising this year in relation to the number of teachers being placed on panels arises directly from decisions by the last government under Budget 2011 and the Four Year National Recovery Programme to reduce the number of teachers in primary schools for the coming school year. Unlike under sectors in the public service however, there will be more teachers employed at the end of the Four Year Plan than at the beginning.

Q12 Why do we need the panel?

- A. The Panel is a system for redeploying teachers who become surplus to requirements in their own school due for example to decreased enrolment. The panel is therefore a mechanism for redeploying teachers rather than making them redundant. The INTO succeeded in the mid-90s in getting panel rights after three or more years service for temporary teachers which has ensured significant employment opportunities over the years for non-permanent teachers.

Q13 Has the DES changed the panel system?

- A. In light of the constraints placed on public service employment by both the Four Year National Recovery Programme and the decisions of the last government under Budget 2011, the DES is implementing a revised system of panel redeployment. Teachers with permanent status will be deployed in the first instance to permanent posts, followed by teachers with 5 years temporary service, followed by teachers with 3 or more but less than five years temporary service.

Q14 How many temporary posts will be affected?

- A. It is not possible to give an accurate figure at this stage as the panel has not yet been compiled and a full list of vacancies in primary schools is not available. However, initial indications are that there will be approximately the same number of permanent teachers placed on panels as there will be permanent posts throughout primary education. However, given geographic and demographic variations throughout the country, it is not possible to be precise at present about where exact matches will take place. This issue will be updated on an ongoing basis as information becomes available on the INTO website.

Q15 If I am two weeks short for securing panel rights on the three year temporary service requirement, is there anything that can be done to get panel rights?

- A. There is no change in the criteria for temporary teachers to secure panel rights. Since the INTO negotiated the initial agreement, it has always been the case that the equivalent of three full years of temporary service are required to gain panel rights under the supplementary panel. A number of teachers have contacted the INTO who have a mix of temporary and substitute service. As stated previously teachers in this situation who wish to have substitute service counted should contact the DES directly. The calculation and confirmation of panel rights in such cases will be dealt with by DES officials after both the main and supplementary panels have been compiled.

Q16 Can I refuse the first 2 offers of a permanent job if I am offered a permanent job while on the Main/ Supplementary panel?

- A. No, there appears to be an ‘urban myth’ in circulation over a number of years that you can refuse your first 2 offers of permanent jobs and that you must accept the 3rd offer (the jobs have to be within a 28 mile radius of your current school) or you will forfeit your panel rights. If you refuse any written offer (within a 28 mile radius) you forfeit your panel rights. In reality Principals often ring teachers on the Panel and have verbal discussions with teachers as to their interest in vacancies in their schools. You can indicate that the job does not wholly suit you, perhaps due to distance, location etc. Generally Principals will move on to try and find someone who is in a better position to take up the post. However if the Principal puts an offer in writing you must respond to it in writing within 7 days of the date of the offer being made by the Board of Management. If you refuse the written offer you forfeit your panel rights.

Q17 I am currently on the re-deployment panel. What happens if I refuse a written offer of a permanent post?

- A. If you are on the Main/Supplementary panel and you receive and refuse a written offer of a permanent post you will forfeit your panel rights. In addition if you are a permanent teacher payment of salary will cease from the end of the school year or immediately if the school year has commenced, unless you secure an alternative post through open recruitment.

Q18 If I have been given a ‘fixed purpose’ contract – is my contract affected by the current moratorium on the filling of fixed-term posts?

- A. Most temporary/fixed terms posts in primary schools are of a fixed term nature i.e. generally of a annual contract for 1st September – 31st August covering for someone on career break, secondment etc. which may be renewed on an annual basis. However there are a small number of teachers in the system who have ‘fixed purpose’ contracts i.e. they have been given a contract that states that they are contracted to cover for Ms. X for the duration of Ms. X’s absence from a school. Ms.X may be on career break or may be seconded to a different organisation to complete a certain project for an unspecified periods (these are just 2 examples). If a teacher has a fixed purpose contract they are not affected by the moratorium on the filling of fixed term vacancies as their current contract is still in situ.

11 March 2011

Q1 What are the key features of the Panel System as structured heretofore?

The Panel system serves two purposes: (a) redeployment for permanent teachers whose posts are being withdrawn from a school and (b) a means to access permanent employment for fixed-term teachers

Prior to the publication of circular the Main panel was made up of permanent teachers whose posts are being suppressed and fixed-term teachers who have a minimum of 5 years service - both of these categories were published as one list.

The Supplementary panel was made up of fixed-term teachers who have between 3 and 5 years service. This Panel only becomes operative when the Main panel is clear.

Q2 What changes to the operation of the Main Panel are being introduced?

- The main panel will now be divided into two subsets: Main Panel (A) Permanent teachers whose posts are being suppressed and Main Panel (B) Fixed- teachers with 5 years' service (or more).
- Main Panel (A) will be published first. (Prior to this permanent teachers and fixed term teachers with 5 years plus were published in one listing).
- If there are insufficient permanent vacancies within a diocese (and within the relevant 45 kilometre radius) to absorb the teachers on Main Panel (A), these permanent teachers may be offered fixed term posts of 1 years duration within the diocese (and within the relevant 45 kilometre radius).

Q3 When does Main Panel (B) – Fixed-term Teachers with 5 years plus service – come into operation?

When the DES announces that the permanent teachers on Main Panel (A) have been redeployed teachers on the Main Panel (B) can then be offered permanent vacancies that arise either within the diocese (and within the relevant 45 kilometre radius).

Q4 Do the new arrangements that apply to Main Panel (A) – apply to the Fixed term Teachers on Main Panel (B)?

No. The redeployment of Fixed-term Teachers on Main Panel (B) will only be to permanent vacancies within their own diocese i.e. they will not be offered fixed term posts in other schools.

Q5 When does the Supplementary Panel come into operation?

Teachers with 3 or more year's fixed-term service but less than 5 years fixed-term service qualify for supplementary panel rights. The supplementary panel only becomes operative once Part (A) and Part (B) of the Main Panel are clear.

Q6 Will teachers on the Supplementary Panel be offered Fixed-term posts from the Panel?

No. The redeployment of Fixed-term Teachers on the Supplementary panel (once the main panels are clear) will only be to permanent vacancies within their own diocese, i.e. they will not be offered fixed term posts in other schools from the panel.

However they can be offered fixed-term posts in the normal manner, i.e. once the DES gives the go-ahead that the Main Panel (A) is cleared then fixed-term posts can be filled either by rolling over contracts or by open competition as hereto fore.